This issue:
Fiction from:
John Wyndham
Jürgen von Scheidt
Delia Leslie
Art by:
Bob Fowke
David Pelham
Bob Layzell
Plus
Crossword competition

A study of aliens in science fiction
Philip José Farmer - the author who dispensed with the stiff upper lip of science fiction

Plus a super Poster offer.
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**Why We've Had to Go Up To 30p**
We apologise to readers for the increase in price of SCIENCE FICTION MONTHLY. This is due to the steep rise in paper and production costs since the beginning of the year, over which we have had no control.
IS friends were beating the drum trees. The familiar sound led him on his way. He was not sure if he could find the flaming threads of gas, only now and again could he feel their heat when he came too close. He hoped to spot them before the flames started and he longer depended on his stick to guide him. Then he became aware of the vast bulk of the burning planet, so alien to this planet, which he himself had helped to build. But that was only a thought.

The machine was not yet running. Otherwise he would have distinctly felt it.

Who would care about him today, he wondered. Strange that the people at the Station lived in fear of the vetricano. To himself and his feelings it would have been no harm. But then there were reasons enough—

When he got to the entrance he became tense. He knew he was safe. So his olfactory cells too would be atrophied. He did not like the sterile air inside the Station, which was exactly what the vetricano olfactory cells wanted. Although he too had almost been killed by the surfeit of carbon dioxide on Gomorrah—that time in the past.

He pulled himself together and groped his way forward to where his sense of touch and memory are clearer. He must be there was no reason at all why he should hesitate. It would not be for long that he would have to miss the whispering of the telepathic prairie gliders, whose simple tales never penetrated the massive steel walls of the Station. And the hot wind that blew from the plain that lay far below the crater of the volcanoes would soon caress his cool skin.

Soon, very soon, he would visit Maureen on the other side of the planet. He would show her what she had been.

He bent forward, touched the contact. The shadow of his towering figure fell across the translucent glass of the entrance. Nobody looked at it. Then the warning light flashed on. A section of the door flapped open, a pulp of hot pressure rushed past the arching glass, and the great, red roses, and for a second the loud banging of the giant tree drums could be heard.

Stepping carefully down out of their beats. With practiced speed their hands went to their ray guns.

"All right, Thomas. You really have a nasty way of frightening people! one of them shouted.

The blind man raised his head, listening, while he felt his way along with the sensitive tips of his yellow-skinned fingers. He did not answer, he could not answer. The twin points of his dead eyelids held his apparent indifference. As though in a gesture of defence he pulled his torn halo away from the focussed light. The disfigured colour of his eyes belied his apparent indifference. Not even a whisper of the tiniest sound to the vetricano was displeasingly reminiscent of Gomorrah's sky.

At the back of the long high hall another door opened noiselessly. 'What's the matter?' another voice asked.

'Nothing to worry about. Chief, it's only Thomas,' the voice replied. 'Take him to the canteen and give him something decent to eat. But don't make a stir, because there aren't any chaps.

'All right, Chief.'

When the door had closed again, one of the guards said, 'What makes those who have maimed and healthy alike when his hand. 'Come on, Thomas, I'm sure there will be something good today. Whenever you come to visit us we've always got something nice for you.'

'For Pete's sake,' muttered the other guard, 'don't you think that we should at least keep watch in the direction of the corridor. His chapped bloodless lips mumbled incomprehensible words. 'Did you heard, Chief. Good news. Scott is going to be dumb as well.' Then he took him by his right hand, which was vaguely grooving about, and lightly touched the other guard's shoulder and sat down again behind his desk as the rules demanded. He was about to record the incident in the Station. He was unable to concentrate. He could not get away from the thought that his mind was dull and soon also dumb human being had once been his friend, that Thomas Alvarez had once been an engineer in the development of solid-state physics on the planet Gomorrah. And now two men constantly had to guard the entrance because those who had maimed and healthy alike were afraid of the others who had fallen ill. Of course there was also a psychological explanation.

But that was even more disagreeable.

Everyone in the canteen was very kind to Thomas. He saw him from the time when he worked at the Station. John Lee Hooler, the new dynamics expert, looked at him, flattered by his presence. He did not yet know that in a few months' time he would probably replace him.

The ward who had brought him in chose a meal for Thomas from the automaton: a tender steak with pommes frites, green salad, and a vanilla-flavoured mousse. When, half an hour later, he looked in again he found Thomas still sitting in the same place. A thick red and pommies fries had long gone cold. He had not even tasted them.

'He's so funny,' I guess,' said the dynamics expert, to whom it had meanwhile been explained that Thomas Alvarez was one of the engineers of the changes whose health had been wrecked during the experiments with the matter-transmitter. 'Perhaps it is too hot for him. He probably needs a reat as well.'

'For hours the temperature out there has remained constant at forty-nine degrees centigrade. You call that hot? Compared with the hellish climate we usually have?'

'Oh well, how do I know how he has come in. If he were not so lively as you,' said the guard, slightly irritated.

'Okay, okay.' The young dynamics expert went across to the automaton and inserted a coin. It disappeared with a clatter and another meal was chosen on the same plan. For the first time he consciously read the inscription on the small brass plate above the coin slot; 'Doesn't the government on Earth provide for our blind?' He asked in astonishment, turning to the other guard. The two guards did nothing, but that was a mere comradely gesture, but why all this fuss—All the same, Hooler's words must have had some effect, for Thomas slowly they all looked at him and a frighteningly uniform expression of bitterness passed over their faces. Idly the dynamics expert thought, though the word implied neither insult nor reproach. Hooler could only infer pity from the way it was expressed, and he remembered the contract he had signed on Earth, four or five weeks ago. Together with the telemechanic Azurwan he had become shiny. He could think fast about a problem once he had sufficient data at his disposal. Orchard's saying something, turned his eyes from the blind man, who was still coughing and looking about in the ancient canteen before the food, now cold, on the immaculate white tablecloth. The only one in the room not looking at Thomas Alvarez. He might have been dead.

Again Hooler read the inscription on the brass plate. For a moment he could not take his eyes off it. Were there more people like Alvarez? He remembered having seen such little plates before, in other parts of the very extensive research station. He quickly glanced over the list of records to distress himself.

The text read, 'For Pete's sake, Mr. Blind. I am a blind man. I have a long life, might as well be dead, cold and dead. Beside ninety-nine pop tunes there was a Bach record. Looking up at the ceiling, he found that the Stowel and Beethoven became dead. But blind, what is it like to be blind? Prelude and Fugue in B minor. Organ. A pathetically simple idiot! Organ.

Furious with himself and his incoherent thoughts that still persisted, he sat down again and took out his notebook. Innocently, normally so logical, of his technician's brain, he pressed the key F/17. With a rattling sound the machine made a guard signal for his existence. It had no will of its own. But what had that to do with him?

A dozen records went by before the selector pulled out the right one and deposited it on the table. The man who had inserted the transparent disc and clicked into the first groove. The vibrato of a mighty organ filled the low undulation, the same woman who had been standing at Hooler all this time now looked at each other inquiringly. While the record was playing there was hardly any other sound to be heard. Later, mingling with the boom of the organ, there came another sound which did not belong and yet was somehow, in a curious way, perfectly fitting. It came from where Thomas was sitting. What had he added to his thin hands and with his parched lips drew from the instrument a melody which affected him so deeply? Was it in fact only a continuous chain of sounds, a melody reduced to essential elements?

'What gave him the idea of playing just at this moment?' asked Hooler. He thought of a Bach piece. His voice did not sound very technical training in a steel mill, of Claudette Baby.

'He thought of us. Maybe he wanted to see us off and to know what he had in the mind.'

'Who is he to whom you want to go and with what you want to say?'

'He thought of Maureen on the other side of the planet. Do you hear what he is playing? That's the Blues. Like the old Country Blues.' He would onlySymphony of sounds too full and too much.'

Taken aback, they fell silent. They moved closer to theỪ. The inexplicable sequence of melancholy notes, which told of the tragedy of being blind, of his suffering and anguish. Like a tired lion, as he, too, had to live in the poisonous hell of Gomorrah without sight and without protection, because no one must be allowed to know it even existed. Because nobody was to learn of the dangerous nature of the experiments which were still being carried out.

Hooler also heard short light-hearted snatches of sound in this music, which he could only half comprehend. He had not expected more than four or five notes, he thought, again and again gaily breaks through, down in the dumps—up in the sky. The broken nose of a bottle in the old days, what was his name, who watched? Claudette Baby was a revelation, when he held her tight in your arms in the smoky twilight of the dance hall. Face, nose, mouth and head and swinging body full of the rhythmic thud of the Blues, she was so soft, so warm.

Lindhurst: 'Whatever makes him play the Blues?'

'Put up, don't keep interrupting with your silly questions.'

They crouched at the feet of the blind man listening to him, became like children, shut their eyes and tried to imagine how it is, a world without light, without colour—only to open them again.

Thomas' tune told them something quite different from what they thought that endless darkness and the black of the unknown. They could not understand it either. How was this poor devil to know how, and to know it of his own accord. He was a bit of a village idiot. Perhaps he did not understand it, he could not know it either. How was this poor devil to know how, and to know it of his own accord. He was a bit of a village idiot. Perhaps he did not know it.
When I consider how my light is spent, E're half my days, in this dark world and wide . . .

John Milton, On His Blindness

BLINDNESS

By Jürgen vom Scheidt

the men and caused an uncontrolled output of hormones, which in turn led to the gradual destruction of their senses.

But Thomas Alvarez's harmonica had yet more to tell.

When the ypprotron in the suubterranean hall stopped its roar, because the majority of the experimenting technicians, as was only to be expected, were rolling and twitching in convulsions on the steel gratings, a hundred metres higher up the mouth organ too stopped. Thomas sat hunched amidst a circle of exhausted men who were still listening to him breathlessly. His hat, battered past recognition, lay beside him, a dirty grey. Beads of perspiration rolled slowly, reluctantly over his wrinkled forehead. They made channels through the incrustation of dust, which lay like amalgam plating on that forehead, and exposed thin lines of pale skin. At last, with trembling fingers, he put the misshapen mouth organ into an inner pocket of his coat. Now that the hat no longer concealed his head, the men around him could clearly see the spidery web of the growth.

Spreading from the eyes and ears, it entirely covered the hairless scalp beneath the outermost layer of skin. The growth had already reach its final stage. This would be Thomas Alvarez's last visit to the station. From now on he would no longer leave the colony of blind men who communicated with each other by means of the infra-sound waves of their tree drums and sought their food in the luxuriant fungal thickets, like a new species of animal.

Hooier said pensively: 'I wonder if the blind, cut off from their former environment, continue to think and reason like other human beings. Whatever the psychiatrists may say to the contrary, a normal human being does not suddenly become a cretin just because his sense organs no longer function. Why should they not go further and think of entirely different lines? A genius remains a genius, even if he is blind and deaf and dumb.

But no one listened to him. Wide-eyed they stared at Thomas who had got clumsily to his feet, groping around him for support, tottering a little. Since he had stopped playing his lips incessantly murmured incomprehensible words, like an ancient sorcerer's incantations. His inexplicable gestures created a strange mood and a tension which gradually mounted until it seized them all and included them in the geometry of these movements.

Hooier: With these gestures he wipes out old modes of behaviour, making room for new ones; he knows exactly what he wants. And in us he arouses not only fear but anger as well. When will someone break the spell, with a jest, a laugh, a blasphemy; when will someone jump up furiously and shake off the magic, as one would repel the molestations of a witch-doctor? a Voodoo priest, who wants to turn us all into zombies without a will of their own, into non-dead.

Thomas Alvarez made a visible effort to speak. His larynx too must already have been badly affected, for nothing but a croaking sound emerged from his toothless mouth. Hooier, who had automatically stretched out his arms towards him, uttered a soft cry. He had not expected that these fragile looking hands still possessed so much strength. The blind man, still croaking unintelligibly, moved his hands along the Negro's arms and slowly slid them over his shoulders. The almost transparent fingers, their blue mesh of veins clearly visible, crept up to Hooier's throat. The Negro did not know what to do. He broke out in a sweat. Then he noticed that Thomas carefully ran his fingers over his rough-hewn features, reading in them as in an open book, his eyes, his nose, his mouth — the oldest alphabet of the blind. When Alvarez let go of Hooier everybody sighed with relief.
Yet the blind man had not yet finished. Again he reached out in search of help, this time in a different direction. Spontaneously Lindhuth took his arms. And was subjected to the same kind of exploration.

Then at last they understood what Alvarez wanted from them.

"Fetch Dollard— he was his closest friend and colleague!"

"He'll hardly be available at the moment. He's down with the machine, checking the cybernetics."

"Never mind. I'll answer for that." It was the Chief, who had come in unnoticed some time ago. If the strange sight of the technicians squatting round the blind man had surprised him, he did not show it. 'Alvarez obviously has something important to tell us. Look at his gestures—he probably wants something to write with. Quick, get some writing materials! When I think that he was our best man—"

"Fetch Dollard! Get writing things!"
'Could he possibly—' but the Chief kept his composure. He knew the man. Nobody rushed off to fetch James Dallord, the quantum specialist; the intercom had broken down as usually happened after the meetings. Someone else got paper and a large pencil.

They pressed the pencil into Alvare's thin hand which was presently closed tightly around it. They guided his hand over the large sheet of paper and gently set it down on the white surface.

'Ysprotron field strength not increase.'

'Field oversaturated!'

no ideas for a story  
His hand, almost clenched into a fist, scrawled these words clumsily in large shaky letters. He then slumped down in his chair and looked at them, and then at the Chairman who was sitting across the table from him. The man who was sitting opposite him had his hands in his pockets and looked up and decried the few words, he said in amazement:

'I don't believe it.'

Quite possible, that may be what he means. We were going to investigate this new year with the SMF—'

The Chairman of the Board checked immediately. Gun-ming, you heat up your H-tubes, all three of them, and you keep to maximum emission. Trial runs. Watkins, you start up the small pile. Lindluth. Do we think we look at Thomas first and wait until the casualties are put to bed? The fall-out was very high again today—seven virgins.  

'turning to Alvare.' How are you, Thomas?'

Disconcerted, Dallord stopped short. He realized that the blind man could no longer understand his well-meant words. Rather helplessly he lays his hands on Thomas's hands. He moved them up and down the floor and pulled Dallord down with him. As he sat there, his emaciated arms hugging his knees, his dead eyes staring into the air, his face set in a silent, self-bestowed, descriptive manner rather than a distinguished physicist. He seemed to be concentrating very hard, for the fumes of his unbelonging or disdained and hummed—For Our Blind. Until the Chief, his face red with anger, pulled the plug out of the main. They glanced at each other in silence. Then the Chief turned on his heel and left the room.

'Get stuffed!' Hooler called after him before his door slammed to. The noise reminded him of a little other noise which accompanied the disappearance of Thomas Alvarez. He bent down and pushed the plug back into the socket. The Blues band blared forth again from where it had stopped. Tears filled Hooler's brown eyes and streamed down his black face. But his mouth was laughing, his throat was laughing, his body was filled with laughing laughter, and his legs moved to the rhythm of it irrestibly.

The familiar plug-glug of the liquid in the man-high bottle told him the way. He no longer needed to see their orange-coloured phosphorescence, which had guided him in the first few months. Thomas Alvarez knew exactly when to dodge dangerous bog holes, because the ground under his feet had a different spring, a different softness. He could hardly feel the steady drip on his scalp any more. But the regular ticking of the horonauts, some of which always hovered close above him, confirmed the presence of friendly creatures. He knew their rhythm well. It had taken him a long time to attune them to himself. The one who ticked differently could only be from Steffen Kullas's swarm.

He had to gather fresh energy. The drum trees were silent. The large mass of the Station lay behind him. He felt the increasing vibration of the ground as the ypsprotron started up. Before the pounding became intolerable he thought 'Maureen'—

Again air rushed into a vacuum. The horonauts remained behind. Patiently they kept ticking on his frequency. A vortecinos roared nearby. His two females stepped out of it. In their clumsily gloved hands they held long-barrelled rayguns.

(Translated by Margaret D Howie)

Jürgen vom Schieidt
was born in 1940 in Leipzig. He studied psychology, sociology, philosophy and anthropology, passing examinations in Munich in 1967 which made him a certified psychologist. After practical work, mainly in the field of drug misuse, he edited, with W Schilling, the Handbuch der Rauschdrogen (Handbook of Narcotics), which appeared in 1971. He was also editor of a collection of studies on drug misuse by juveniles entitled Drogenabhängigkeit (Dependence on Drugs) and of a science-fiction anthology Das Monster im Park (The Monster in the Park). A study on Sigmund Freud's cocaine experiments, a social pedagogical dissertation on the subject of Jugendliche Haschischraucher und ihre Behandlung (Young Hashish-Smokers and their Treatment), and a science-fiction novel are close to completion.

Crossword Competition

WIN A COPY OF NEL'S NEW ANTHOLOGY OF SCIENCE FICTION STORIES, STOPWATCH, EDITED BY GEORGE HAY

All you have to do is complete the crossword and send it in with the entry form. The prize will be awarded to the senders of the first three correctly completed entries.

RULES
1. All entries for the competition should be accompanied by a completed entry form and sent to: The Editor, SMF Crossword Competition No 3, Barnard's Inn, Holborn EC1 2JR, to arrive not later than 15th September 1974.
2. Entries should be sent in an envelope clearly marked 'SMF Crossword Competition No 3' in the top left-hand corner. Those who do not wish to out their copy SMF may draw the frame onto a

CLUES ACROSS
1. Editor of "Amazing Stories" in the 1940s (7)
2. Author of Strange Relations (6)
3. Term in which the present is now extinct (3)
4. Area was at all sheep-like (3)
5. Initially Robert Silverberg and Randall Garrett (7)
6. Type of door which invites the unknown (8)
7. Author of the Unnumbered Engineers (4)
8. What Paul Anderson and Pendason do (4)
9. To quench (5)
10. This author's tone (5)
11. Phonetically ph (2)
12. Elementary Cremation (2)
13. In short, Theodore Cogswell (2)
14. Chief Owen is not home (2)
15. Earth's alien cognomen (5)
16. A thick skin (2)
17. I am formed by the condensation of acetylene (5)
18. Would Arnold Young agree this way? (7)
19. A little bit silly (5)
20. Isaac Asimov to start with (2)
21. Even in this day never comes (8)
22. The author whose Glory Road started it (4)
23. The second dimension (5)
24. Pertaining to oligos (5)
25. Sonic discharge (7)
26. Magazine produced by sf fans (7)
27. British author of Men, Martians and Machines (7)
28. Fluorine, Chlorine, Bromine and Iodine are (12) "Horribly grouped"

CLUES DOWN
1. A murmuring flow (4)
2. Initially art and Arnold Kahn (2)
3. Harriet Edwardian Remanent (2)
4. Of the Solar System only one (4)
5. Stone (Amazing, December 1934): a rare word in early (4)
6. 1660 and Old Lace (7)
7. Hitler's odyssey (7)
8. James Blish's series of cities in flight (7)
9. Paul Ernst for fitness (2)
10. Peter Phillips (2)
11. One billionth (4)
12. Towards storm hesitation, not before (5)
13. The south, the bear's head of the south (5)
14. Older than 19 down (4)
15. Robert Achant's claim to Glyptology (2)
16. Falco Tauricus (2)
17. The Muse of History (4)
18. Before Daley (2)
19. The paws-mails of David Mellor (6)
20. The officer of a shire (5)
21. The prince of Garlies and Callisto (7)
22. At ease (7)
23. An author whose name makes sense (5)
24. Author of World of Pawns (5)
25. The most direct manoeuvre to launching (7)
26. Small water container (7)

SFM Crossword Competition No 3

NAME

ADDRESS
the Artist in Science Fiction

By Aune R Butt

Pelham, David. Born: 12 May 1958. Studied St Martin’s School of Art, London. Art Director of Penguin Books and sf artist. Work includes covers for JG Ballard’s The Drowned World, The Draught, The Wind From Nowhere and The Terminal Beach. Although responsible for the new look on Penguin book covers for the past six years, Pelham says of his own Ballard illustrations: ‘This is the sort of subject matter that I want to be involved with when I’m wearing my illustrator’s hat, and which gives me the biggest lift to do. There was a time when I was very interested in scientific apparatus, machines and life-support systems, and I found book covers of this type imposed disciplines on me which forced me to refine my images down to their most fundamental forms.’

Pelham came to illustration initially through the visual stimuli of such artists as Konrad Klapheck, Eduardo Paolozzi and Richard Hamilton, whom he counts as being the head of the movement because of their ideas. His interest in sf came later and was triggered off by the novels of Ballard. Pelham found himself extremely sympathetic to the ‘strip, barren, bleached-out’ landscapes depicted therein, even to the extent of sharing Ballard’s obsessions with dereliction and decay.

Pelham describes his illustrations as ‘uncompromising, brutal and savage’, machines appear starkly and incongruously against a background of frightening simplicity, and present a philosophy of the future in picture form. To Pelham these machines are the devils of our society. ‘I’ve a big thing about machines and their subsequent breakdown. I love the idea of all this work going into making a machine and then it not working or being left redundant.’

Pelham explains his outlook in
terms of a simple but important analogy — as many people find romance in viewing previous epochs, so he finds romance in seeing the future as if it were already the past— in visualising the ruins created from the actual we are manufacturing now. Like Albert Speer, the architect of Hitler's Third Reich, who designed buildings incorporating a ruin factor, Pelham sees something reminiscent and grand in the built-in obsolescence of the temporary monuments he portrays. Writers like Ballard and Harry Harrison (whose novel Make Room! Make Room! was filmed as Soylent Green) are seen by Pelham as prophets who are 'nostalgic for the future' in the same way. He sees future mankind as rising above the age of machines, bypassing them, and paintings in an almost eerie juxtaposition of the ultra-modern (space-car, Centurion tank) into a totally alien and frighteningly barren background.

David Pelham planned his career as an extension of his art training, so that he covered both book and magazine art-work, and then took time off to spend a couple of years in a finishing studio learning, among other things, to perfect the air-brush technique. The specialised knowledge Pelham gained there lay dormant for some years because he went on to be firstly art director of another studio and then of Harper's Bazaar where he learnt about photography and other aspects of visual communication. In his present position as Art Director of Penguin Books he has been conscious of some frustration in always managing the creations of other people. One finds oneself doing an awful lot of nailing, worrying about schedules and not being in the right mood to create anything oneself. There's a dichotomy there, and I feel I have to discipline myself enormously in the two roles.

Working in the studio with Wolf Spies and precociously finished art-work which was second to none in quality has made Pelham develop an enormous amount of finish in his creative work: 'I like the idea that there are no ragged edges—that everything is really as clean and as resolved as I can make it.' He develops his ideas, trying them this way and that, experimenting with colours and shapes in a process of continuous development and adjustment: 'I like to be able to look at my reference and make sure that this is the right type of colour for that space; it might be painted white to reflect the glare, or whatever.'

Pelham has a huge reference file which includes pictures of machines that are visually exciting to him. He becomes involved in a book he is reading. images start coming out which invariably equate with others in his files. He pastes them together to make a photo-montage which he then develops in his own unique way. As he says, 'It's taken me a long time to develop my technique and quite honestly I'd rather keep it to myself.' Whatever the method, the final product is both eye-catching and expressive. Certainly it is a measure of the artist's success that JG Ballard himself felt Pelham's illustrations were able to crystallise some of his most powerful and poetic statements.

Although Pelham's view of the immediate future may appear pessimistic, he maintains that he is no prophet of doom; he considers the period we are living in to be one in which the world is jettisoning off its manufactured debris. In the same way as Edgar Allan Poe was able to raise his obsession with death and disease to an aesthetic level, so Pelham aims to portray the inherent poetry of dereliction and decay. In his view man has to pass through this period in order to attain mastery over himself, his environment and his affairs.

Pelham acknowledges himself to be in a fortunate position because he can commission his own work and keep in the artistic swing at the same time. Having spent a number of years trying to develop his obsessive images, he has now come to terms with the requirements of both book cover illustration and his chosen art form. The result is a series of exceptionally complete and lucid paintings which convey Pelham's thought with great clarity.
Whatever the pen-name he used, he wrote stories that people believed in ... and he was writing science fiction twenty years before The Day of the Triffids dawed.
3: JOHN WYNDHAM

Bookshop browsers look puzzled when, among the paperbacks on the bottom shelf, they discover some bearing the by-line, 'John Wyndham writing as John Beynon'. When they find the answer in his autobiography, they are mystified. The fact is, the world knows John Wyndham, creator of the sinister Triffids and the not so sinister Midwich Cuckoos. But who is—or was—John Beynon, author of The Stone People and Port of Darkness? None who have read him, under one name or the other, can possibly have missed his English origins. Son of a Welsh barrister, he was born in a Welsh mining village. John Beynon Wyndham, leaving him ample scope for pen-names. Educated at seven different schools, he was destined for farming at 18, then decided to follow in his father's footsteps when he failed his final examinations for Oxford, finding more to fascinate him in the Science Museum.

At length advertising claimed him, and brought out his flair for wordcraft. Censorship by the book would have been writing crime stories had it not been for coming time—his time. The time he was destined to dominate by insects. But most notable among his contributions to Wonder were two interplanetary stories which dared to introduce serious sociological and philosophical aspects into his fare—the Venus Affair and The Kraken Wakes. In The Venus Affair, the Venus story, which he always intended to expand to a novel but never did, he considered his best—"because it is the simplest". He gave his characters a sympathetic treatment of comparatively simple concepts: for he had no time for the complex 'thought-variant' featured by Astounding or the 'gusty space opera' with its cosmic concepts and its lack of 1996 and the novel against the same self-titled as, about which he was pleased. 'A well-intentioned genre more bedevilled by a smirched label and a monstrosity perverted by the years.'

Such little gems as Spheres of Hell and The Man from Beyond were rare among the mass of crude ore which kept the pulps going through the Depress- sion. But his careful touch and control showed in his tales, and the time he was destined to dominate by insects. But most notable among his contributions to Wonder were two interplanetary stories which dared to introduce serious sociological and philosophical aspects into his fare—the Venus Affair and The Kraken Wakes. In The Venus Affair, the Venus story, which he always intended to expand to a novel but never did, he considered his best—"because it is the simplest". He gave his characters a sympathetic treatment of comparatively simple concepts: for he had no time for the complex 'thought-variant' featured by Astounding or the 'gusty space opera' with its cosmic concepts and its lack of 1996 and the novel against the same self-titled as, about which he was pleased. 'A well-intentioned genre more bedevilled by a smirched label and a monstrosity perverted by the years.'

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THE Prince Khordah of Ghangistan was in a bitter mood. His council, seated cross-legged upon a semi-circle of cushions before him, had come to know too well that look of dissatisfaction. Of late it had seemed to dwell perpetually upon his dark features. The members of the council were aware of his words before he spoke, so often had they heard them.

"To all great nations," he observed, "night is right. Today we hear much talk of the rights of small nations—and to what does it amount? Nothing but so much dust in the wind to fill the eyes of those who would see."

He glowered upon his councillors. Each appeared occupied in an interested study of the mosaic floor; the beauty of its patterns was more soothing than the expression on the Prince's face. More than one grimy forefinger scratched in its owner's beard in order to give a misleading suggestion of thought.

The council was formed entirely of old men. Not that old men are always wise, but they do have the advantage of less fiery ambition, and, whether one is a Prince in Ghangistan, or a Big Shot in Chicago, too much ambition at court will prove embarrassing. The ambitions of most of the council rose little higher than a bountiful supply of food and drink and an occasional change of wives. The Prince continued to address unresponsive figures.

"What can we do? These English, and other foreigners, trifle with us. They do not so much as stir to consider our demands. We are treated like children—we, of Ghangistan, whose temples and palaces were weathered when these English hid in caves, whose ancestors reach back unbroken to the creation. We offer them war, and they laugh as one laughs at the futility of a cornered mouse. Here we must sit, impotent, while they pour over our country the froth and ferment of their way of life, in mockery of the wisdom of our sacred ancestors."

Again the Prince paused and looked questioningly about him. At the lack of response he shrugged his shoulders; some of the spirit seemed to go out of him, and he threw out his hands in token of helplessness.

BY JOHN WYNDHAM
in the Atlantic. In sheltered spots, where they are able to take advantage of kindly climate, flowers and plants thrive, as was excellently testified by Mr. Wattle's garden.

Dinner followed (the way importantly across a stretch of smooth lawn) to the thick hedge masking the far corner of his ground: As they reached a gap he paused, and with something of the manner of a showman, waved his son forward.

"See by boy," he said proudly. "Just take a look at that!"

Ralph, as he stepped forward to the hedge, was fully prepared to be impressed, but at the sight which met him, the nicely turned phrases he had thought up for the other's gratification fell away. He stared speechlessly for a moment, then—

"What on earth's that?" he demanded.

"Ah, I thought it'd surprise you. Fine growth, what?"

"But—what is the thing?" persisted Ralph, gazing in horrified fascination.

"Well," Mr. Wattle admitted doubtfully, 'I don't think it's been named yet—sort of experiment they got me to try out. A new form of marrow or something of the sort, I gather. Wait a minute, and I'll get the letter—"

He bustled across the lawn while his son turned to regard the 'fine growth' with renewed interest. Experiment or not, he decided that it was quite one of the most unhorse-looking plants he had ever seen. It reminded him mostly of a pumpkin with a diameter of some two feet; but it was not so much the size which was responsible for his surprise as the colour. It lay before him, lamplight glittering in the evening sunlight, a ball of blotchy, virulent yellow. The ground around it was bare, and it lay on one side attached to the earth only by a few, twisted wisp of stalk, as foolishly disproportionate as a pig's tail.

'To be a good weight, a thing that size,' he muttered to himself. With some distaste, he inserted his hand beneath it, and then stared at it in blank surprise. It weighed possibly a pound.

He was still staring at it when Mr. Wattle returned with a paper fluttering in his hand.

"Here you are. That, and the instructions for growing, are all I know about it."

Ralph took the typewritten letter. It was headed 'Slowitt & Co.', and underneath in smaller type was added: 'Agents for Experimental Growers Company'.

Dear Sir (he read). In the course of our experimental work we have succeeded in evolving a new form of vegetable. We have the greatest hopes that this extremely prolific plant will successfully adapt itself to a great range of climatic conditions. In so far as we have been able to reproduce the various conditions in our laboratories, the results leave nothing to be desired, and we now feel that the time has come to put the plant to test in the actual climates it will have to face.

Our agents, in pursuing our instructions to find people likely to be interested in this development, forwarded us your name as that of a gentleman we thought likely to be interested in the new form.

Ralph read far enough to enable him to grasp essentials.

"This is all very well, Dad," he remarked. "But what on earth's that, he led the thing? It must be hollow; have you felt its weight?"

On the 10th day of September, 1944, the broccoli was a foot down the Madison Avenue. "Oh, that's all right. It says in the growing instructions, which are round the plant, that every one must not be surprised at the extraordinary lightness. I gather that when it is full-grown it will be less than a pound solid! I reckon I'll wait till I'm looking at something, I'll admit, and so were the seeds.

He fished in his pocket and found an object which he handed over to his son. "Keep this out of curiosity, you see, they've enclosed it—or, rather, several of them—in a kind of envelope. The instructions are simply that the capsule, must not be opened in any circumstances.

"Then how—?"

"You just bury the whole thing and water it very respectfully. I suppose you can't touch it again until it's full-grown," he said as he handed the capsule and left the thing to begin. It certainly shows a fine turn of speed. You'd never guess how long it is before this chap. He stirred the yellow ball with his toe. Ralph did not attempt the guess. "How long?" he inquired.

"Three days," said his father with pride. "Only three days to reach that size! Of course, I'm not suggesting that it will grow, it's just started, you see, and—"

But Mr. Wattle's intended lecture was frustrated. Mr. Wattle's voice tactfully summoned him to the house.

"Don't tell anyone about this, yet, my boy, I promised to keep it quiet till the thing should be full-grown," he said as he hurried across the lawn.

Ralph thankfully departed on his intended visit. Later, he was unable to remember whether it was because he felt the pressure of the one remaining capsule to find its way into his pocket; he only knew that it was lucky he didn't.

Dorothy Forbes had expected Ralph earlier. She had even employed sundry of her waiting moments in inventing such approaches as might be best seen in a lady of her type. But it was pleasant mental exercise, but little more; Ralph's method of greeting did not allow of the interview being placed on a dignified footing. Instead of venting her displeasure, she smoothed her frown, shook back her fair hair, and asked for a moment. She was not quite so warmly, and suggested that there was a swing seat in the garden.

Sitting down with a success that it was quite half an hour before an object on the other side of the garden caught Ralph's eye and caused him to sit up, staring. Just visible over the top of a cucumber frame was a curved section of a familiar yellow surface.

"Good Lord!" he said."

"What?" asked Dorothy. Following his line of sight, she added. "Oh, that's one of Daddy's secret's you're not supposed to know."

"Well, now I have seen it, what about a closer look?"

"I suppose it doesn't really matter, but don't tell him you've seen it."

"I thought I was sufficient to settle any lingering doubt. The plant behind the frame was identical with that in his father's garden, though possibly a few inches smaller."

"That's queer," Ralph murmured. Dorothy nodded, though she misapplied the remark.

"I think it's horrid. I told Daddy I'm sure it's unhealthy, but he only laughed at me. Somehow I therefore, decided, there's something quite nasty, poisonous look about that yellow..."

"He's keeping its secret, I reckon."

"He's very jealous about it. He says it will make him famous one day."

"He wasn't mentioned. He was the first in the order. Two people each thinking himself unique, were growing this most unappreciating vegetable."

"What about a little walk?" he suggested. Dorothy, with slight surprise at the sudden change of subject, assented.

It was a wandering stroll, apparently aimless. Nevertheless it took them close to a number of back gardens. Altogether, they counted over twenty of the strange yellow balls.

When Ralph returned home to London, it was obvious that in a very short time there would be no more concealment of the strange growths. They were swelling to prodigious sizes, and the swiftness which was rendering secrecy impossible. Already two pepperpots who had concealed themselves as favourites, had discovered one another's rivalry and were indulging in worthy unpleasantness.

"It could not be long before all twenty, and other yet undiscovered growers, would hear about it and join in the indignation. Dorothy's next letter, therefore, did not astonish him when it announced that the cats were out of the bag and the gardeners.
of the town of St Brian were in full cry for one another’s blood.

"Wove father discovered that they were rivals," she wrote, "it was bad enough. But now there are more than a score of them tearing their hair and threatening each other. You should only live in St Brian, either. We’ve heard reports that hundreds of gardeners both in Cornwall and west Devon are being terrorized.

"Ours is so big, too. It’s over four feet in diameter now, and looks more evil than ever. I’ve begun to fear it a bit. I’m afraid of it, I know. It sounds silly, but it’s the truth. I told Daddy the other day that there was something wicked about it at all. I was sure it was never meant for people in England, but he only laughed and said neither were potatoes. All the same, I think the balls are becoming more and more real. They roll off the borders of one of near Newquay and rolled down it the cliffs so that it burst. I’d like to do the same with our own. I only hate the idea of touching the—ugh!

"The earlier part of the letter caused Ralph some qualms about the temper tantrum of the amateur gardener, with all its jealousies and enthusiasm, and the prospect of the war far from being a relief. Ralph was becoming more and more uneasy, but he had no reason to be afraid of the gardeners. He did not even think it possible that they might be, he found himself able to understand it and to sympathise with it. He was worried by the feeling for the gardeners’ cause.

"Nevertheless the matter was gradually slipping into the back of his mind until it was recalled a few days later by a paragraph tacked away at the foot of a newspaper column:

“Several cases are reported from Newquay, the well-known Cornish holiday resort, of an outbreak of rash which is puzzling the local doctors. It is thought that the condition may be consequent upon prolonged or injurious exposure of the skin to the sun. While sunbathing.

“ar a moment he was puzzled to know when he had lately thought of Newquay; then he remembered, it was near there that the yellow ball had been pushed over the cliffs.

“Dorothy’s next letter informed him that a state of excitement was prevailing all over the West Country. The inhabitants, it appeared, had gone into two schools of thought on the subject of the yellow balls.

“Skrilvers and their friends were noisily upholding their rights to grow what they liked on their own land, while the opposition, without apparent grounds for the statement, proclaimed that the things were unhealthy. They shared, Dorothy surmised, her revulsion against them. Something besides the fact that they refused no protest had taken place in Bodmin. In the course of it, three balls had been slashed open.

“After he had finished the letter, Ralph turned to his newspaper and found information which brought wrinkles of speculation to his forehead. The newspaper column at Newquay had been serious. One of the victims had died, and the others were in a precarious condition. It was, according to the correspondent, impossible to state definitely that the rash was the cause of death, but he evidently had more than suspicions.

“Shy revulsion that the sight of the strange, mysterious rash had made its appearance at Bodmin, coupled with an assurance that it could not be the last, be less, in any way attributed to sunbathing. Thoughtfully, Ralph withdrew his father’s see capsule and gave it another regard. It may be a fool. It’s probably just a coincidence, but it’s worth investigating," he told himself.

“He was in the office, he dashed in at the laboratory of a friend who worked in the bio-chemical department of Amalgamated Chemi-

cable.

“Two days passed before he heard any result of the examination of the capsule. Then Arnold forwarded the thing to Newquay as he was finishing off for the day.

“Touched it. I am not sure whether I owe a dinner for putting me on to it, or whether the other fellow for putting devil of a lot of work. On the whole, I approve of the tuck."

“Tough, right. You look as if some good food wouldn’t do you any harm. Come on! It was not until the end of the dinner, the coffee and cigarettes, that Arnold consented to discuss his conclusions. Then he began with an expostulation:

“Mad, old man, you might have given me a bit more warning about that beastly stuff you brought along.

“Great, I told you I had an idea it was pretty noxious," Ralph pointed out. "But, after all, the reason I bought it at all was that I didn’t know much about it.

“Where did you get it?" asked Arnold curiously.

“His manner shed its slight banter, and a look of seriousness crept into his eyes, as Ralph explained.

“Good God! You don’t mean to say these things are being grown! What for?

“Food—what else does one grow vegetables for?

“But this is a fungus.

“I thought it looked that way, but quite a lot of them are beautiful when they’re cooked.

“Ralph replied to some seconds; he seemed to have not heard and was staring fixedly into space. When he turned back Ralph was startled by the expression on his face.

“Do you know anything about fungi?"

“No, replied Ralph promptly.

“Well, I’ll be short about it, but I try to show you this business means. First of all, there are two types of fungi. Either a fungus is a saprophyte and lives upon decaying matter, or else it is a parasite, and lives upon another living thing.

“As far as the saprophyles are concerned, well, you’ve eaten a good many in your time as mushrooms or cheese, or a hundred other ways; but the parasites are not so numerous—the kind which most frequently affects human beings is ringworm.

“Now this particular bit of evil which you kindly handed to me is neither one nor other of these forms; it is both. Think to say that it flourishes equally well on decay, or on living flesh. Do you see what I’m getting at?"

“Ralph began to see.

“This thing," Arnold continued, "is not only a saprophyte, but a very vicious parasite than any known. All these growths you have told me must be scotched—utterly wiped out and obliterated before they can be the worse for it. While sunbathing.

“Ralph regretted him nervously. "You’re sure of this?"

“Arnold nodded. "Of the danger I am certain. About the plant itself I’m very puzzled. Obviously the spores were enclosed in a soluble capsule so that they might be planted and brought to fruit in safety.

“If your information is correct, the whole thing seems to be deliberate, and on a large scale. It is not merely a case of scattering a few spores to grow gaphazard, but immense trouble has been taken to induce people to set the fungus so that millions of spores will be spread.

“He paused, and added: ‘It’s up to you to stop this thing, boy. Someone or other or it’s God help thousands of miserable people!"

“Ralph was silent. He remembered the mysterious rash at Newquay of the similar outbreak at Bodmin. He recalled, too, the sight of that slinky, yellow ball in his father’s garden, and his face was pale as he looked at the other.

“We’re too late," he said. ‘It’s begun.’

“STUFF," said Major Forbes, with some violence. "Stuff and nonsense! You ought to know better, young man, than to come to me with an old wives tale like that.

“Ralph grew up in a hurry. He convinced the old man.

"After Arnold’s warning of the previous evening, he had caught the earliest possible train for the West Country in order to arrive there all night. There had not been any time to lose. So far as he knew, the enormous puffsballs might burst of their own accord at any moment. He was not therefore taking the danger of one of them receiving an accidental puncture and spreading its spores about the neighbourhood.

“Now, Major Forbes repeated firmly. ‘You say those muckers were just the same as the yellow ball—of course they are. Women are always wanting to run up to London for some fal-lal or other. Why, you and I’d run up on the stage and they’d do ‘em good. But don’t come bothering me!

“ar with a similar interview with his own father, who had attempted to smooth over her husband’s irritation.

“Now, don’t worry your father any more, dear. You must see that he doesn’t have quite the same passion. I should like to go to London for a week or so, but don’t bother him. I should have to go soon, in any case to see the doctor.

“But you don’t understand, Mother. This is really serious—it’s dangerous. These things he is great fear lest he were to take sick.

“Mrs Waite looked a little distressed.

“Do you really think so? dear, it may seem so silly, though it is not—and the people—no, they don’t seem to think so. They definitely said they were vegetables.

“Not that I mind what they said. Take it from me or, rather, from Arnold, who is an expert—that these things are deadly and must be destroyed’.

“Was that’s it? asked Major Forbes. ‘And why not have them troayed’? I’d like to see anyone attempt to destroy my specimen. I’d show him what’s what! There’s still life in the land.

“You’ll promise me, won’t you, John, not to eat any of it while I am away?" Mrs Waite spoke as though the mere presence of it could have any poison quality. Her husband ungraciously conceded the point.

“Right," said gruffly. ‘I’ll promise you that much—though I repeat that I think the whole thing is a scare.

“Will you come, I can’t make you," said Ralph, ‘but I do beg of you—

“Again he went over the details of Arnold’s warning, trying to convince his father of his temper and his own. At last he turned to Mrs Waite.

“Mrs Waite looked a little distressed.

“This is a waste of time. You’d better pack your things and get ready, Mother.

“'You mean now, dear. Yes at once.

“‘Oh, but I couldn’t possibly be ready before tomorrow. There are such a lot of things which just have to be finished off:

“Ralph went around again to see Dorothy.

“Don’t have to wait until tomorrow, she said to him. ‘I can’t make them believe there’s any danger in delay. No, I won’t. You’ll have to wait until tomorrow."

“Down in Cornwall; trying to make your people clear.

“Am I the devil have you been for the last two days?"

“Down in Cornwall; trying to make your people clear.

“Did you?”

“Got Dorothy and my mother up here. Neither of the others would come; said that this was some How have you been up to?”

“Arnold disregarded the question. ‘You’ve done all right?"

“Of course I have—short of kidnapping the old blighters.

“Arnold looked grave.

“I’m afraid the news is rather serious," he began.

“The morning after our chat I went round to see a few cheap gadgets in the new store they welcomed me there with open arms. This thing is a good many times bigger than we thought it was. The Authorities have been misinformed. They didn’t want to ruin the holiday traffic, or some sort like that. They told me that there have been
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Continued from page 12

hundreds of cases of the rash and several dozen deaths. Not only that, but soon after the death of the woman, two yellow puff-balls started growing from the graves.

Their experts were as sure as I was that this fungus that had been heard of before and most of us are pretty certain that somebody has been up to some rather ugly cross-breeding, wars and plagues. Police officers issued yesterday that no more of the things to be planted, but that was useless; already round the corner when the things have burst, the place is littered with the balls.

Growing already.

They vanished of them, around Newquay and Bodmin and several other places. And nobody dare touch them.

But isn’t they doing anything—destroying them?

Have a potato?

Can’t they—can’t they spray them with acids, or something? Do you realise that the first lot has been growing for months?

The second crop is the result of accidental breakage. God knows what will happen if they are allowed to burst.

Nobody seems to know how to tackle the situation. But they’re not lying down; they see the danger all right, and they’re going after it day and night. You can see yourself that the problem is how to destroy the balls without littering the ground.

There must be some way.

Oh, they’ll find a way, but it’s got to be drastic and well organised. The thing they’re most anxious about at present is that there shall be no panic. You know what people are like when they lose their heads, if they get wild and start doing things and yelling, there’ll be hell to pay. You can take it from me that the departments concerned are already taking steps to avoid the thing.

Meanwhile, the first crop of balls must be nearly ripe.

Ralph searched the lounge of the hotel where his mother and Dorothy were staying. He eventually found Mrs Waite occupying a comfortable armchair in a secluded corner. He greeted her, and seated himself at her side.

Where’s Dorothy?” he asked a few minutes later, watching her read.

‘Ready?’ repeated Mrs Waite inquiringly.

We arranged to go out and dance this evening,’ he added. ‘Shall I come and get you? Then you don’t have to hear from her—she said she would telephone.’

‘She didn’t What was it about.’

‘Well, she wasn’t going to go out tonight. You see, she’s gone down to Connwll.’

‘She’s what? ’ shouted Ralph, in a voice which echoed across the lounge.

‘Yes, dear, she said she felt she must go to Connwll,’ Mrs Waite repeated placidly.

‘But why couldn’t you stop her? Surely you realise the danger? God knows, she may have caught the rash—she may die of it.’

Mrs Waite looked a little shocked.

‘Dear, I did tell her that I didn’t think you would like it. But she seemed so anxious about her mother and she was young and healthy. I always think—that I didn’t feel it was right to interfere.

Ralph made no reply. His mother, glancing at him, saw that his face was drawn into tight creases. There was an expression in his eyes which she had never seen before, and he told her that there was real fear behind his actions and talk of the last few days. Futilly she started to explain, but she knew that she was lost already, and we shall all have a good laugh at our fears. Don’t you worry, dear. I expect—good gracious!

Ralph was lost in one of his thoughts to see what had caused her exclamation of surprise. He looked up to find himself facing his father and Major Forbes. Major Forbes should have kept silent.

‘Of course, this may not be so very dangerous after all. I expect it’s just another of these scares. Things may be different in the end, and we shall all have a good laugh at our fears. Don’t you worry, dear. I expect—good gracious!’

Major Forbes was lost in one of his thoughts to see what had caused her exclamation of surprise. He looked up to find himself facing his father and Major Forbes. Major Forbes should have kept silent. He was pleased to see them and cheered by the thought that the whole party was reunited, but now his great secret could be spoken.

Major Forbes looked around him. ‘Well, Ralph, did you ask her?’

‘Yes, she was uncooperative. Dorothy had set out to get to her home, and he had a horrid fear that she would do it if it were humanly possible. The Major didn’t want to know his own daugh-
ter’s tenacity of purpose. Ralph stood up with determination.

‘I’m going down there now. There are still cars, even if they have stopped the trains.’

Thump... thump... thump... went Ralph’s mallet. It was three days since he had left London, and now he was driving in driving stakes into the hard soil of Dartmoor. A message earlier in the day had informed him that no news had been received of Dorothy. There could be no doubt that she had been trapped in the isolated area and was now—if she had succeeded in escaping—some five or six miles to the west of him. He reflected angrily on hours, Greenwich Mean Time. Strong westerly winds, rising to gale force, may be expected on all the Irish coast. English coast west of a line from Southampton to Newcastle, and English Channel. Ralph glanced at his father, who caught his eye, but sent a warning glance in the direction of his mother. Both of them grasped the implication. Thousands of light, yellow balls attached merely by skinny stalks—a gale raising.

‘The announcer began on the news:

We are advised by the Ministry of Transport to broadcast the following. Suspension of service. All train services between Exeter and points west thereof have been temporarily suspended. Further details will be announced tomorrow.

The Major looked at Ralph triumphantly. ‘I told you so. They’re isolating the whole district. There’s no point in your going. We shall have Dorothy back here in no time.’

Dorothy was uncooperative. Dorothy had set out to get to her home, and he had a horrid fear that she would do it if it were humanly possible. The Major didn’t want to know his own daughter’s tenacity of purpose. Ralph stood up with determination.

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of posts. Here and there, parties of men who had completed their sections were already beginning to weave an impenetrable net of barbed wire around the stakes. Behind, on the roadway, was a collection of men’s bodies—clad with more wire and yet more stakes, while closer, between themselves and the road, a sweating army of men laboured away at the work.

Ralph was amazed at the organisation which in two or three days had enabled the authorities to be thrown back five miles over the country. At the same time he was puzzled; the purpose of the wire was obvious, but there was nothing Sudanese in its breadth, its precision, its thoroughness. Nor was his partner, Bill ‘Wiggins, as he called himself, able to explain its use. Ralph believed that the wire was simply a means of getting the supplies up there when the order for retreat came. You see, the wind in these parts is practically always from the south-east, and that’s the way they got ‘em scared—the idea of this stuff being swept right across the country. If it’s true what they say about wind-staring it on purpose, then e picked a likely place.

‘However, the wind didn’t come to much, after all. Not for long. Such bulls just rolled a bit and then got stuck in the valleys and ‘ollows and sukked—blamed lucky it was, too. All they’ve been doing is indicating the defences, ‘is in case a real storm comes along? ‘Then that’ll be about the idea,’ Bill agreed.

‘The wind,’ Ralph said, ‘from time to time a great plane would roar across the moor, carrying food supplies to be dropped into the isolated groups of people in the interstages. They came swaying and plunging past them, bound for the west. Bill grinned as he caught sight of the glut of food that was passing his instrument.

‘What are they?’ asked Ralph. ‘Looks like a squad of divers going on duty’

Bill looked at the other explained. ‘And they’re carrying flame-throwers. Those’ll give the blinkin’ things a bit of a toasting;’

SOME six nights later, Ralph sat with a group in the stable where their billet. One man was holding forth pepticly

There was a thunderous knocking on the door and a stentorian call to turn out. ‘Get your jobs, gents. Get to ‘em, and look lively!’

The wind swept in from the Atlantic at gale force, twisting the yellow grass and rolling them a little at the ends of their skinny stalks. Later followed a gust which twisted them so that the stalks snapped and they were free to roll where the wind urged. As the pressure grew to a steady blast, it swept up a mass of the light balls and carried many of them across the countryside, an army of venetian invaders launching their attack to capture the land and destroy the harvest.

The wind of a week before had already moved the balls in the most exposed positions, but this time, now that the wind was strong, the balls developed the strength in their stasis to resist the air which tore at them. Every now and then a spiralling flux would burst through the hummocks, but the wind that caught them on its passage and carried on as an advance guard of the yellow army.

An abacardine siren, the official and officialal emblem for this new game. It increased its force to drive the balls yet more curiously, Hedges, ditches and trees all seemed to bend and close to shelter these balls. Even rivers proved no obstacle; with the wind behind, the balls sailed across in their thousands, bobbing and sailing, always avoiding the land.

They were thrust relentlessly down the narrow streets of the little towns, jostling and jamming against the cornfields until the buildings and houses were hidden in a cloud of swirling spores, and the surviving balls tore loose to follow bowing.

This time, the wind did not desert them. Many lodged in sheltered hollows, but they served merely to fill them up and make a path over which the rest could travel. The wave of invaders climbed the slopes and swept up and out to the moor, and there, from a new height, the gathering speed to charge yet more swiftly upon the defenders.

There was a line of fire across the countryside. Ralph had soon learned the purpose of the broad felled. Filled now with blazing oil and wood, it formed a barrier to stop the oncoming balls which seemed to lead the way, and the turgid mass of yellow pressing close behind the outrunners.

They were burning them up. The first balls hurled themselves to destruction upon a cheval-de-frise, a hedge of bristling spikes which slit the flammable material with ease and sent the spores to scudding on into the flames. But there seemed not thick and fast. In many places they piled up side by side, formed the sort of rams for those behind to come racing over the top and fall among the masses of burning wire.

Eleven days had gone by, then he realized it was useless to leap—though it possessed motive power within itself. Missing the wire, it would bowl across no man’s land. Not, of course, that Ralph in any way regretted the burning spores shooting aloft like the discharge of a monstrous firework.

‘My God!’ muttered the man next to Ralph. ‘If this wind doesn’t drop soon, we’ll be done. Look at that!’

That was one of several balls which, miraculously escaping all traps prepared for it, had leaped past them into the darkness behind. But the wind was blowing there and burned it when the wind drops, Ralph replied with a confidence which he scarcely felt. ‘The thing is that worrying me is the thing below—down—not that we can’t get near to fuel them from the lee side here.

But, as luck had it, the fires lasted out.

‘Men,’ began the officer in charge, the next morning, in Ralph’s cell. ‘Last night was the last night between us, and we have to thank providence that we succeed fully interacted. But we can’t afford to waste time. We’ve got to keep the enemy going. There is likely to be another wind any time, and that mass of stuff could off and then be cleared before it it. And, of course, we men will be a new experience of flame-throwers to step forward.

Ralph, in the company of others, stepped out. He had no knowledge of flame-throwers, but it was the only way he could acquire an abnormally broad vision to the danger in the town.

For more than a week he had stiffened his anxiety to know Dorothy’s fate, and now he could bear it no longer.

As he struggled into the heavy covering which would not only isolate him from the fire, but also withstand the road. He was determined to return to the city, perhaps a simple game away that was one of the dangerous plans. Perhaps such a simple wasteway was that the name of a plan. Roughly, it consisted in getting out of the fields and keeping from those who would be clearing the ground with their fire-sprays, and working gradually ahead until the town was reached. This will give them the concealment from the rest of the party. All he had to do then was to walk off to the west.

The only possible thing was that one of the food-carrying planes might spot him. But the chance was remote, and it was unlikely that a lone stranger would be considered worthy of investigation.

The scheme worked as he had expected. No hue and cry, and he was able to get out of the danger zone. For more than a week he had stiffened his anxiety to know Dorothy’s fate, and now he could bear it no longer.

He tore off his mask and tried to shout to them. Funny, his voice wouldn’t work. Somehow, never mind. Dorothy had fooled the yellow balls. That was damn funny. He was laughing as he sat down like this.

Yes, dear, I’m real, said Dorothy, at the bedside.

But—how—

When did you find me crying that Daddy had gone? Do you do the thing for me to go too. Several of us went down the river in a boat and roved about nearly to Land’s End. Right in the toe of Cornwall we found a place that was very close to windward of them. Then, when it was safe—

Safe?

Yes, dear. It’s safe now. The balls are just like an ordinary fungus now—they don’t attack living things any more. Then we came home and—

But—

Not now. You mustn’t talk any more dear. You’ve been very ill, you know.

Ralph acquiesced. He went to sleep peacefully, her hand in his and a smile on his face.

The Prince Khordah of Ghanastran regarded the white figure beside him. ‘You plan has failed, he said.

The nephew of Haramim nodded dourly. ‘Continued confusion. The last but one fact that accursed country more than did ever our wars—and we have lost nothing. Tell me, why did it fail? Perhaps, the wind, perhaps the fungus. After two or so generations it was no longer a parasite, but had reverted to a common, sapro-

Fungus.

Which, however, it will take them many years to suppress—

My ye—’ the other repeated hopefully.

The Prince Khordah spent a few moments in contemplation. ‘We are not displeased,’ he said at length. ‘Doubtless the first arrow did not kill a lion. There are other means, nephew of Haramim. The bent figure heaved a sigh of relief.

There are other means,’ he agreed. © John Wyndham 1938
I am 13 and have enjoyed your magazine very much so far. The recent issue featuring is remarkable. I bought a copy that I got into a gift shop and start to look through the novel of the book. It looks as if it says, “What does he think he’s doing? He’s far too young for that.” I remember when I bought two books someone said I would never be able to understand it well. I read it again first the last part of it. So why don’t some people give us a chance.

Marvin Weege (Guildford, Surrey)

In SFM Vol 1 No 6 an anonymous ARB reviewed Zaroldo. I found this criticism infuriating and obviously ARB has not read the book and did not pay attention to the film. I have seen 11 eleven times and Zaroldo twice; yet Zaroldo has moved me more than ever I will. I think ARB is boring and can’t believe in the use of a computer which can talk and its totally incomprehensible ending. I feel that ARB must have some kind of grievance against John Boorman and Bill Star who I can only congratulate on producing a magnificent film and book. M Hughes (Erith, Kent)

ARB: Sorry you didn’t like the review, but is it after all only a matter of opinion.

Many thanks for publishing the new magazine; using the titles of books as posters are certainly a different approach. I bet you didn’t get many scripts submitted from the Commonwealth countries for your story competition as the other countries have never been luckier than Australia – the first edition hit our newsstands on 4th April. I haven’t yet done enough time travel, it wasn’t possible to enter for the competition. I have to go to March, much as I would have liked to.

V Rogers (NSW, Australia)

A British of magazine is back on our newspapers’ racks. But for how long?

Alas, not too long, unless the format is changed in the way.

K Oldacre suggests in SFM Vol 1 No 10 that the magazine is not going to survive, since it is by the latter alone that SFM will sink or swim. I cannot help feeling that British authors – Arthur Clarke, James White, Bob Shaw, John Brunner et al (I do not want to know, but he must feel British by now) – should only be too delighted to have a magazine to print their stories in. After all, if SFM folds, then it is goodbye to British sf magazines.

One final point I’d like to mention is ‘The Mainstream versus The New Wave’ battlefrostlyp by W J Huggins and J T Parker (SFM Vol 1 Nos 3 and 6). Surely no magazine can consciously steer a course between the Mainstream and the New Wave without going against very long, very long ago. I cannot reject fiction judging to see if it belongs to one school or the other; it must be judged on quality, not on its style or subject matter. Rest assured Mainstream fans, the rip-roaring space ships and fantastic worlds of Clarke, White and Blish survive! It can stand proudly next to the new wave of New Wave material (Spindar, Disch and Moorcock) on any bookshelf. Clarke and Asimov will not be stepping-off places until time itself invalidates them. W Little (Stone-on-Trent, Staffs.)

Does anyone do apart from myself feel that SFM readers should be given the chance to vote on the best British sf magazine? I say to hell with the Hugos and the Nebulas, let’s have a British mag fiction award.

Although I enjoy SFM very much there is one small criticism I would like to make. You lack a regular, regular, regular section of a publication of your versatility could come up with a top-quality cartoon section. After all, I can’t think of any other field in which a magazine has such wide scope in the world of fantasy and imagination, a world well suited to the cartoon strip. NA Potter (Hedington, Oxford)
By Aune R Butt

THE FRANKLIN SCHOOL of CONTEMPOARY STUDIES is offering a series of ten lectures given by the G. E. College Environmental Consortium on the subject of Science Fiction—Mainland’s Distant Early Warning System. In giving the course this title Mr Hay explains: “I am drawing attention to the fact that constant vigilance is still the price of freedom, and illustrating through contemporary and older writers how this genre is par excellence the medium where we can see this in action and how it will move our intellects and hearts alike.”

George Hay’s interest in sf is well-known among fans, but others who have only recently been introduced to the genre will find his lectures a great help in relating sf to the world of today. As he continues: “More perhaps than any other medium, science fiction is all things to all men. My own approach is to view it as a Trojan Horse, a subversive items to sneak in under cover of its new-found respectability...” Those who attend the course are indeed subverted, then I hope it will be toward a growing sense, not of doom, but of wonder.”

Beginning in October and continuing for four terms, the course costs £10 (including VAT) for ten sessions. Checks or postal orders must accompany the registration application and should be made payable to Franklin School of Contemporary Studies Ltd, and sent to the following address: The Registrar, Franklin School of Contemporary Studies, 43 Adelaide Road, London NW3. Upon acceptance into the course, an admission card will be posted to each student. Applicants should register as soon as possible since there is a maximum number of twenty students for each class. The School is also responsible for personal registration, and catalogues listing full courses are available from the Registrar. The School can be reached from Chalk Farm tube station, or by a No 31 bus which goes along Adelaide Road.

GLOBE MEETINGS—Contrary to our expectations in Science Fiction Monthly 5, the White Horse has changed its name to the The One Tun. The Globe is visited by a secondhand bookshop, which has been rejected as the new temporary home of the first—

Thursday-of-the-month science fiction meetings, it was decided that the location there was too small to accommodate the number of members a new venue was needed. The first Thursday of this month saw the opening of The One Tun in Saffron Hill—has been chosen as a solution. This pub is only forty or fifty yards from The Globe and has the advantage of being extremely commodious—an important asset if many of our readers intend to introduce themselves there. The barman of The One Tun is a friend of London members who was the White Horse when the sf meetings began; it seems as if that combination was very durable. Let’s hope the meetings of today manage to be as fruitful and long-lasting!

FILM NEWS FROM AMERICA—Rollerball, described as a sci-fi picture about a potential lethal twenty-first century disease and will be filmed for United Artists by producer Norman Jewison. The screenplay is to be written by William Hanlon as an adaptation of his story Rollerball Murders. Another science fiction picture now in the process of filming in Jamaica is Tomorrow Never Jars. James Caan produces, with Hope Lange starring.

THE WELL-KNOWN AMERICAN FANZINE Riverside Quarterly is now available to readers in the UK through a British agent, Christopher Fowler of 72 Kenstone Heath, Southcote, Reading RG3 3DN. Subscriptions cost £1 for five copies, and most back issues are available at 25p each. Please address all enquiries to Chris at the above address.

STAR TREK ACTION GROUP—commonly known as STAG—is the largest Star Trek fan club in the UK. Their club is over a year old this year; it is a remarkable achievement. The club has acted through President and Crewmember” Jenny Elson (16 Starfleet Drive, Wigtown, Lecister LE6 2YA) for Star Trek Welcometome, and also as an information centre. James Scott Doohan is an honorary member and was one of the Guests of Honour at the first British Star Trek Convention held this September. Activities include a very lively newsletter issued every two months containing news, articles (both serious and humorous), information, and auctions. In an auction held in May, for example, three original Star Trek scripts (rare items; get hold of now!), donated by James Doohan of the Trek set, came under the hammer. STAG also produces several fanzines, one called Beta Nine being fairly regular; these are soon due to be printed rather than distributed, and include other items containing good SF fiction. Other projects are the compiling of The Anatomy and Physiology of a Star Trek babble and poetry book. Fees are 80p per year or £1.50 for life membership. Any inquiries should be sent to Mike Quarto, Membership Secretary, Lodge Cottage, Bury Farm, Pednor Road, Chesham, Bucks, or to the President, Jenny Elson at the address given in the first paragraph. Science fiction fans with a penchant for the Star Trek type of thing are welcome to this lively group, especially if they feel like contributing articles and the like on the ST theme.

Many readers seem to have the impression that the paragraphs included on books are meant to represent actual book reviews, in fact they are only intended to be a quick guide to some books which a newly published story has been published, so that the reader can look out for them in the local bookshops. Very read! The blurbs about them is sketchy because publication at the time of our going to press has not advanced sufficiently for any review copy to be available.

Books

The Moons of Jupiter by Isaac Asimov. Published by New English Library, 3/85p is probably number six of Asimov’s Space Ranger series, and is concerned with the sabotage of a revolutionary advance in space travel. Only a handful of highly-trained men were supposed to know the secret. But someone else knew! For David Star it was the most important and dangerous mission he had ever faced. He had to find the mysterious saboteur before the damage became irreparable. But the unknown enemy did not seem to be human. Not even remotely human!!

Final Solution by Richard E. Dressler. Published by Robert Hale & Co. £1.70. This chilling tale begins in a familiar way—a university and a murder but this time the result is successful. He had to find the mysterious saboteur before the damage became irreparable. But the unknown enemy did not seem to be human. Not even remotely human!!

The Best of AE Van Vogt 1940-1960. Published by Sidgwick & Jackson, £2.75. A collection of twenty-two short stories by A. E. Van Vogt that is intended to demonstrate the development of his fascinating talent. Includes“Giant of Gold” and “The Bones” Joe Slattery knew he could roll dice better than any man in right town, but then he played against the Big Gambler. The Big Gambler knew where he was or how he got there, but Joe didn’t know he shouldn’t understand the creatures he met, Marianna—she was faced with a series of switches which turned off her world, and the result was something she had never on it. The anthology also has a complete bibliography and an introduction by Fritz Leiber.


In Search of Ancient Mysteries by Alan & Sally Landsburg. Published by Corgi Books, 75p each. The Sahara desert exists as the small patch of the Atlantic Ocean known as the Bermuda Triangle which was filled with millions of years and hundreds of ships and aircraft during the past two centuries alone? Why do we still every culture on Earth contain a legend of a great flood? Where did ancient civilizations get their knowledge of astronomy and mathematics? Why do men think of the past as long as they are from the sky? Alan and Sally Landsburg found themselves on the trail of these and other strange phenomena when they went in search of ancient mysteries. 

FEATURING

Frederik Pohl and Cyril Kornbluth. Published by Panther Books, about 15p each. A collection of science fiction short stories by sf’s most famous writing team. Fred Pohl and Cyril Kornbluth get together once more to produce a first-class series of the genre.

The Time Masters by Wilson Tucker. Published by Panther Books, 40p each. The final two volumes in the sf’s most enduring dies irae trilogy, now available for the first time in a British edition. Ten thousand years in the future a madman is employing his ability to warp space and time to create the Beast—a man-made god capable of winning the war. In cosmic history, simply to get his revenge on a world which has long ceased to exist. But somewhere there is still one human who is preparing to fight back—Man! His adventures through the shifting, distorted dimensions of a cosmos ruled by fear, creation and slavery form the basis of this classic series.

The Best of Fritz Leiber 1942-1966. Published by Sidgwick & Jackson, £2.75. A collection of twenty-two short stories by Fritz Leiber which is intended to demonstrate the development of his fascinating talent. Includes “Giant of Gold” and “The Bones” Joe Slattery knew he could roll dice better than any man in right town, but then he played against the Big Gambler. The Big Gambler knew where he was or how he got there, but Joe didn’t know he shouldn’t understand the creatures he met, Marianna—she was faced with a series of switches which turned off her world, and the result was something she had never on it. The anthology also has a complete bibliography and an introduction by Fritz Leiber.


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Perhaps this funny little man really ought to be taken more seriously on his first visit to Earth.

After all, the planet Sirius is reported to be several hundred years more technologically advanced than our own; quite capable of being extremely unpleasant if its ambassador is insulted!

At the moment this is only a science fiction artist's view of the first contact between the human race and other intelligent creatures. Even so, in a humorous way the cover illustration from Galaxy magazine (1955) does raise an important problem, one which may eventually have to be faced in reality.

Why should we expect alien beings to resemble ourselves? And how can we possibly expect to deal with creatures who look so peculiar?

It's a good question and it has inspired some of the very best science fiction. It doesn't really matter whether extraterrestrials (ETs) look like us, are funny, frightening, or completely outside our experience. Somehow we are going to have to learn to get along with each other.

How do you talk to a black cloud, an intelligent ocean, or an energy-being resembling a leering ball-lightning? All have been the subjects of science fiction novels, which show the far-reaching nature of the field. Even closer to home, relatively minor cultural differences continue to cause misunderstanding and distrust between, for example, Arab and Jew, or Protestant and Catholic. At our present level of civilization, peaceful contact with alien life-forms doesn't appear to be a very hopeful prospect.

Life was so much simpler in the rawer days of magazine science fiction, when strange creatures could generally be relied upon to be slavering BEMs (bug-eyed monsters). Heroes did not have to worry overmuch about creating the right impression or being misunderstood; they simply shot at aliens, ran away from aliens, or (if female and attractive) were abducted by aliens.

It was a pattern which dated back to the early years of this century, one which I suspect was set by HG Wells' extraordinary novel, The War of the Worlds (1898), still one of the very best stories of interplanetary invasion.

Wells' octopoid Martians were quite remorselessly bent upon the destruction of the Victorian world. They had not the slightest interest in the exchange of scientific knowledge, or other modern-day rationales for space travel. They came to conquer and destroy because, their author implied, Mars was used-up, a barren and dying world.
As an extra touch to his masterpiece, Wells also suggested that the invaders would keep a few people, almost as prime cattle, fattening them up as juicy titbits for Martian appetites. No doubt this detail sent shivers down the whole-boned spines of his readers!

Wells was showing one aspect of contact between cultures, one which has so many historical precedents that it may indeed be the most likely possibility. But he was also replying to a slightly more extreme form, the experience of the Spanish Conquest of Mexico, or perhaps to the determination of the Tasmanian aborigins by the first white settlers.

His book was inspired by its times. One ingredient was the growing scale and the realism of the increasing horror of mechanization. Perhaps the Italian astronomer Schiaparelli discovered the existence of 'canals' on Mars in 1898. Wells was no doubt the two elements, and this produced his frightening novel.

The year of its publication certainly was fascinating, as was proven in 1938 by its radio broadcast in the United States. It was also a year in a popular novel, and its very success has provoked any number of imitators, right down to the present day.

In the West, advantages, a fertile imagination and a gift for writing. Far too many of his successors have lacked both. In fact, sad though it may be, the advent of mechanization tended to dominate the entire theme of contact with alien life. There was too much interest in ray guns, monsters and other dramatic trappings at the expense of anything really new or thoughtful. How many invasions from Mars have there been since 1938?

And so in many respects science fiction became a breeding ground for BEMs, particularly in the more lurid US 'pulp' magazines of the 1930s and 1940s. Titles abounded in the early days, such as Astonishing, Astounding, Thrilling Wonder, and so on, each rivalling the other in their extravagance.

But let's not be snobbish; these magazines were great fun to read. But with a few notable exceptions their appearance could hardly be said to advance the standing of science fiction as a 'respectable' literature dealing with important and serious intellectual concepts.

Still, some of the great names in sf circles made their reputations by inventing BEMs. AE Van Vogt is the classic example, whose first published story Black Destroyer (July 1938) caused a minor sensation. He followed that with an even master Scarlet Destroyer, and finally worked up to a Galaxy-wide people-eater. You can't get much more ambitious than that! (The stories are available as Voyage of the Space Beagle.)

Another famous personality is John W Campbell, who is probably better known through his transformation of Astounding into the one 'mature' science fiction magazine during the 1940s. Campbell is not widely remembered as a writer except for one spine-chilling story, Who Goes There (1938), subsequently made into an incredibly bad horror film as The Thing From Another World.

Campbell's ET inspires complete xenophobic hatred and fear. It is a creature able to devour a man, and then re-form and exactly imitate its victim so perfectly that the substitute cannot be detected. The next man is alone with the monster! Gradually we realise that some of the characters in the story have been eaten, but which? The scene is vividly described, as the small party huddles together in their anti-matter bowing outside, knowing that some of their members are monsters and wondering how many... for when the creatures are strong enough they will come out of hiding.

Campbell really lays on the horror in a way calculated to provoke nightmares. Every description suggests that these things cannot be reasoned with, they can only be killed. 'Prewar' has flickered eyes blazing up with a living fire, bright as fresh-spilled blood, from a face ringed with a writhing, loathsome nest of worms. The mobile worms that crawled where hair should grow..."

Other writers have drawn references to Robert Heinlein's The Puppet Masters depicts slug-like aliens from Titan, who ride upon people's backs and (through the spinal cord and brain) can control their actions. Again, no compromise is possible; nor is it with the equally revolting Pythec- cans in Bob Shaw's The Palace of Eternity, except here it is the aliens who shoot first and ask questions later!

Campbell, Van Vogt, Shaw and Heinlein took care to make their stories unforgettable by being original. But they are in a minority for it is just too easy to invent menacing aliens. In fact a very considerable number of extra-terrestrial powers have seemed anxious to invade Earth, regardless of cost or personal inconvenience to themselves. It was a great day for magazine science fiction when someone asked 'Why should they bother?'

That person was Campbell again, in an Astounding editorial in the early 1960s. He tried to examine in a logical way the reasons why an advanced spaces-travelling intelligence should be interested in our planet. In the end there didn't appear to be many. He concluded that interstellar traffic of any sort would only be worthwhile for things like works of art, native crafts and curios, or for pure knowledge. None of these is best obtained through conquest and invasion, and so out of the window go all those carnivorous Martians and slave empires!

Of course, Campbell was only formalising a conclusion reached long ago by nearly all major practitioners of science fiction. Through the years writers have imagined every alternative besides conflict, and without coming anywhere near to exhausting the possibilities, some of the treatments of alien contact are listed below:

1 The Nasty Alien; totally inimical, usually preoccupied with invasion of Earth
2 Evil Earthman—exploited natives
3 Superior Beings (either completely indifferent or intent upon showing us the error of our ways)
4 The 'Hard Science' alien life-form
5 Meeting of equals
6 Making of extra-terrestrial life
7 Parodies

Those titles are descriptive enough for the contents of stories in each category to be guessed. The 'Nasty' theme has already been described, and today it has almost become a cliché in science fiction, like cops-and-robbers or cowboys-and-indians in other types of fiction.

Oddy enough the whole business is now gaining increasing relevance and increasing respectability. The British Interplanetary Society has now designed a workable interstellar probe rocket and we already have NASA's science of Exobiology ("the only physical science without a subject matter"). At present leading astronomers and space programme officials in the USA are seriously debating the possibility of making contact with another civilization.

Project OZMA, begun fifteen years ago to send coded messages to the nearer stars, now seems to have been unnecessary. Earth stands out like a beacon in space because of our television broadcasting, say astronomers such as Carl Sagan in his book The Cosmic Connection. Some eminent authorities are questioning whether we should not instead attempt to 'cover up and keep quiet', rather than try to attract attention. What if alien beings are hostile? They ask worriedly, ignoring the fact that science fiction began to think seriously about this.

The Martian war-machines conquer the Earth, in HG Wells' The War Of The Worlds.
possibility at least fifty years ago. Chalked aliens are old hat; far more fashionable in SF circles are stories wherein human explorers are ready to exploit and absorb whatever native forms of life may exist on a new planet. The younger, newer writers of science fiction seem to be particularly attracted to this theme. Some, like Barry N Malzberg, seem to feel that the exploitation of human beings by other species is the worst thing that could happen to the Universe.

An excellent treatment of the idea can be found in Brian Aldiss' *The Dark Light Years*, a 1964 novel in which his aliens are so different, physically and mentally, that their most basic social customs are disgusting to us. This immediately puts his 'utod' off to a bad start with a future Earth civilization all too anxious to mine, colonize and fight wars upon other people's property. 'Other people'-that's the point. For Aldiss shows that the utods are people, despite their habit of wallowing in excrement. The sympathies of the reader are entirely on their side and yet the Earth explorers will never admit that the utods are more than animals to be exploited. Aldiss' book is one of the best, and it attempts to show that bridges must be built across the gaps between minds. He says that Might is not Right, yet his novel is quietly depressing in that it reflects the more likely probability that even the most well-meaning explorers will, for one reason or other, exterminate or enslav.e anyone unlucky enough to be in their way.

Where Brian Aldiss points a warning finger, Robert Heinlein praises the praises of mankind's aggressive nature. In *Starship Troopers* (1959) the message is 'Universe: Watch Out!' This controversial novel is vivid, fast-moving and realistic in the way that only Heinlein can describe a future society. But he has no empathy with, and no time for, aliens of any description. Despite its gutter and rationalizations, *Starship Troopers* is as xenophobic as Campbell's classic of the 1930s.

There are vast numbers of other examples. Perhaps almost a unique viewpoint is shown in Isaac Asimov's little-known short-story, *Blind Alley* (from *Astrounding*, March 1945, and in *The Early Asimov*). He asks what place there be for the only other intelligent race ever discovered, in a galaxy entirely colonized by mankind? This is the only reference Asimov ever makes to ETs in his entire *Galactic Empire* saga of seven novels, and his conclusion is sad. Despite the best-intentioned care and protection these beings simply lose will to live; there is nothing left for a species so out-numbered and so outclassed.

Very advanced alien civilisations in science fiction are often benevolent, if they have any interest in the human race at all. Sometimes they are interested in scientific study, rather as we write articles for the Sunday colour supplements on the customs of the Papuan natives. Often they completely ignore humanity (when did you last visit Papua?); and occasionally they try to improve our sorry state by making us natives wear trousers.

Arthur C Clarke has paid some attention to this theme, and his two most powerful works have the same conclusion. His 1953 novel *Childhood's End* introduced the space-travelling race known as the 'Overlords', who put a stop to the petty quarrelling of mankind and impose their own kind of order, leading eventually to a transformation of our species to a level immeasurably far superior to our former one.

Clarke is delivering almost a mystic vision, one which so effectively concludes the film *2001* (for which he and Stanley Kubrick wrote the screenplay) in which the newly-reborn 'Star Baby' returns to the planet of its origin:

'For though he was Master of the World, he was not quite sure what to do next. But he would think of something.'

Writers in Clarke's class are rare, but there are others. Olaf Stapledon was a great semi-metaphysical writer of the 1930s and in recent science fiction there is Stanislaw Lem with *Solaris*. *Solaris* transcends a merely arbitrary line in this classification, between the categories of 'Superior Being' and the 'Hard Science' approach. Lem's alien being is a wonder indeed; it is an entire planetary ocean, billons of tons of protoplasmic liquid, which in some mysterious way appears to have a life of its own. But the intelligence of the ocean must be so different from our own that it is hard to imagine any common ground existing. The entire novel is about communication, although in the end the ocean of the planet Solaris remains a puzzle, and a scientific curiosity.

The ocean may be a 'superior being', but it is indifferent to the human race. Although Lem puts a great deal more into his novel than speculation about the nature of his alien being, the scientific content is very important. *Solaris* therefore tends to approach the very pure, 'hard' form of SF, which at its ultimate is not concerned with character interplay or with any moral 'message'.

Because so many science fiction authors and readers are scientists of one type or another, 'hard' SF has always been popular. The acknowledged master practitioner in this area is Hal Clement. He made his debut in the halcyon days of *Astrounding* in the early 1940s, when a whole school of new writers under the direction of John Campbell was exploring new directions in SF storytelling techniques. In many ways Clement reverted to the type of story originally proposed in 1920 (by Hugo Gernsback, founder of *Science Wonder Stories*) as the only interest of his new field—where the scientific content was entirely dominant.

But where the scientific content of many Gernsbackian stories was spurious, Clement was immediately distinguished by his painstaking and original approach, specializing in the depiction of alien beings and alien environments. In thirty years this author has created an incredibly wide range of extra-terrestrial, including energy beings living inside suns, intelligent comets, creatures breathing in a vacuum at 600°C. In every case his conceptions are eminently believable and so far as we can tell, probably the most realistic.
accept that his achievement is great enough, and that Clement’s concern is with the body and the environment with the mind.

Two more authors stand out in this crowded field. James White in his ‘Sector General’ series and a further rich selection of assorted aliens, although the background he has chosen permits him to speculate on the environment and their environment.

Leinster is the most recent newcomer to have made his mark; he has already collected a haul of assorted awards for his depictions of Earth and strange peoples in the depths of space. Niven is often regarded as a ‘hard sf’ author, in that his approaches are empirical in contrast to the subjective view of Aldiss or Malzberg. Certainly his aliens are bizarre enough, and his selection includes the unforgetable three-legged, two-headed puppeteers; the tiger-like kzn; the fat, white-skinned mamnatchi, and the immobile, telepathic Grogs.

Each is sufficiently strange in mind as well as body to defy that race is forever revealing new surprises and new delights. The puppeteers, for example, are corpse ants and it is this attitude governs all of their dealings with the rest of the Universe, and the only individuals of the species to trust their lives in space and in dealing with other races are regarded as insane.

The major difference between the rather more solemn approach of Clement (or the self-flagellation of Malzberg) is that Niven is the perpetually busy exploring the Universe will be fun; and this attitude comes across very clearly in his fiction.

By and large, Leinster’s aliens are roughly equivalent to humans in their cultural achievements. To him they define only by comparison to see what kind of good side of humanity rather than the bad, so there is no exploitation or oppression in his works. His explorers meet other races as equals in the Universe.

In 1945 Mervyn Leinster wrote a story that perfectly illustrated the problems of a first contact between two such races. That story was First Contact (Astounding, May 1945), and it describes the encounter in space between an exploring vessel from Earth and a craft from a human-like civilization on a roughly parallel level. The two peoples appear to have a great deal in common, and both side a sense of friendship. But, can either ship trust the other?

Like two strange dogs, the ships circle and snuffle at one another, each wary of the other’s intentions, but daring to turn their backs. The stakes are high; the prizes are the locations of each other’s homeworld. It does not, in the absence of trust they may be forced to fight. It is an intriguing situation, and Leinster sets it up to show how little it does exist. Nevertheless this is one of the first times that science fiction used a meeting with aliens to explore the concept of humanity rather than strange aspects of physiology or psychology.

As an amusing consequence of this story, a Russian writer by the name of Ivan Yefre- mov wrote an indignant rebuttal to Leinster’s story. In his novel, Yefremov specifically mentions and attempts to discredit the premises of First Contact. Yefremov’s theory, whatever their appearance, all advanced races will be communists, this being the only possible economic solution on any planet. His travellers from the World Soviet meet a race of fluorine-breathing aliens, but they do not trust it completely; they link hands beneath the stars and no doubt sing the international.

Subsequently, the USSR and Red China on our own world may cast some doubts upon Yefremov’s visionary hopes. Leinster’s proposal may be considered the more realistic of the two.

Alien life-forms hold so much fascination for science fiction enthusiasts that if authors do not discover ET’s, they have attempted to manufacture them. A great many stories have explored the possibility of telepathy, or humans artificially mutated to live in strange environments.

The latter prospect is frightening, and yet the first steps have already been taken to make this a practical step in the biological laboratories. In any case mankind naturally adapts to extremes of environment; the best-known example is that of the Peruvian Indians, who live and work in the rarified air of the Andes.

Science fiction takes this sort of adaptation much further, and then speculates; having created such beings, are they still human? This question can be found in James Blish’s book The Seeding Stars, where in the final story his ‘Adapted Men’ have become a race of extraterrestrial human stock and Earth itself, the home-world, has become uninhabitable for unchanged people. Blish asks, ‘What then is a human?’ and concludes that the original race of Adam has become just one splinter group upon the varied family of mankind.

Blish has made some of the definitive statements on panpansy (his word), the science of adapting men for their new worlds. In the book referred to above he creates both inhabitants for Ganymed, with breath methane and with bones of ice IV, as well as a warm-blooded, tailed, tree-dwelling folk. His most successful and best loved story is Surface Tension, in which he depicts a world of microscopic, water-dwelling men who are managed to climb out of their pond and conquer the stars—they think!

It is in the field of parody, however, that aliens come into their own. This final category is evidence, if it were needed, of a sense of humour among science fiction writers, a healthy sign that they can laugh at their own clichés and through parody make them anew. It is no accident that of the three examples chosen, three were written by Fredric Brown, science fiction’s master of the tongue-in-cheek.

In What Mad Universe (1961), Brown takes all the clichés of the crudest pulp magazines, and contrives to make them real. For hundreds pages our hero stumbles bemused through a world in which General Eisenhower commands the Venus section of the Earth Space Fleet; in which space-girls really do wear metallic bra-and-pant; and where purple monsters from the Moon arrive on the 7.30 Luna shuttle every night.

In an utterly delicious way Brown manages to give a logical explanation for the most outrageous excesses of the pulp magazines, including the most ravenous, toby-like Arcturian monsters one can imagine. His novel is witty, controlled and ingenious; everything which the writer of pulp fiction never was.

What does Brown think of aliens? In his second novel, Rogue In Space, he introduces an intelligent asteroid, a being as strange as the ocean of Solaris or Fred Hoyle’s Black Cloud. True to form, however, Brown’s correspondent among the antennae-tipped and amiable, roving wanderers of the spaceways.

In Martians Go Home, Brown turned out the ultimate parody on the threadbare theme of the ‘little green men from Mars’. One day, he declares, little green men suddenly begin to appear on Earth. Millions of them, one for every three people. They are insubstantial and can’t be hurt; no one has even noticed; they can teleport, thus can go any-where, and they are the nudist, nastiest, most-loud-voiced irreverent little green men that they can imagine.

They can bring organised life to a halt. Imagine a honeycomb with a little green man sitting patiently in the room (oh yes, they can see in the dark as well). Imagine a cinema, theatre, any gathering, with scores of raucous voices disrupting all proceedings. They were insubstantial—and had to be stopped.

‘Green was a swear word. Anybody who owned anything green dyed it, or repainted it, threw it away or burned it if he could. The colour was to change its colour. Some people even ploughed up their gardens and lawns. Several countries, including and especially Esclaire, changed their flags.

‘There is an underlying, more serious danger, and no small amount of chorus might be that ‘Wars are not only fought with bullets’ such as ‘leaves to leave others alone and we’ll leave you alone’. In any case the story makes hilarious reading.

The very same year, 1955, James Blish, just to show how widely science fiction has ranged in its treatments of the alien’ theme. The genre has come a long way from the early days of monsters and EMs, and as if to emphasise this, Tenn’s story is called The Flat-Eyed Monster (Galaxy, 1955). After all, everything is relative. To a race that was really bug-eyed, what would a human being look like? ©

Frederic Brown takes all the clichés of the crudest pulp magazines and invents worlds where space-girls wear metallic bra-and-pants and purple monsters from the Moon arrive on the 7.30 Luna shuttle every night.

Arthur C. Clarke

The reptilian aliens in Arthur C Clarke’s Jupiter V would have been good neighbours, but they became extinct over two million years ago.

May create a being able to live under the hellish conditions at the surface of Jupiter, in Poul Anderson’s Call Me Joe.

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Mr Glimm about the plumbing, same as I mentioned to you, and one or two other little things, like a new food dispenser unit and the Tri-D screen needs adjusting.

But Mr Glimm refused to listen to a word I said. Instead, he started getting nasty about those blooming Venusian cacti. Said he'd see we paid for a new lot, spacecraft charges and all, and wouldn't believe me when I explained about the neighbourhood does just getting curious.

Well, Mr Glimm seemed pretty upset so I said to him why didn't he come and have a look at the garden and all the plants Auntie had put in. Lovely show we had, I remember. Chrysanthemums, autumn roses . . . it really was a picture. Of course, it's all spring flowers now, daffodils, snowdrops . . . in fact, why don't you come and see for yourself?

Just wait a moment. Might as well take the watering can down with me. Have to leave it in the refrigerator you know. Way the water comes out of the taps here, would scald any Earth plants to death.

Mr Glimm? Yes, well I'm getting around to telling you. Mr Glimm started looking round the garden, same as you'd done now . . .

Just smell those marigolds! Oh, all right. But even if you do prefer Venusian plants that go sloop, I'm sure there's no need to stick that morkel outfit on . . .

Mr Glimm didn't seem to appreciate Auntie's flowers either. He just kept going on and on about his blooming Venusian cacti and how many credits he was going to put on our service charges to pay for a new lot, when out Toddles Auntie to water the chrysanthemums.

Er, now this is where we get to the part I really feel very embarrassed about telling you. Maybe it wouldn't have happened if Auntie would only get proper options fitted instead of wearing those crazy old-fashioned glasses. But as I said earlier, anyone can make a mistake.

I can see you're not with me. Well, picture it for you. There's Auntie, standing there with her watering can, and she doesn't see too well. And there's Mr Glimm right next to the privet hedge, and don't think I mean to be personal, but what with that Venusian green skin and all those tentacles and so on . . .

Yes, that's what I've been trying to tell you all along. When the spray from Auntie's watering can hit Mr Glimm, near as I can make out his metabolism must have jumped to the conclusion that the Venusian winter rains season had started. And right before my eyes Mr Glimm went into hibernation.

It was fascinating to watch really, the way all those tentacles curled up and folded away and Mr Glimm rolled right up into a fuzzy little green ball!

Auntie half no idea what she'd done, of course, and just trottled along watering her flowers as happy as could be. We knew she'd be terribly upset if she found out, so we called a meeting and we all voted to keep it from her. And later that evening, we just moved Mr Glimm along a bit, into the middle of the privet hedge and well, you'd never know, would you?

Naturally we realised that Mr Glimm would come out of hibernation once he dried off. But he was bound to be pretty mad at Auntie and we don't like to see anyone upset her. And there were practical considerations too, like the hill he was going to send us for all those Venusian cacti. I mean, we've had a lot of expense lately, what with the passenger lift and the hole it made in the roof and that Venusian air purifier . . .

So we really only acted for the best. You do understand, don't you? No, please don't scurry away. There's no rush, in fact we hope you'll be staying with us for quite a while.

That's better. You just settle down for a nice long nap while I go and fill up the watering can again.

You see, during dry spells we have a rota system for the garden. And Tuesdays, it's my turn to water the landlord.
Before science fiction writing was any good, it was very bad. Not just in terms of literacy, for because of its peculiar nature, standards of literary merit have always been waived in appraisals of sf material, but in actual content itself. Practised as a form of juvenile-escapist fiction during the first half of the twentieth century, the most remarkable aspect of that whole period is that there was so much material, of real quality, produced in the first place.

By the early 1960s with atomic weaponry and space programmes sober realities, science fiction practitioners and readers started to take themselves more seriously. This didn't mean that the level of writing was raised, only that now it was treated more seriously and solemnly. On to this scene, in 1952 came Philip José Farmer, a first class eccentric in the true sense. Not only did he write about things that no one dared write about in science fiction circles before, but he wrote it well, he was a genuine craftsman.

In case you're wondering what horrible thing he alone dared write about, well it was sex. Back in 1952, a most sterile time in recent history, sex was something only suggested, inferred or hinted at subliminally. What Farmer did to the subject that was so outrageous was to treat it naturally, even going as far as to suggest that There Was Something Good About It! This in itself, was enough to shake the foundation of high-minded science fiction fans everywhere; what right had this man to introduce reality and emotionalism to the hallowed arches of Science Fictiondom?

Not content to start small and work his way up, Farmer achieved instant acclaim, and notoriety, with his first story The Lovers: an unusual title for a science fiction story, the subject matter was even more out of the ordinary. He described a morality of the future and the possibility of man making not only cultural, but sexual contact with extraterrestrials. In a nightmarishly-oppressive future world of overpopulation and rigid controls under a socially and psychically repressive State-Church, Hal Yarwood, a jack-of-all trades linguist, is doomed to a life of misery and frustration. He lacks the high degree of specialisation that will give him anything but the most mundane teaching job; and his wife of five years,chosen for him by a computer, seems to lack one certain response: the successful product of a society that professes love but negates sexuality—she is frigid! Salvation arrives in the form of an assignment as a crew member on a liaison mission to a newly discovered planet.

But soon after leaving, Hal realises that his mission is not merely to learn the language of the Wogs, the planet's humanoid inhabitants, but to pave the way for their eventual subjugation at the hands of his own colleagues. Contact with the Wogs, and a relationship with a female inhabitant on a sexual and emotional level beyond all prior conceptions bring Hal to the realisation that the values instilled in him by the State-Church are contrary to everything that is natural and positive in his own make-up.

He understands that fear, repression and hatred are only conducive to dehumanisation and self-destruction.

In this story, as with so many others he would write, Farmer makes an open appeal for the release from sensual and emotional inhibitions. He relentlessly condemns the hypocrisy of a religion-veiled morality that suppresses the need for feelings, while sanctifying guilt, fear and frigidity. Although describing the attitudes of a 'future' society, the parallel with that world and the prevailing attitude in America in 1952, when The Lovers first appeared, is unmistakable. As a writer of science fiction he was treading on dangerous ground.

Farmer won critical recognition from the academy of sf writers in the form of a Hugo award for the best story of the year. His
approach to the field, puritanical and tradition-bound as it was then, has been described as 'an explosion in a fresh air factory'. However, the various editors and publishers of the sf magazines and books who had the final say in the matter and to them. Farmer, like many others and other non-fictional themes became more and more disturbing. Over the next few years came a dearth of stories proving this. An obsession with the creation of areas of human relationship and experience that had been merely acknowledged as 'off limits' to the innocent science fiction reader. In an overtly Freudian allegation Mrs. Farmer's protagonist finds himself trapped, literati, in a monstrous womb from which escape can only come when he is able to break the psychic 'umbilical cord' which restrains him. After this open condemnation of the inaudacious influences of maternalism, Farmer went even further with stories like, Father, Open To Me, My Sister and others where he asked if the concepts of 'normal' and 'abnormal' were legitimate or whether they were merely the products of narrow-mindedness and socially conditioned prejudices. This applies not only to the subject of sexual relations, but to the deeper moral questions such as racial discrimination and religion. During this period Farmer also created one of his most amusing characters, Father John Carmody, a criminal turned Catholic priest. Carmody travels to various worlds where his human-conceived notions of divinity are often in constant conflict with his early inspirations, quite often dramatically, from alternative sources. On one occasion, in the novel Night of the Half Breeds, witnesses a battle between good and evil in the form of monstrous manifestations produced by the collective will of the planet's inhabitants. During the period of the mid-fifties, Farmer's most ambitious work took the form of a 100,000 word novel, working on the strong religious theme—Resurrection. Tentatively titled J Owe For The Flesh, the setting was one of the most unique in any type of literature, the shores of a seemingly endless river whereupon the entire body of humanity (everyone that ever lived from Paleolithic times till the twent-centu), some 35 billion souls) finds itself miraculously resurrected naked, youthful and apparently immortal. With sustenance provided by longevity (if a limb is cut off, it grows back, if killed, one is simply resurrected again somewhere else along the river) there seems little reason to question this already promised after-life, but there is more to this than God's will. Fate has singed out one man, Sir Richard Francis Burton, nineteenth century explorer, scholar, translator of The Arabian Nights, womanizer and the one who said 'roll up the river and discover its source, the meaning of this world's existence. Revealed to the reader is far as the reader is concerned, was not forthcoming. The book was never published! After a labour of love and single-minded commitment, the promised payment for the story never came; the company that had eagerly accepted it had quietly gone out of business. This was the final culmination of a decade's struggle as a writer. Unable to meet payments, Farmer lost his home and after years of just barely keeping his family by taking various jobs that included labouring, his venture into the science fiction field led him to be systematically misled by his publishers, mismanaged by agents, and ignored by critics and readers to whom new ideas were less than welcome.

Typical of the treatment doled out to him was that from John Campbell, editor of Astounding (now Astounding, written, circulated and best paying magazine in the sf field. Campbell consistently rejected material submitted by Carmody. There was a prevailing reactionary sentiment among sf professionals, he considered Farmer's work unsuitable. On submission of the story Open To Me, My Sister, Campbell hastily returned it with the courteous but final: No thanks.

Most of Farmer's work was relegated to the poorest paying markets. In 1957 he started writing for Trafalgar Square and other Roy coffee, mostly in conjunction with atomic research and missiles. His output of science fiction was limited to one story per year over the next few years. Two excellent short novels Flesh and Day Of Timestop (retitled A Woman A Day) which both had the unique blend of religion, philosophy, psychology and sex, were both marketed as soft porn. The highlight of this period was a novelette entitled The Alley Man which appeared in 1959, the story of Old Man Paley, an itinerate junkman and ragpicker. With superb characterization and dialogue, it seemed more the meat of mainstream writing. One slight 'difference' may be that Paley claims to be the last living pure-bred Neanderthal Man. Verification of this, if his appearance fails to convince, is his peculiar odour which allegedly makes him irresistible to any woman.

By the early sixties, the science fiction field had begun to mature. New young writers, unhampered by the limitations traditional sf writers and editors were imposing on themselves, had begun to tackle new subjects with more experimental styles and different outlooks. In 1965, one of the more outstanding members of this movement took upon himself to bring into being the kind of this New Wave. Harlan Ellison was his name, and with a planned super-antithasis of stories especially written to shake the genre completely open up the genre to give it new dimensions. He asked a number of the established masters to give him a story which he would like to have written but had previously thought could not be published. From the newer members in the field he expected the very unique, to prove once and for all that science fiction was breaking new ground. From Philip José Farmer he just asked for something extra-special.

The volume grew to enormous proportions, double its word allowance and budget, it allied a quart of a million we looked into the future, say 1966 AD, he would have crapped in his pants, and 2166, oh my. As for ratings, well, a particularly lucid one was made by Ellison, a top-flight swriter himself, in his introduction to the story: 'An editor should never show favouritism yet I am compelled by my awe of the story you are about to read, by my incredulity at the poetic writing, by my jealousy at the richness of thought and excellence of structure, to say that this is not merely the best story in the book—it is easily the best. No, make that the finest. It is a jewel of such brilliance that re-examination and re-re-reading only serve to deepen the ramifications after raimonday, joy after delight that were only partially glimpsed the first time around.'

After turning a deaf ear to him for so many years, the readers and practitioners of sf writing found it impossible to simply pretend he wasn't there. Farmer had found his audience. The effect on him was one of revitalisation. For this new generation of readers, less easily shocked and more receptive to new approaches, he dusted off some of his older poorly-received stories and brought them back to a market decidedly sex-orientated piece, which had previously seen the light of day as a cheap paperback with a small back cover revamped by Farmer, almost completely rewritten with a greater amount of explicitness than had been allowed at the time of its original conception. Best of all, Farmer was given the go-ahead for some newer themes that he had previously been holding back. One of his themes, or perhaps the word obsession is more appropriate, is the myth of the Hero, endlessly recurs in literature, film and the 'über-mensch' who is superior in every respect, mental, muscular and sexual. The most famous modern incarnation of such a character is the creation by Edgar Rice Burroughs, of Tarzan of the Apes.

While Farmer's form, our author makes the Jungle Lord the subject of exploration in not one, but five major works, starting with one of his more quiet, fantastical novels called the Greeter, Ras Tyger, an innocent instantly likeable young demi-god, leaps through the trees of his jungle paradise, armed with only his knife, steel-like muscles and razor-sharp senses. However, in opposition to the tradition of noble savages, he is a chimp of the men of the natural Wanto tribe, whose male population he constantly tempts with regard to his sexual prowess. In an attempt to save himself and limping dongs, I send the great white snare whose tail grows from between my legs. He speedily finds his way to the men and it takes root in them as lie by your side.

Even more distressed than the Wanto men are man's 'adopted' relatives, the dwarves, who adamantly swear that they are really apes and are constantly frustrated by their friend's refusal to behave in true Tarzan-like fashion.

Particularly with respect to his dalliance not only with native women, but with white ones as well. Slowly Farmer reveals the basis of this surrealistic trip into popular fiction: a fantastically weird marvel which has taken pains to viciously enact his adolescent reading of Tarzan by raising his own Jungle Lord in strict accordance to the original Tarzan stories— even to the extent of kidnapping a blonde, virginal Jane for the purpose of mating his Ras Tyger. With typical Farmer's acid tomb, R. J. does master his environment, but in a manner that would make Edgar Rice Burroughs turn in his grave. Not having said ever having pretended to say, Farmer wrote A Fire Unknown, the chronicle of Lord Grandin 'the true Tarzan'. Unfortunately the publishing rights in the United States (1968) was such that the book only saw print as one of a series of pornographic novels done by fly-by-night California publishers. Though, it has been rescued from oblivion (all copies having been destroyed in a subsequent raid on the said look out) by a London publisher who are reissuing the book and another of Farmer's forays into hard-porn-st, Image Of The Beast, in the near future.

Next came Lord Of The Trees, a sequel to A Fire Unknown, forcibly collaged up by the editors of Ace, a more respectable publishing outfit which represents, in Farmer's own words: "Something unique, the only spinoff of a "clean" book from a "dirty" book. "And more? The Jungle Rat Kid On The Nod, wherein Farmer shows us Tarzan as if it had been written by William Burroughs instead of Edgar Rice Burroughs! What else is there to say?

Finally, Tarzan Alive was published as the definitive, documented, footnoted, bibliographed, annotated, indexed, actual biography of Tarzan (not his real name). Were the name of the biographer not so familiar to even the most
casual reader, it would be apparent to anyone picking up this volume that this was simply the biography of an Englishman, born in Africa in 1888, and reared by apes, who is still alive!

His lineage is absurdly traced back through Burke's pedigree, details of his career, and service during both World Wars are verified by actual historical records, even the transcript of a tape recorded interview is incorporated into the text of this remarkable document. For, as incredible as it may seem, Mr. Edgar Rice Burroughs, despite whimsical exaggerations and the inevitable glossing over of facts, was recording the life and times of a real man! A god-like semi-immortal who for obvious reasons has chosen to allow the world to maintain the erroneous belief that he is a literary character. It is left to Philip José Farmer to demonstrate to a blasé world that Darzan Lives.

He also gives us an explanation of the ape-man and a number of other superhuman phenomena of our modern era. If you were to visit Wold Newton in Yorkshire you would see a monument marking the spot of a meteorite landing. 785.

Three coaches were passing the place when the meteor struck, and in them were such personae as the third Duke of Greystone and his wife, the rich gentlewoman Fitzwilliam Darcy and his wife Elizabeth Bennet—the heroine of Pride and Prejudice—Sherlock Holmes' grand-parents and a number of others. The radiation caused by the meteorite produced definitely beneficial mutation to the descendants of these people. Amongst them they were to produce the living prototypes of such illustrious figures as Bulldog Drummond, Lord Peter Wimsey, Doc Savage, Nero Wolfe, Sherlock Holmes, Leopold Bloom (a day in whose life was recorded by James Joyce in his Ulysses), Professor Challenger, Raffles, Sir Denis Nayland Smith (opponent of the insidious Fu Manchu—who also existed) and a host of other outstanding, but less well-known figures. Farmer promises to give us the complete story on all these men and others, previously believed to have lived only in fiction. Already he has written the definitive biography of Doc Savage, as well as that of Philae Fogg, with due emphasis on his 80-day trip around the world (fictionalised in Jules Verne's Around the World in 80 Days) which he has titled The Other Ling of Philae Fogg, a short bio of Kurt Vonnegut's sf writer anti-hero Kilgore, Herman Melville's Ishmael, The Whirlwheels of Ishmael—what happened to the first mate after his experiences in Moby Dick, and...

Farmer has taken science fiction writing as an opportunity to create his own universe and populate it with the people he knows, and loves, or hates most. The ultimate form of expression in this vein is his previously mentioned I, Owe For The Flesh. In the mid-sixties Farmer toyed with an idea of a universe made up of layers upon layer of Earth cultures existing at the same time and place, unique yet mutually dependent. These books, A Private Cosmos, Gates of Creation, and so on, are a mere groundwork for the author's 'chef d'oeuvre', the final culmination of his many diverse lines of exploration, The Riverworld.

Farmer realised that now, a decade after he had conceived and executed the ill-fated I, Owe For The Flesh, his audience was there, finally! Over a period of seven years he rewrote the original book in a form that has so far been published as two inter-related novels, and a short story. The first of these, chronicling Sir Richard Burton's advent in the Riverworld, is entitled To Your Scattered Bodies Go. Burton, out of 35 or so billion souls, is selected by some unknown agent to lead a force of twelve selected individuals, whose ultimate mission will be to sail up the great river on whose shores they have been resurrected to find out why all humanity has been denied its final 'rest'. En route, some of the more familiar characters he encounters are Alice Liddell who as a young girl was the model for Lewis Carroll in his Alice In Wonderland, Herman Goering, crazed by religion and fanatic guilt, and John de Greystock, a twelfth century ancestor of a certain Lord Greystock (Tarzan) about which little more need be said. Apart from his romantic advances to Alice (he argues with her that her earthly marriage vows need not bind her to chastity) Burton finds himself brought to bear for various misdemeanours during his lifetime. Twentieth century Jews demand justification for his overly anti-semitic writings, a rather vicious crime in comparison to that of Goering, who is eternally tormented by his enforced immortality (he cannot take his life but is forced to suffer guilt-ridden for seeming complicity in the death of millions).

A compassionate novel, fantastic and outrageous, humorous yet deeply religious and philosophical, Farmer wrote The Other Ling of Philae Fogg a year or so later in 1972. A shorter story, Riverworld, appeared as well, revolving around an encounter between Tom Slick, star of American oil magnate, and Ceylon Samrat, a heretical malcontent of Roman Judea whom we know as Jesus Christ. The second major novel of the Riverworld series, The Riverboat, appeared later in 1973. Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known under his nom-de-plume Mark Twain. In the opening sequences of the book, Samuel Clemens is pursued by Riverboat, Clemens has been searching throughout the Riverworld for his beloved wife Livy from whom death had separated him. In the meantime, he is visited by the same mysterious stranger as Burton, who informs him that he, Clemens, has been chosen to captain the ship that will take the chosen twelve up-river.

With the meager mineral resources, but vast wealth of twentieth and twenty-first century technology at his disposal, Clemens enters into a reluctant pact with the treachery King John of England, to build the only piece of machinery in the world. John's motives, however, are inspired by the desire to become ruler of his new demesne rather than by any kind of quest for enlightenment. And in the course of building the fabulous riverboat, Clemens encounters some of his other chosen shipmates, Goering, Liddell and Leopold Bloom and Cyrano de Bergerac—who has been living with Livy, the former Mrs Clemens, for over ten years! And she chooses not to go back to her former husband!

The final volume, although completed, has yet to be published. It is the most eagerly awaited pieces of science fiction. No less remarkable considering it won't be in print until over twenty years after the initial concepion. What else is Farmer up to these days? Well, he's been dashing off a number of strange stories with titles like Don't Wash The Carrots, which he calls his Psycological Parnmyths. As for exactly what they are or are about, according to their creator: 'They're a form of fun-therapy for me and perhaps the reader. They're symptoms of something in my unconscious that makes me rich and then scratch. A sort of cerebral athlete's foot', which should instantly clarify matters for anyone who may read them and wonder. Another religious sf story has recently appeared as well, entitled Toward The Beloved City, this time involving a Day of Judgement. And most recently, of 1974 vintage, is a new novel called Tractor To The Living, which on first glance seems to be more an invention of a means than technology to communicate with the dead, but as with most simple premises in Farmer stories, the implications expand geometrically.

And there you have it, a brief survey of some of the higher points of one man's writing career. A wild genius (a word used cautiously in reference to science fiction writers) who despite difficulties, such as intolerant readers, editors and publishers, to mention plain bad luck, has persistently been inspired by the wonders and ecstacies of the universe to write in a genre that is for the most part advanced of the fact that human beings can, and often do, have emotional experiences.

About technology as it progresses, he says that if they can increase and amplify our range of psychic experience, they're great. Like few other science fiction writers, Farmer writes about the emotions, and with them too. In fact if there can be any criticism levelled against him, it's that he's too emotional. Once he gets a hold on an idea, he refuses to let go. He often gets so wrapped up in his concepts that he neglects the writing aspect—the actual communication, which is vital if what he has to say is to be listened to. Many of his books, despite their brilliance, are written too hastily, downright sloppily. Many of his best ideas get thrown away in floods of abundant enthusiasm. Yet in all of these are few writers in any field who have unceremoniously the range that this man has, or who so willingly approach the multitude of deep and unverifying topics that he is so prone to. There is no mystery too complex for Farmer to unravel, no line of thought, no approach too far for him to try. In their own way, each new work of his can appropriately be described as a new, if not always pleasing, psychic experience in itself.
Frank Herbert's Hive

Another mind-expanding st saga from

Science and Psychology

Frank Herbert is famous for his Award-

Humanity

In his latest science-fiction epic, he

takes readers to a new world

called Amdur, where human beings

are divided into hive and ant colonies,

subjected to the influence of

mysterious, mind-altering drugs.

Hilton's Laboratory

Working in secret on a closely guarded

Project, Dr. Oregone, the renowned zoologist,

finds a way to expand human intelligence.

Another mind-expanding st saga from

Frank Herbert

Hive