

Heavy Metal presents

# SO BEAUTIFUL AND SO DANGEROUS

by Angus McKie

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So Beautiful and So Dangerous

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BY ANGUS McKIE

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# INTRODUCTION

It's no coincidence that one of the heroes of *So Beautiful and So Dangerous* bears a striking resemblance to a well-known comedian, film maker, and clarinet player. Like Woody Allen, author/artist Angus McKie sprinkles his weird and witty tales with problems, puns, allusions, and quotations. "The first existential science fiction story," Angus subtitles his comic; and he paraphrases Sartre: "Hell is other aliens."

References echo off the walls of McKie's universe: Haldane, Vonnegut, Kierkegaard, the Stones, Wordsworth, Dylan, Einstein.... Imagine, an artist who keeps his ears open! His characters—earthlings and extraterrestrials, aliens all—endure not only hardware dangers and monster threats, but pop-static, mind-stress, and philosophical doubt. And if the description makes Angus sound like a pompous, boring turkey, that's my fault. Because he ain't.

When we at *Heavy Metal* got our first look at his work, we saw only book jackets and posters. They were sent to us by his agent, with a note saying Angus was interested in doing a comic, with all the art in this style. The art was spectacular.

We said yes, please, where do we sign, and assumed that the draftsmanship, colors, details, and designs of the comic would make up for what would doubtless be a typical, dim-witted space opera.

Episode One arrived from England, on schedule. That in itself meant we were dealing with someone unique. We opened it up and looked it over. Sure enough, this loony English dude had drawn a comic, giving as much attention to each panel as your above-average illustrator gives to a full-page splash panel. Fantastic.

And then we read it.

Well, for one thing, *So Beautiful* starts, quite literally, where *Close Encounters* leaves off...with a big mother of a mother ship collecting a gaggle of dead beat earthlings and taking them for that long ride. But McKie's characters, earthborn and otherwise, seemed a lot more interesting than Spielberg's mashed potato freak and the friendly ghosts from Mars.

For another, there was clearly a sense of humor operating in this strip—not undercutting, camping, or parodying the story, but moving it forward, illuminating character and atmosphere.... Far (to coin a phrase) out....

And so it went. Month after month—on time, mind you—another chapter would arrive, to boggle ourselves and our readers. Jokes and terrors, wisecracks and dream technologies, a little economics, a dash of mythology, a pinch of quantum mechanics...and *flash flash flash*, those amazing, hard-edge, brilliant images; pictures actually accomplishing what comics are supposed to: they let you create your own movie, inside your head.

In any issue of *HM*, McKie's stuff more than held its own beside work by Moebius, Druillet, Corben. With that trio and few others, he shares a rare double gift: imagination—free, wild, childlike—in combination with craftsmanship—disciplined, careful, mature.

And McKie seems to be the most intelligent—or, at least, the cleverest—of them all.

It got so the staff—Julie, Valerie, John, and I—took to hanging around the mail room, awaiting the neatly wrapped bundle from Britain each month, containing the next chapter.

Then the last episode of *So Beautiful* arrived and ran in our June issue, ending with a quotation from that other funny/smart young fellow, Hamlet. Angus McKie had concluded this particular postgraduate course in illustrated storytelling.

At the magazine, we hope for the chance to enroll for another, soon.

Meanwhile, we give you this book, with Angus's remarkable cover, and we open the mail from overseas with a little less enthusiasm than we used to.



Thanks to J.C. Mezieres for inspiration and the first view  
of Axis. Thanks also to the Oxford University Press for  
the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

*The world loved a man when he smiled  
The world became afraid when he laughed .*  
Rabindranath Tagore

This book is dedicated to two beautiful people:  
Quasimodo and Johnny Rotten.

FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS MAN HAS WONDERED WHETHER  
HE IS **ALONE** IN THE UNIVERSE

PING

THE PARAMETERS AND UNCERTAINTIES INVOLVED IN  
CALCULATING THE PROBABILITY OF ADVANCED TECHNICAL  
CIVILIZATIONS ARE DEMONSTRATED IN A SIMPLE  
APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM DEVISED BY U.S. ASTRO-  
PHYSICIST F.D. DRAKE

THE NUMBER  $N$  OF EXTANT TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS  
IN THE GALAXY CAN BE EXPRESSED BY THE FOLLOWING  
EQUATION, THE SO-CALLED **GREEN BANK FORMULA**..

$$N = R_* f_p f_n f_l f_i f_c L$$

WHERE  $R_*$  IS THE AVERAGE RATE OF STAR FORMATION  
OVER THE LIFETIME OF THE GALAXY,  $f_p$  IS THE FRACTION  
OF STARS WITH PLANETARY SYSTEMS.

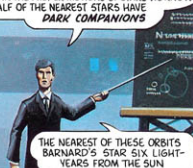
$f_n$  IS THE MEAN NUMBER OF PLANETS  
PER STAR THAT ARE ECOLOGICALLY ABLE  
TO SUSTAIN LIFE,  $f_l$  IS THE FRACTION OF  
SUCH PLANETS ON WHICH LIFE ARISES

$f_i$  IS THE FRACTION OF SUCH PLANETS ON  
WHICH INTELLIGENT LIFE EVOLVES

$f_c$  IS THE FRACTION OF SUCH PLANETS ON WHICH  
TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION DEVELOPS AND  $L$  IS THE  
MEAN LIFETIME OF A TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION

THERE ARE ABOUT  $2 \cdot 10^{11}$  STARS  
IN THE GALAXY AND THE AGE OF  
THE GALAXY IS ABOUT  $10^{10}$  YEARS

THEREFORE, A VALUE OF  $R_* = 10$  STARS PER YEAR IS PROBABLY  
RELIABLE. THROUGH MEASUREMENT OF SLIGHT GRAVITATIONAL  
PERTURBATIONS IN THE PROPER MOTIONS OF STARS WE KNOW  
THAT ABOUT HALF OF THE NEAREST STARS HAVE  
**DARK COMPANIONS**



THE NEAREST OF THESE ORBITS  
BARNARD'S STAR SIX LIGHT-  
YEARS FROM THE SUN

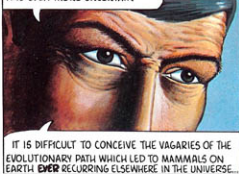
THE DISTRIBUTION OF PLANETS IN ALIEN  
SYSTEMS MAY BE IRREGULAR, BUT CONSIDERING  
THE WIDE RANGE OF TEMPERATURES  
COMPATIBLE WITH LIFE WE CAN TENTATIVELY  
CONCLUDE THAT  $f_p f_n$  IS ABOUT ONE

BECAUSE OF THE RAPIDITY OF THE ORIGIN OF LIFE ON  
EARTH AS IMPLIED BY THE FOSSIL RECORD AND THE  
EASE WITH WHICH THE RELEVANT ORGANIC MOLECULES  
CAN BE PRODUCED IN SIMULATION EXPERIMENTS THE  
LIKELIHOOD OF LIFE ORIGINATING OVER BILLIONS OF  
YEARS SEEMS QUITE HIGH

FOR THE QUANTITIES  $f_l$  AND  $f_i$  THE PARAMETERS  
ARE EVEN MORE UNCERTAIN



AND SO MANY SCIENTISTS BELIEVE THAT THE  
APPROPRIATE VALUE FOR  $f_l$  IS ALSO ABOUT ONE



IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONCEIVE THE VAGARIES OF THE  
EVOLUTIONARY PATH WHICH LED TO MAMMALS ON  
EARTH EVER RECURRING ELSEWHERE IN THE UNIVERSE



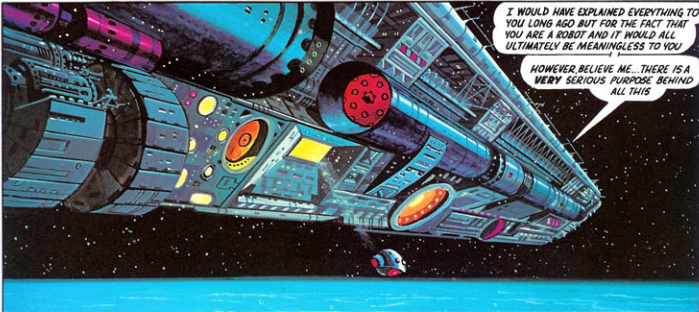


NO WONDER THESE HUMANS PERSONALIZE THEIR PLANET WITH THE PRONOUN OF THE FEMALE GENDER.



THEY SAY THAT THERE IS GREEN GRASS ON EARTH, SISYPHUS!

TITAN... I'D BELIEVE ANYTHING IN THIS PART OF THE GALAXY. THERE MUST BE A LOT OF STRANGE THINGS DOWN THERE BUT I HAVEN'T COME HALFWAY ACROSS THE ENTIRE GALAXY JUST TO SIGHTSEE!



I WOULD HAVE EXPLAINED EVERYTHING TO YOU LONG AGO BUT FOR THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A ROBOT AND IT WOULD ALL ULTIMATELY BE MEANINGLESS TO YOU

HOWEVER, BELIEVE ME... THERE IS A VERY SERIOUS PURPOSE BEHIND ALL THIS



I INHERITED MY INTEREST IN EARTH FROM MY FATHER. HE STUDIED FOR MANY YEARS ACTUALLY **LIVING** ON EARTH, TRYING TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE A NORMAL HUMAN BEING.

INCREDIBLE!

SINCE MY YOUTH I HAVE MADE AN EXTENSIVE STUDY OF EARTH LITERATURE BY VIRTUE OF **ELECTROMAGNETISM**.

YOU KNOW... I THINK YOU'LL BE SOMETHING OF A **SURPRISE** TO THESE PEOPLE. YOU'RE A VERY WELL-READ ALIEN.

BUZZ LEVEL FOUR TITAN. I PROMISED AN ALARM CALL FOR THAT TRAVELING THEATER GROUP THAT HITCHED A RIDE BACK ON TARO\*.

FLUTO

SISYPHUS... I'M PICKING UP A CURIOUS HIGH FREQUENCY WAVEFORM... SYNCHRONIZED PULSES OF ANALOG INFORMATION PULSED FROM FIFTY TO FIFTEEN THOUSAND BEEZASS\*.

\* 1 BEEZASS IS APPROXIMATELY EQUAL TO 1 HERTZ

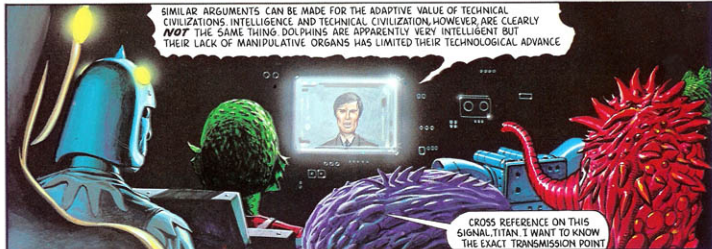
THE ANALOG IS ENCODED VISUAL AND AUDITORY STIMULI TITAN. IT'S CALLED YEE-YEE. PUT IT THROUGH THE RELAYS. I'VE BEEN DYING TO SEE IT ALTHOUGH I KNOW MY FATHER WOULD **NEVER** HAVE APPROVED.

ZZZ: SKRRRK... IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONCEIVE THE VAGARIES OF THE EVOLUTIONARY PATH WHICH LED TO MAMMALS ON EARTH **EVER** RECURRING ELSEWHERE IN THE UNIVERSE....

ON THE OTHER HAND, INTELLIGENCE NEED NOT BE RESTRICTED TO ONLY THE EVOLUTIONARY PATH WHICH OCCURRED ON EARTH AND CLEARLY HAS GREAT SELECTIVE ADVANTAGES TO BOTH PREDATOR AND PREY



SIMILAR ARGUMENTS CAN BE MADE FOR THE ADAPTIVE VALUE OF TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS. INTELLIGENCE AND TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION, HOWEVER, ARE CLEARLY **NOT** THE SAME THING. DOLPHINS ARE APPARENTLY VERY INTELLIGENT BUT THEIR LACK OF MANIPULATIVE ORGANS HAS LIMITED THEIR TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCE



CROSS REFERENCE ON THIS SIGNAL, TITAN. I WANT TO KNOW THE EXACT TRANSMISSION POINT

SOME, THOUGH BY NO MEANS **ALL**, EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGISTS WOULD CONCLUDE THAT THE PRODUCT  $f_e t_e$  TAKEN AS  $10^{-4}$  IS A FAIRLY CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE

STILL **MORE** UNCERTAIN IS THE FINAL PARAMETER **L**, THE **LIFETIME** OF A TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION...

**HERE** THERE IS NOT EVEN **ONE** EXAMPLE

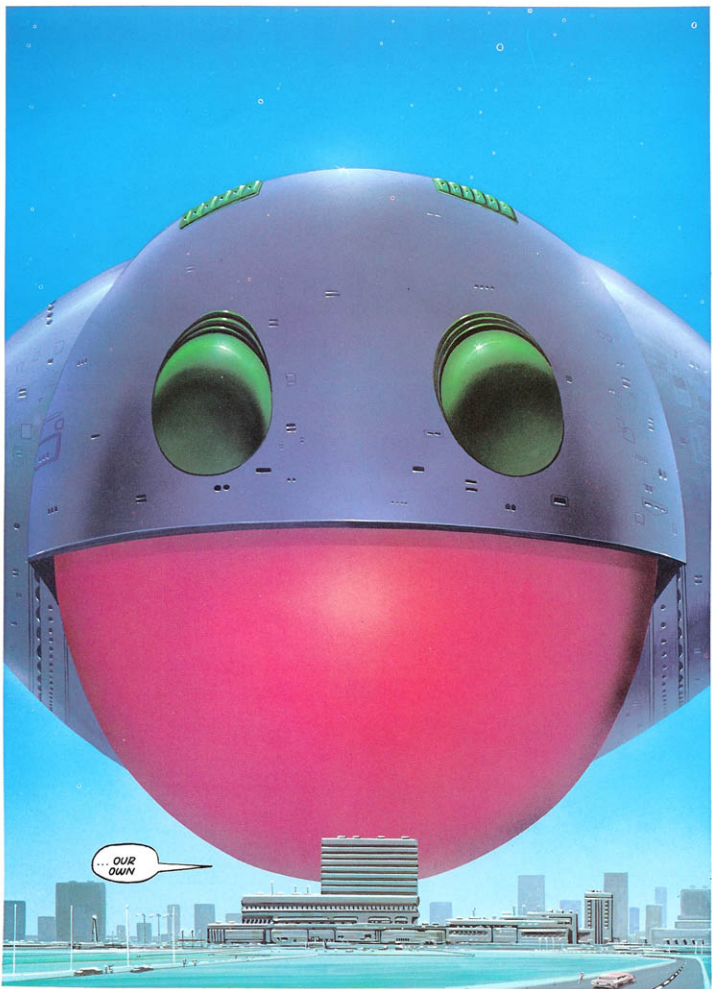


CONTEMPORARY WORLD EVENTS DO NOT PROVIDE A VERY CONVINCING COUNTERARGUMENT TO THE CONTENTION THAT TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS TEND THROUGH THE USE OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION TO DESTROY THEMSELVES SHORTLY AFTER THEY COME INTO BEING

IF WE DEFINE A TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION AS ONE CAPABLE OF INTERSTELLAR COMMUNICATION, **OUR** TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION IS ONLY A FEW DECADES OLD. IF THEN **L** IS ABOUT TEN YEARS, MULTIPLICATION OF ALL THE FACTORS ASSUMED SO FAR LEADS TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THERE IS...

...IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, ONLY **ONE** TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION IN THE GALAXY ...AND **THAT** IS...





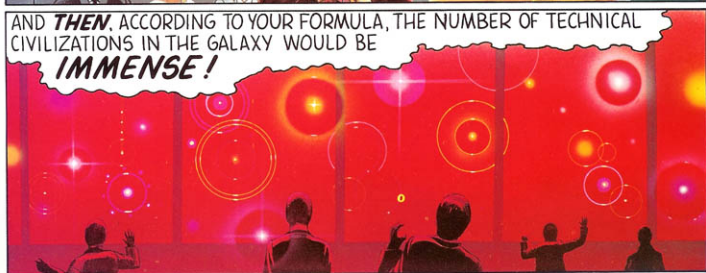
... OUR  
OWN



AH!...BUT IF TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS **AVOID** SELF-ANNIHILATION, **THEN**... THEIR LIFETIMES MAY BE VERY **LONG** IN THE GEOLOGICAL OR STELLAR EVOLUTIONARY TIME SCALE...



AND **THEN**, ACCORDING TO YOUR FORMULA, THE NUMBER OF TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS IN THE GALAXY WOULD BE **IMMENSE!**



I KNEW THERE WAS A GOD!

C'EST BELLE

NO! NO! IT CAN'T BE... IT'S NOT REAL!! Y-YOU'RE DEFYING THE GREENBANK FORMULA!

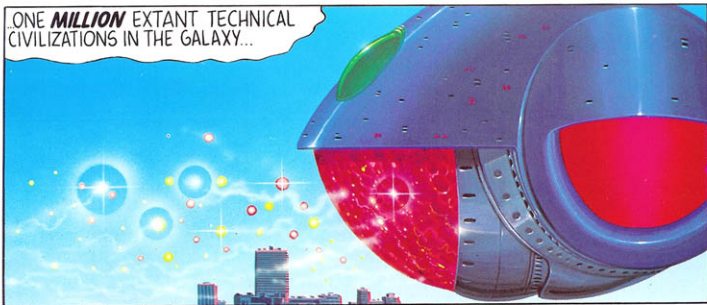
GET UP ON THE ROOF WITH THAT CAMERA!



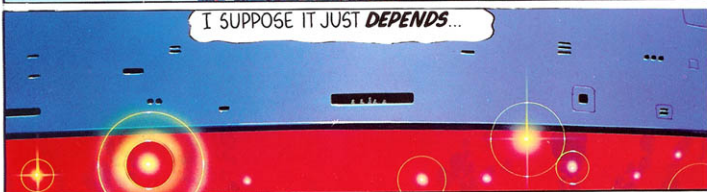
NOT AT ALL... NOT AT ALL... IF EVEN **ONE** PERCENT OF TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS MAKE PEACE WITH THEMSELVES, THAT WOULD GIVE A FIGURE OF... LET ME SEE... YES...



...ONE **MILLION** EXTANT TECHNICAL  
CIVILIZATIONS IN THE GALAXY...

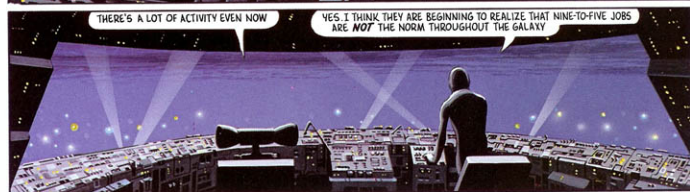
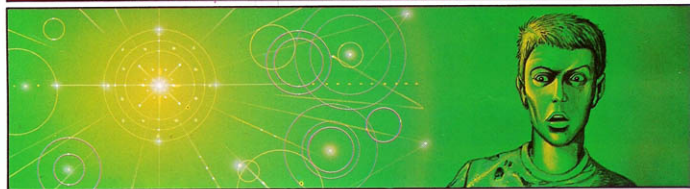


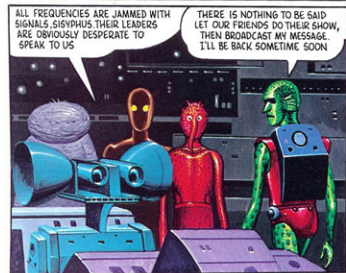
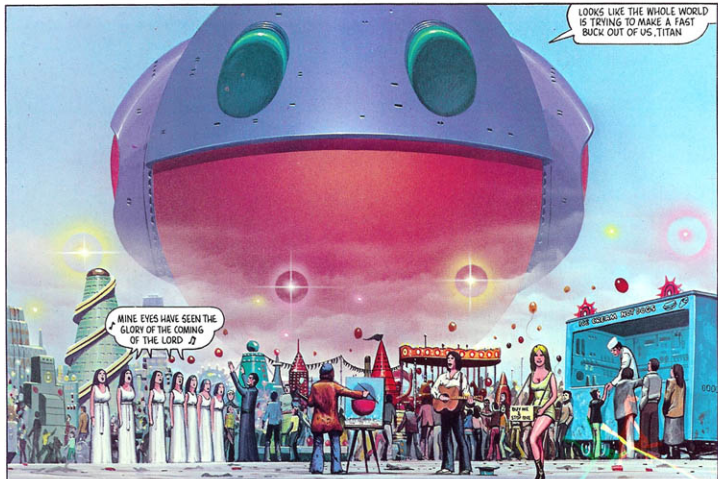
I SUPPOSE IT JUST **DEPENDS**...



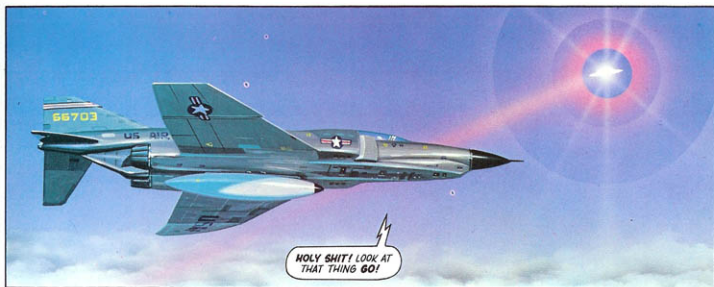
...ON WHETHER YOU'RE A **PESSIMIST** OR AN **OPTIMIST**...













AND NOW...TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER...  
LEVITATION, LITTLE PEOPLE, BLACK RAIN...

SPONTANEOUS HUMAN COMBUSTION, LEY LINES  
AND MYSTERIOUS OOZINGS...

STIGMATA AND  
INVISIBLE BARRIERS

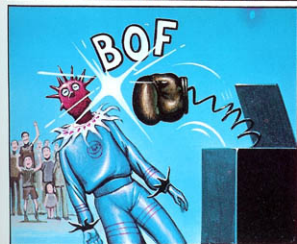
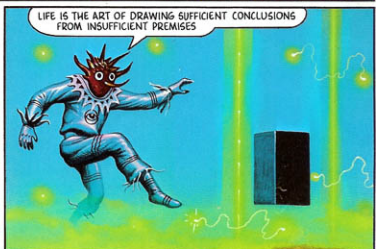
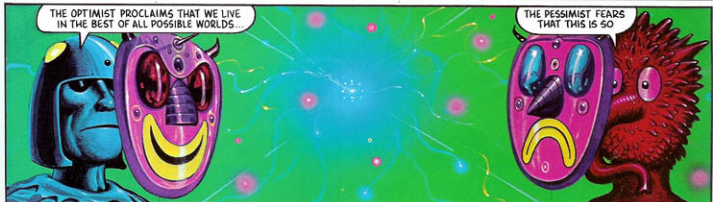
AND, OF COURSE,  
THE FEMALE BODY...

THERE IS A DEFINITE FOCUS HERE AND IT'S DEEP...  
MUCH DEEPER THAN ANYTHING I'VE EVER  
COME ACROSS BEFORE

PLANET WAVES TELL ME THAT YOU PAID  
THE PRICE OF SOLITUDE... BUT THAT  
NOW YOU ARE OUT OF DEBT

I AM NOW CLINGING TO THE EDGE...THE UTMOST LIMIT...

AUVERS  
SUR  
DISE



OUR FRIENDS ARE PUTTING ON A...ER...SPECTACULAR SHOW. I WONDER WHAT THE EARTH-PEOPLE ARE MAKING OF IT ALL.

ACTORS! THEY'RE THE SAME ALL OVER THE GALAXY! THEY JUST HAVE TO BE THE CENTER OF ATTENTION. TOTALLY INSECURE, TOTALLY INSECURE.

YOU RETURNED SOONER THAN I ANTICIPATED, THE EARTH-PEOPLE HAVE FREE ACCESS TO THE LOWER BAYS AS YOU INSTRUCTED AND I HAVE INFORMED THEM OF THEIR RIGHT UNDER GALACTIC BYLAW...

FREE PASSAGE TO ANY PORT OF CALL ON OUR FLIGHT PATH



GOOD AFTERNOON, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. WELCOME ABOARD SPACESHIP ICARUS. IF THE THOUGHT OF FLYING TOO CLOSE TO THE SUN WORRIES YOU WE ADVISE YOU TO LEAVE IMMEDIATELY.

THIS IS CRAZY, JOE. WE CAN'T JUST UP AND GO TO ALPHA CENTAURI! MY WIFE IS EXPECTING ME HOME AT FIVE-THIRTY!

BELIEVE ME, ED. IT'S ALL FOR THE BEST. ANDROMEDA IS THE ONLY SAFE PLACE TO HIDE FROM THE MAFIA.

YOU'D BETTER BE RIGHT ABOUT THIS. IF WE GET TO ORION AND FIND OUT WE'RE NOT ENTITLED TO WELFARE...



LOOK AT THEM, TITAN, EARTH'S REJECTS, THE DEADBEATS, DROP-OUTS, DRUG ADDICTS, PIMPS, AND PROSTITUTES... THE PETTY THIEVES, GAMBLERS, AND ALCOHOLICS... ALL ON THE RUN FROM THEIR DARK, SECRETIVE PAST LIVES.



GEE! I JUST LOVE THOSE TENTACLES. ARE THEY ARMS OR LEGS?!

JUST DEPENDS... WHAT DO YOU DESIRE THEM TO BE?

:GIGGLE:

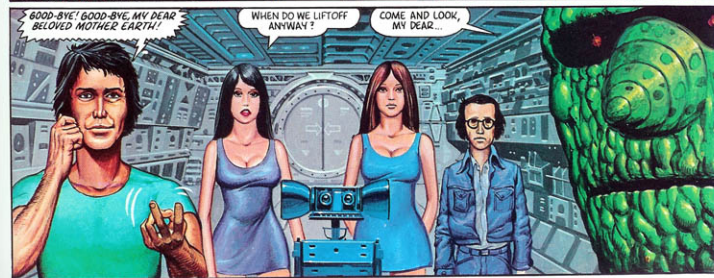
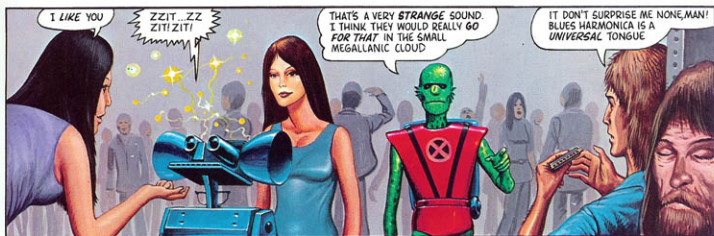
...AND WHEN I SAW THE LIGHTS, I KNEW THAT I WAS FINALLY, TRULY LIBERATED.

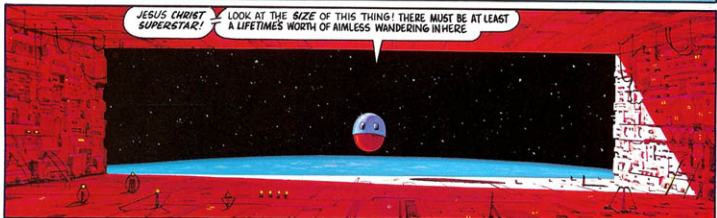
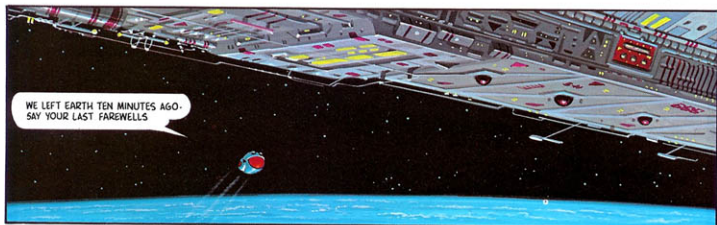
THAT'S COOL, BABE.

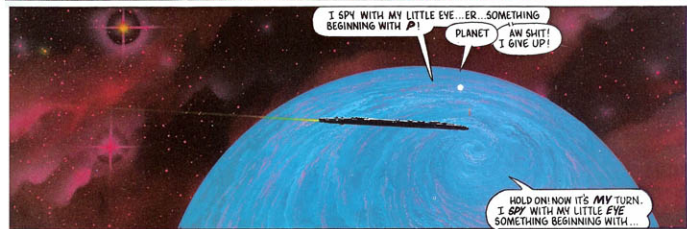
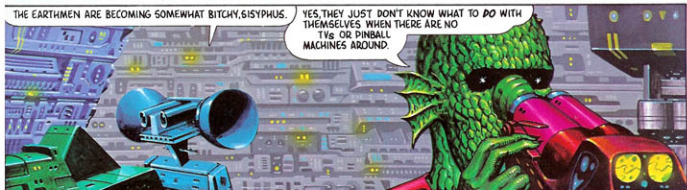
HEY THERE YOU'RE A CUTE LITTLE FELLA















I CAN ASSURE YOU, GENTLEMEN, THEY ARE REAL. THESE CREATURES ARE THE SIRENS OF TITAN AND I ADVISE YOU **NOT** TO GAZE TOO LONG.

WHY? THEY'RE BEAUTIFUL...



PRECISELY.



I WANDERED LONELY AS AN INTERSTELLAR DUST CLOUD, AMONG A HOST OF GOLDEN CEPHEID VARIABLES.



HEY MAN, WHERE YOU BEEN? YOU MISSED ALL THE FUN.

DO YOU REALIZE, THAT ACCORDING TO E-MC<sup>2</sup> THE UNIVERSE IS **FINITE**... AND YET **UNBOUNDED**!

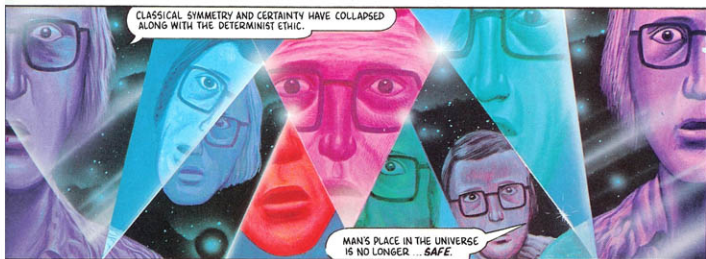
FINITE YET UNBOUNDED, YEAH! THAT'S **EXACTLY** HOW I'D DESCRIBE THESE **TITS**.

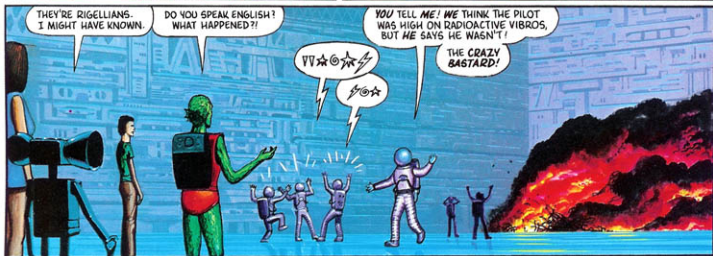
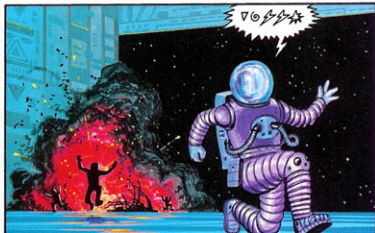
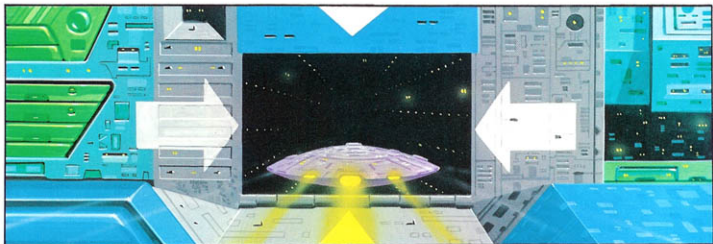
AND THAT ACCORDING TO THE SECOND LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS, THE UNIVERSE IS MOVING **IRREVOCABLY** TOWARD A STATE OF COMPLETE RANDOMNESS, LACKING ANY **ORDER, PATTERN, OR BEAUTY**.

BEAUTY! YEAH! THAT'S ONE THING THEY HAD **PLENTY** OF, I'M TELLIN' YOU...

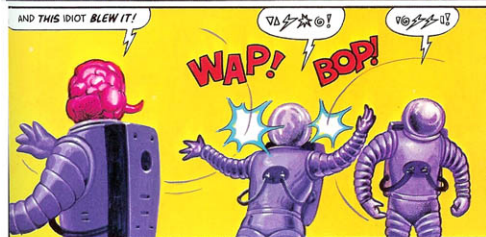
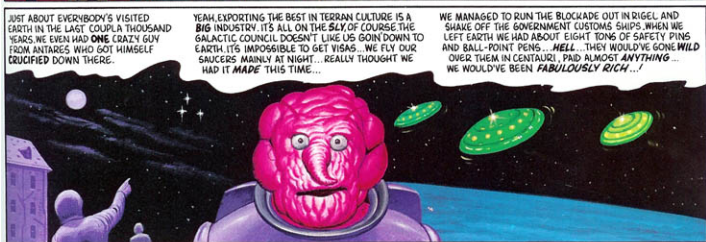
...AND THAT THE **HEAT DEATH** OF THE UNIVERSE IS **INEVITABLE**!











...A VAST ETERNAL MONUMENT TO VANITY AND VICE, IT WAS CONSTRUCTED ACCORDING TO CERTAIN ANCIENT PLANS AND MYSTIC DIMENSIONS WHOSE EXACT SIGNIFICANCE WAS TOTALLY MISINTERPRETED AND COMPLETELY MISUNDERSTOOD OF COURSE... BUT MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, AXIS IS THE HOME OF THE RAYS... WITHOUT WHICH GALACTIC CIVILIZATION WOULD BE A MEANINGLESS TERM.

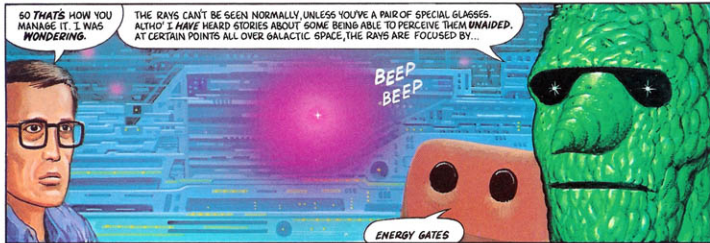
FROM EACH COMPASS POINT A RAY EMANATES. EACH RAY IS REFRACTED BY A VAST CUT-GLASS CRYSTAL INTO A THOUSAND MILLION SMALLER RAYS THAT ARE THROWN OUT ALL OVER THE GALAXY.

IT IS BY VIRTUE OF THESE RAYS THAT TRAVEL OVER DISTANCES INVOLVING MANY LIGHT-YEARS BECOMES A REALITY.



SO THAT'S HOW YOU MANAGE IT. I WAS WONDERING.

THE RAYS CAN'T BE SEEN NORMALLY, UNLESS YOU'VE A PAIR OF SPECIAL GLASSES. ALTHO' I HAVE HEARD STORIES ABOUT SOME BEING ABLE TO PERCEIVE THEM UNAIDED. AT CERTAIN POINTS ALL OVER GALACTIC SPACE, THE RAYS ARE FOCUSED BY...

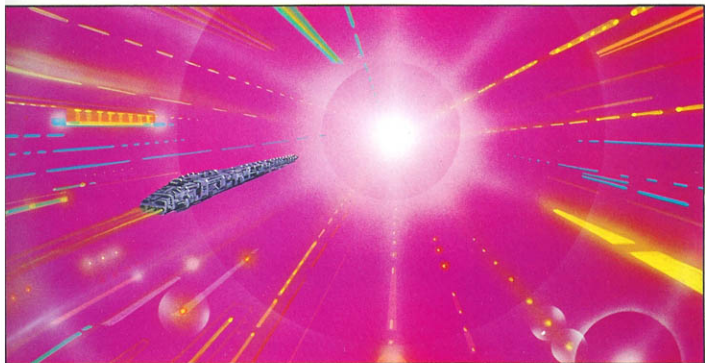


BEEP  
BEEP

ENERGY GATES

FROM HERE ALL RAYS LEAD TO AXIS.



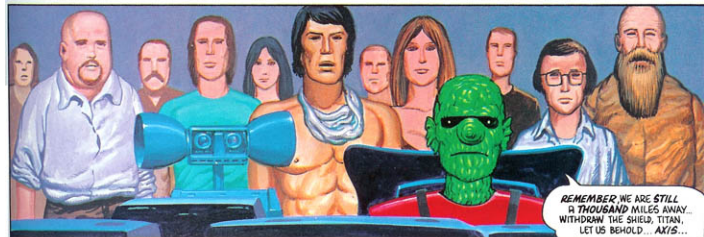
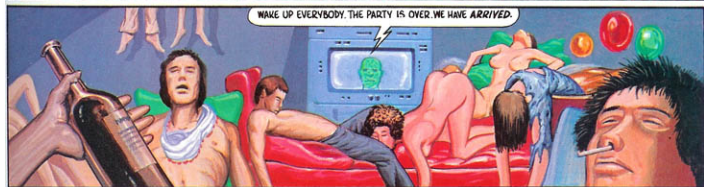


LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IN THE NEXT FORTY-EIGHT HOURS YOU WILL TRAVEL OVER FIFTY THOUSAND LIGHT-YEARS.

THIS CALLS FOR A BIG CELEBRATION.



WAKE UP EVERYBODY, THE PARTY IS OVER, WE HAVE ARRIVED.



REMEMBER, WE ARE STILL A THOUSAND MILES AWAY... WITHDRAW THE SHIELD, TITAN, LET US BEHOLD... AXIS...







AXIS... THE MOST  
FANTASTIC SIGHT  
IN ALL THE GALAXY...



AND THEY'VE ALL GOT TOO MUCH OF  
A HANGOVER TO APPRECIATE IT!

OWW! THOSE BRIGHT LIGHTS!

HEY! THOSE  
ARE MINE! HOW'D  
YOU GET THEM?!

OOHH! MY HEAD

I THINK I'M GONNA  
BE SICK...



LOOK! COSMIC GRAFFITI! ...SOMEBODY'S GOT  
THE SITUATION HERE SUSSSED...

BE AS INNOCENT  
AS DOVES  
AND AS WISE  
AS SERPENTS

AXIS, EARTHMEN, IS NOT *ONE* IDEA, OR EVEN *ONE* PLACE... IT IS A *THOUSAND MILLION* IDEAS AND PLACES... IT IS AN *APOCALYPTIC MAGNET*... A DAZZLING *JEWEL* THAT *HOME* CAN POSSESS... A BRILLIANT *CANDLE* CONSUMING WANDERING BUTTERFLIES... A FANTASTIC *SPIDERS WEB* STEWED WITH THE REMAINS OF A *BILLION DREAMS*... ITS VAST, ETERNAL *PATHOS* IS MATCHED ONLY BY ITS INSIGNIFICANT *PATHETIC BATHOS* OF ITS INNUMERABLE INHABITANTS...

AXIS, VAST CONGLOMERATE *BLOOD CLOT* IN THE HEART OF THE GALAXY... COSMIC *PLUG-HOLE* JAMMED TIGHT WITH THE FLOTSAM AND JETSAM OF COUNTLESS CIVILIZATIONS THE AIMLESS WANDERER AND HE WITH GRAND DESIGNS, *BOTH* ARE DRAWN IRRESISTIBLY HERE FROM THE FARTHEST REACHES OF SPACE FROM THE *DARK RIM* OF THE GALAXY, WHERE ITS NAME ECHOES FROM THE HIGHEST MOUNTAIN TO THE DEEPEST DARK OCEAN AND DRIFTS IN WHISPERS ACROSS THE MOST FERTILE PLAINS AND THE MOST BARREN WASTELANDS...



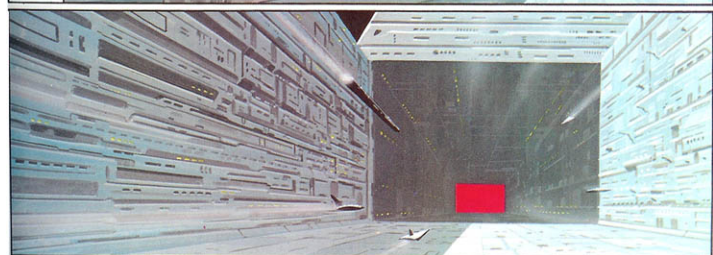
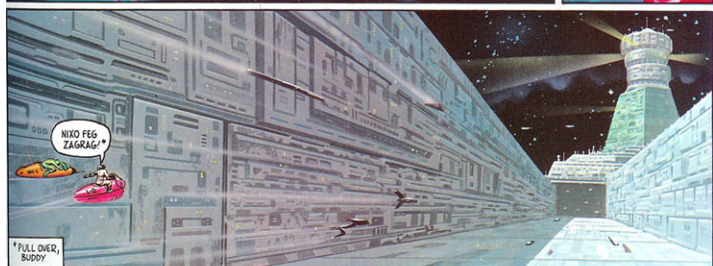
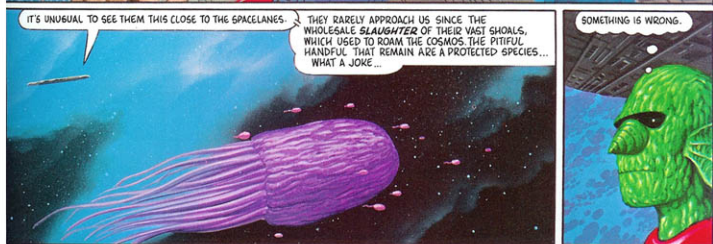
FOR EONS AXIS HAS FIRED THE SATANIC IMAGINATIONS OF A HORDE OF DEMON POETS, PAINTERS, AND WRITERS.

IT IS SAID THAT WHEN A MAN IS TIRED OF *AXIS*, HE IS TIRED OF *LIFE*, FOR THERE IS IN *AXIS* ALL THAT LIFE CAN AFFORD

BUT PERHAPS MOST OF ALL, *AXIS* IS THE ETERNAL *EROTIC CHIMERA*, AN EXTRAORDINARY CREATURE POSSESSED OF AN UNNATURAL *TERRIFYING BEAUTY*, WHICH IS MORE THAN THE EYE OF MAN CAN WITHSTAND, A TERRIFYING BEAUTY WHICH *VIOLENTLY DESTROYS ALL* THAT SURROUNDS IT WHILE CONCEALING DEEP WITHIN... A HEART OF... FATHOMLESS... MYSTERIOUS SILENCE...

THE *EROTIC CHIMERA*, SHE WHO IS A LIVING EMBROIDERY OF THE SUBLIME PARADOX, WHICH IS A COMPLETE MYSTERY NOT ONLY TO THE WORLD... BUT TO ITSELF, ALSO...





OKAY, EVERYBODY THIS IS WHERE WE HAVE TO PARK. IT'S THE END OF THE LINE YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE YOUR CHANCES WITH PUBLIC TRANSPORT FROM NOW ON.



AND REMEMBER, THE HIGHEST QUALITIES ALWAYS MAKE A MAN UNFIT FOR SOCIETY. THE LIE IS A CONDITION OF LIFE... TRUTH IS THE SAFEST LIE AND CLEVER LIARS GIVE DETAILS, BUT THE CLEVEREST DON'T...



... IT SELDOM PAYS TO BE RUDE, IT NEVER PAYS TO BE ONLY HALF-RUDE. A DOG WILL NOT HOWL IF YOU BEAT HIM WITH A BONE. NEVER GIVE A SUCKER AN EVEN BREAK, AND LASTLY... NEVER WHISPER TO THE DEAF OR WINK AT THE BLIND.

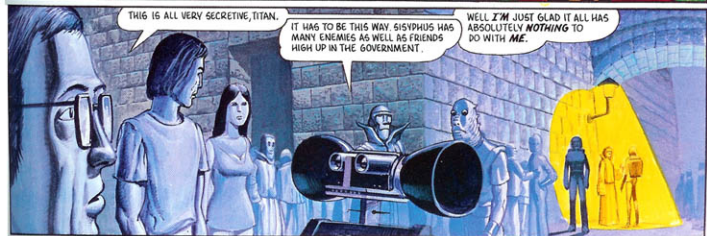
WHATE THAT CRAZY ALIEN SHOUTING ABOUT JOE? CAN'T HEAR A THING ABOVE THE NOISE AROUND HERE.

WHO CARES CAN YOU SEE ANY BARS AROUNDABOUT THIS JOINT?

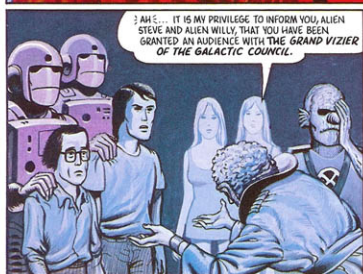


HURRY UP, SISYPHUS THERE'S A HOVERTRAIN ABOUT TO LEAVE.









HA HAH! THE HALF-CYCLE HAS PASSED, AND SO...  
UNTIL TOMORROW... *AU REVOIR, MES ENFANTS!*

THANK THE STARS! SUCH HUMILIATION! IT'S *INCONCEIVABLE!* THAT  
DOG SHALL PAY *DEARLY* FOR THIS.

HAHEM! THE EARTHMEN,  
YOUR OMNIPOTENCE...



I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING BUT THINGS AREN'T  
WHAT THEY SEEM! I CAN ASSURE YOU YOU'RE *NOT* SILLY.  
WE'RE *DIPLOMATS* AND WE HAVE TO HUMOR THAT  
MAD DOG FOR THE SAKE OF AXIS.

EVERY DAY AT THE ZENITH WE HAVE TO BEHAVE  
RIDICULOUSLY AT SAY SILLY THINGS OR ELSE  
HE'LL DETONATE THE OLEFACTIVE.

THE OLEFACTIVE?

I SUPPOSE IT GIVES HIM SOME *PERVERTED*  
*PLEASURE* TO SEE IMPORTANT CIVIC  
DIGNITARIES GROVEL LIKE MORONS...  
*THE SWINE!*



I'LL GET STRAIGHT TO THE POINT. AXIS IS BEING HELD  
TO RANSOM. THERE'S A TERRORIST STATIONED OUTSIDE  
THE MAIN INTAKE OF THE VENTILATOR COMPLEX  
WITH A *READLY OLEFACTIVE DEVICE!*

ONCE HE GETS THROUGH MAKING US CRAWL,  
HE WANTS A BILLION BILLION CREDITS  
TRANSFERRED TO AN UNREGISTERED BANK  
ACCOUNT IN THE WHITE DWARVES OF  
THE CRABLIKE NEBULA.

ER, WHAT'S THIS  
OLEFACTIVE  
DEVICE THING?

TO PUT IT  
SUCCINCTLY  
A *MAMMOTH*  
*STINK BOMB!*

THE SMELL IS *UNIMAGINABLE*.  
I CAN ASSURE YOU! AXIS  
WOULD BECOME *ABSOLUTELY*  
*UNINHABITABLE!*  
THERE WOULD BE  
*UTTER CHAOS!*



I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS  
IS ACTUALLY  
HAPPENING.

THIS IS ALL VERY  
INTERESTING, BUT WHAT'S  
IT GOT TO DO WITH US?

WELL... THIS TERRORIST,  
THIS MADMAN... *BARONY'S*  
HIS NAME... WE  
HAPPEN TO KNOW...

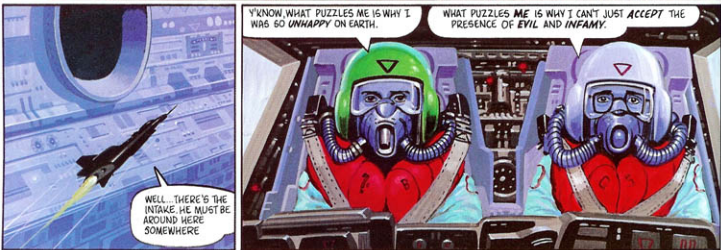
HE'S *TERRIFIED*  
OF EARTHMEN

I KNOW EXACTLY  
HOW HE FEELS.

I MEAN, YOU HUMANS *DO* HAVE A  
REPUTATION FOR BEING *DEADLY*.  
SO WE THOUGHT...

*GUARDS!...*  
BRING THEM  
BACK PLEASE.



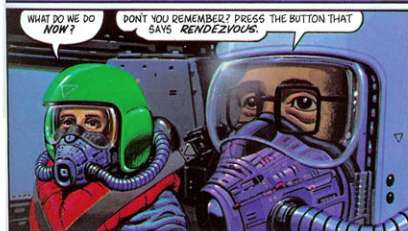






I FEEL LIKE CHRIST. I'M PAYING FOR THE SINS OF THE HUMAN RACE.

HEY WILLY!  
THERE!...



WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

DON'T YOU REMEMBER? PRESS THE BUTTON THAT SAYS *RENDEZVOUS*.



IT'S A GOOD JOB THEY SIMPLIFIED THE CONTROLS OF THIS THING FOR US...



WOW! THAT BLUE THING MUST BE THE OLEFACTIVE...

CHRIST! WHAT A STINK BOMB CAN YOU IMAGINE IT IF...

SHUT UP, WILL YOU?



THIS BEARS AN UNCANNY RESEMBLANCE TO A LION'S MOUTH.

...AND SINCE I HAVE DECIDED TO BRAVE THE DREAD PERIL OF THE ABSOLUTE  
LONELINESS OF INTERGALACTIC SPACE AND GO INTO VOLUNTARY EXILE,  
I DECIDED TO COME AND GEE FOR ONE LAST TIME, O MASTER

REMEMBER NIETZSCHE! THE MORE TERRIFYING THE  
CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE, THE BETTER FOR MAN SO THAT  
HIS FREEDOM, POWER, AND IMAGINATION CAN BE TESTED TO  
THE BREAKING POINT ... TO FIND OUT WHETHER  
HE IS IN ANY NEED OF FAITH AT THE END.

REMEMBER KIERKEGAARD IF YOU ARE CAPABLE OF BECOMING A MAN,  
THEN THE DANGER AND THE HARSH JUDGEMENT OF EXISTENCE ON  
YOUR THOUGHTLESSNESS WILL HELP YOU BECOME ONE.

WHEN IS A STRAIGHT LINE NOT A STRAIGHT LINE?  
WE DO NOT SEE THE BEAMS IN OUR OWN EYE.  
SPACE IS CURVED AND THERE ARE NO TRUTHS  
OUTSIDE THE GATES OF EDEN.

FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS THE SAFETY OF SOULS WAS  
ENTRUSTED TO THEOLOGICIANS WHO COULD SPEND MONTHS  
DEBATING THE PRECISE CONSEQUENCES THAT ENSUED  
WHEN A MOUSE NIBBLED A CONSECRATED WAFER.

AND OF THE  
PRESENT AGE?

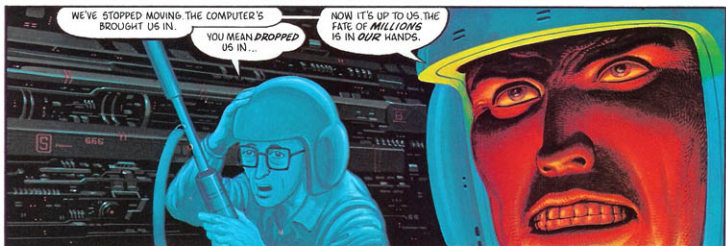
THOUGHT, FEELING, AND IMAGINATION ARE AT WAR.  
THE TASK IS NOT TO ANNUL ONE AT THE EXPENSE  
OF THE OTHER, BUT ON THE CONTRARY, TO PRESERVE  
THEIR EQUILIBRIUM, THEIR SIMULTANEITY ...

AND THE PLANE ON WHICH THEY ARE UNITED  
IS **EXISTENCE!**

WE ARE INVOLVED IN A LIFE THAT SURPASSES  
UNDERSTANDING AND OUR HIGHEST  
BUSINESS IS OUR DAILY LIFE.

NOTHING BELONGS TO US BUT TIME, AND TO REALIZE THE  
UNIMPORTANCE OF TIME IS THE GATE OF WISDOM.

BUT THERE IS ONE FINAL THING TO  
BE SAID AND IT IS THIS ...







OKAY! THE STATE SECRETARY CAN TAKE A REST FROM HIS PUSH-UPS. NOW LET'S SEE THE MINISTER FOR DEFENSE PERFORM A FEW CARTWHEELS WHILE SAYING SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS TWENTY TIMES, BACKWARDS...

HA HA! THAT'S A GOOD ONE WILLY  
HA HA HA! HA HA HA!

WE'LL GET YOU FOR THIS! IF IT  
TAKES FOREVER, WE'LL GET YOU!



OH, HI SIS, COME IN  
AND ENJOY THE SHOW

ER, I THINK WE'D BETTER GO. THE COUNCIL GAVE ME YOUR  
MESSAGE WHEN I GOT BACK. I'VE BROUGHT EVERYONE, AND  
WE HAVE AN UNMARKED SHIP AS YOU INSTRUCTED.



WELL, SO LONG BARYON. KEEP THEM AT IT FOR A  
COUPLE OF HOURS, THEN SCRAM YOURSELF. NOW DON'T  
FORGET WHAT I TOLD YOU ABOUT YOUR MOTHER, AND  
IF YOU'RE EVER NEAR EARTH SOMETIME, CALL ME AT THAT  
NUMBER I GAVE YOU. YOU'RE ALWAYS WELCOME... SEE YOU,  
OKAY... TAKE CARE, SEE YOU OLD SON!

SEE YA  
BARYON



SET COURSE FOR THE EDGE  
OF THE GALAXY TITAN.

GEE! I KNOW WILLY, HE WAS REALLY  
QUITE A NICE GUY, FOR A TERRORIST.

I HOPE YOU REALIZE, YOU'RE  
BOTH ON THE FILES  
NOW.

AH FUCK IT, SIS, WE WERE DOOMED  
LONG AGO. WHAT'S A FEW MORE  
SLAPS IN GOD'S FACE GONNA DO?



BOY! THOSE GUYS MUST'VE  
DONE SOMETHING UTTERLY  
UNNAMEABLE!

THESE THINGS HAVEN'T  
BEEN ACTIVATED FOR A  
THOUSAND YEARS!

THEY BIMME THE CREEPS  
JUST LOOKIN' AT 'EM.  
HURRY UP AN' LET'S  
GET OUTTA HERE

HOW DO YOU  
SPELL, STEVE?





YOU MEAN YOU REALLY **HAVEN'T** HEARD OF THE LEGENDARY **ARMOURED AGASSASSINS**? YOU'RE CONDEMNED TO BE FUGITIVES SCURRYING FROM SHADOW TO SHADOW FOR THE REST OF YOUR DAYS.

CHOKE! YOU MEAN... UNTIL THE DAY WE DIE...?

DON'T WORRY, IF THOSE THINGS ARE AS EFFICIENT AS I'VE HEARD, THAT COULD BE TOMORROW.

YE-RR-Y GOOD, TITAN. YE-RR-Y GOOD.

...A MOMENT'S PLEASURE, AN ETERNITY OF TORMENT...  
YAWN? WHAT ELSE IS NEW?



OPTIMISM? WILLY!... WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU!?

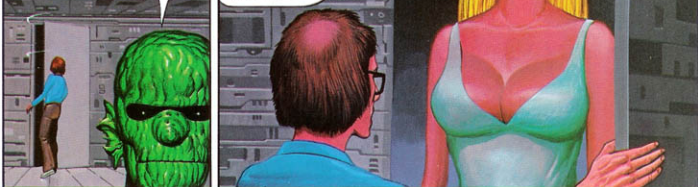
MAIS C'EST NORMAL. THE BASIS OF OPTIMISM IS SHEER TERROR. UNFORTUNATELY I'VE READ OSCAR WILDE TOO, WILLY...



CALM DOWN, WILLY. THERE'S SOMETHING THAT MIGHT CHEER YOU UP...



WE HAVE A COUPLE OF **SPECIAL GUESTS** ON BOARD...



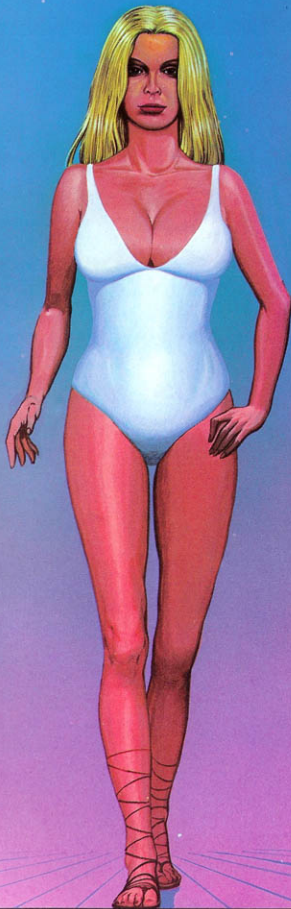
HI THERE, WILLY. IT'S ME, REMEMBER? **BARPO... THE RIGELLIAN**

I WANT 'CHA T'MEET... **SOLARA**...





HEL-LO WILLY.  
I'M SO PLEASED TO MEET YOU.



HEL-LO

HEY! WAIT A MINUTE! SHE  
SAID HELLO TO ME

COOL IT WILLY,  
COOL IT.

WHAD'YA  
MEAN,  
COOL IT!

OH WELL, AT LEAST THEY'VE  
FORGOTTEN DEATH FOR  
THE MOMENT.

EASY BOYS, EASY! SOLARA'S A SENSITIVE. SHE CAN TUNE IN TO THEM  
OL' COSMIC WAVES... YESSIEEE... FROM WAY DOWN IN THE INFRA-  
RED TO WAY UP IN THE ULTRA-VIOLET.



AND X-RAYS ARE HER SPECIALITY,  
SO DON'T TELL HER NO LIES...  
SHE CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH YOU.

WHAT'S THE ANGLE, BARPO.  
EVEN HONESTY IS A  
FINANCIAL SPECULATION  
WHERE YOU'RE  
CONCERNED...

EVER HEARD  
OF CELITO?

OF COURSE, HASN'T  
EVERYONE? OH, SO  
THAT'S IT. SOLARA IS...

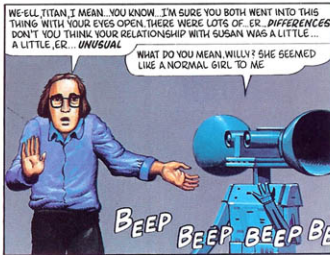
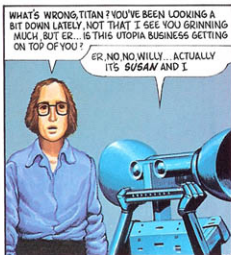
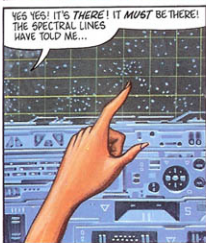
YEP! SHE'S GOING  
TO FIND IT FOR ME!

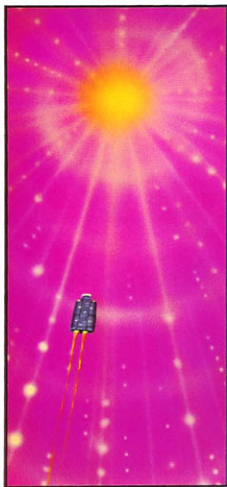


IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE SOMEWHERE  
IN THE SECTOR WE'RE PASSING  
THROUGH RIGHT NOW! WOULDN'T IT  
BE AMAZING TO FIND EXACTLY W...

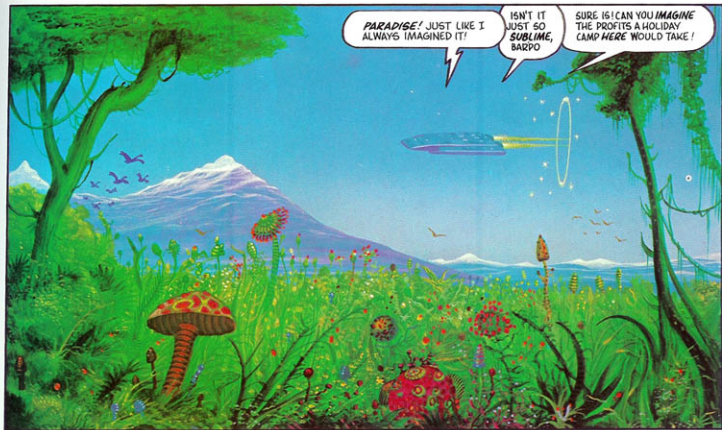
IT'S AMAZING TO FIND SOMEONE  
WHO STILL BELIEVES IN UTOPIAS.











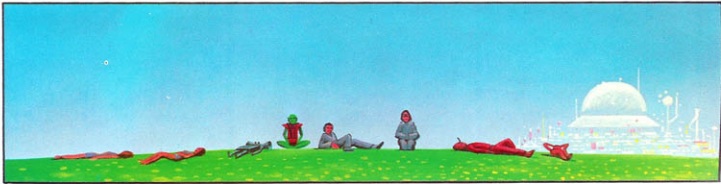
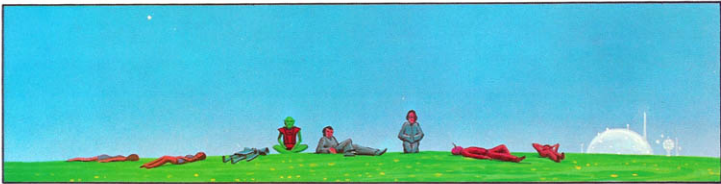
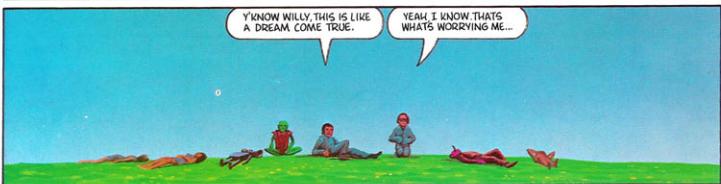
PARADISE! JUST LIKE I  
ALWAYS IMAGINED IT!

ISN'T IT  
JUST SO  
SUBLINE,  
BARPO

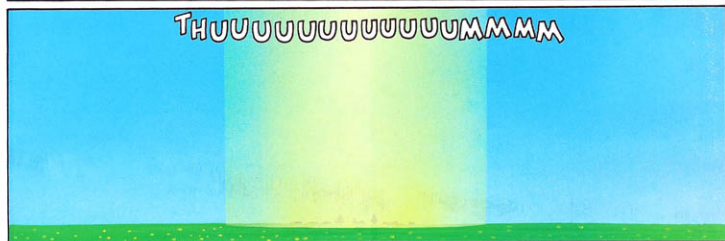
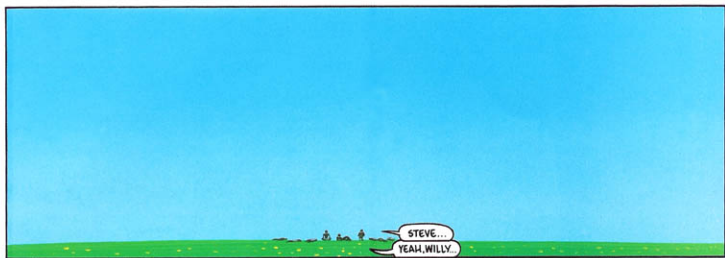
SURE IS! CAN YOU IMAGINE  
THE PROFITS A HOLIDAY  
CAMP HERE WOULD TAKE!

Y'KNOW WILLY THIS IS LIKE  
A DREAM COME TRUE.

YEAH I KNOW THATS  
WHATS WORRYING ME...











WELCOME HOME SOLARA... WHAT WIDE-EYED LITTLE FISHES HAVE YOU HOOKED FOR US *THIS* TIME ...



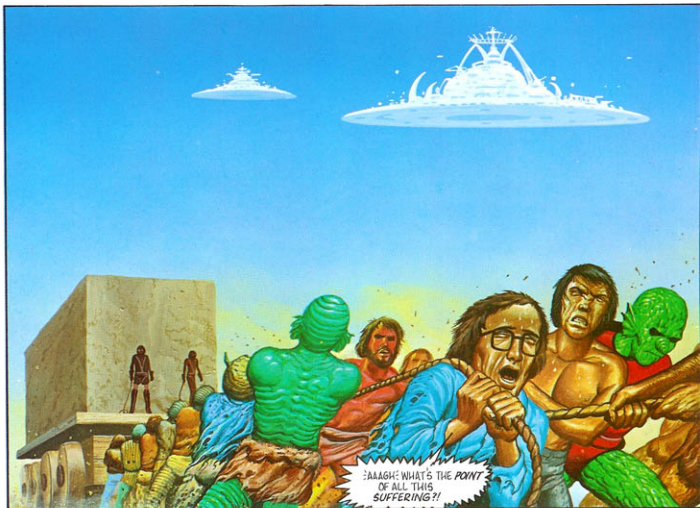
I'VE GOT A HORRIBLE FEELING... LIKE I'VE JUST BEEN DRAGGED OUT OF A WARM BED ON A FROSTY MORNING.

3608: MY BEAUTIFUL UTOPIA! **GONE!**



*HAHAHA!*... UTOPIA EXISTS, YES INDEED IT DOES, BUT IT IS ONLY FOR *THE ELITE*...

HOW *ELSE* CAN OUR CASTLES IN THE AIR BE SUPPORTED... BUT BY THE ENSLAVING OF *MILLIONS!*





PUT THE ROBOT AND THE TWO ALIENS ON THE CHAIN GANG...

I'VE GOT A SPECIAL TASK FOR THESE TWO HUMANS.



OKAY... YOU, FOUR-EYES, HAVE TO CARRY THOSE STONE BLOCKS OVER TO *THERE*...

AND YOU, BIG BOY, HAVE TO CARRY THEM *BACK* AGAIN.

HA HA HA  
HA HA HA  
HA HA!



JUMP TO IT! BY THE END OF THE SHIFT I WANT TO SEE *EVERY* STONE THERE IN EXACTLY THE SAME POSITION AS IT IS *NOW*!

HA HA  
HA HA!



HEY, HEY MAN! WHAT'S THE SCORE? ONLY THE SCUM GIT SENT DOWN HERE... THE DEPRIVED AND CORRUPT... MASOCHISTS BODOMITES, NECROPHILIACS... I'M A PEDERAST... WHAT YOU' IN HERE FOR?...



HUH... IDEALISM...



YAAAAA! IDEALISTS!  
GASP! KEEP AWAY EVERYBODY!

SHRIEK



OK, BREAK TIME!  
I'VE GOT A HALF-A CYCLE T'FEAST ON THIS RARE DELICACY!





YOU **EARTHMEN!** ALWAYS CAUSING **TROUBLE!**  
GET OVER THERE WITH YOUR OWN KIND...

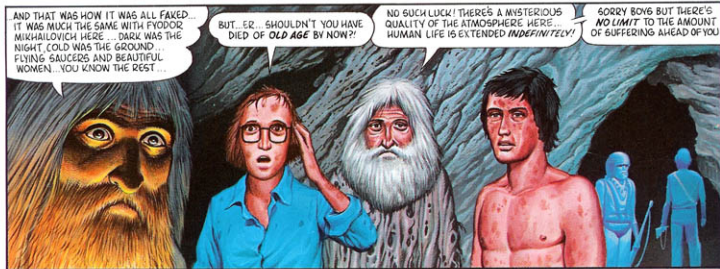


IN THE CORNER... WITH  
**DOSTOYEVSKY** AND **TOLSTOY!**



!?

DRINK THIS,  
MY SON



AND THAT WAS HOW IT WAS ALL FAKED...  
IT WAS MUCH THE SAME WITH **FYODOR**  
**MIKHAILOVICH** HERE... DARK WAS THE  
NIGHT, COLD WAS THE GROUND...  
FLYING SAUCERS AND BEAUTIFUL  
WOMEN... YOU KNOW THE REST...

BUT... ER... SHOULDN'T YOU HAVE  
DIED OF **OLD AGE** BY NOW?

NO SUCH LUCK! THERE'S A MYSTERIOUS  
QUALITY OF THE ATMOSPHERE HERE...  
HUMAN LIFE IS EXTENDED **INDEFINITELY!**

SORRY BOYB BUT THERE'S  
**NO LIMIT** TO THE AMOUNT  
OF SUFFERING AHEAD OF YOU



BREAKTIME IS OVER,  
GET BACK TO WORK!

YOU BOY!  
COME HERE!



YOU WERE **TWO MICROSECONDS** SLOW IN GETTING ON  
YOUR FEET! WHAT DO YOU **MEAN** BY BEING **TWO**  
**MICROSECONDS** SLOW?! YOU HUMAN BEINGS! YOU  
REALLY GET ON MY **NERVES**... JUST BECAUSE YOU  
WALK ERECT AND HAVE DEVELOPED SELF-CONSC-  
IOUSNESS YOU THINK YOU'RE **IT**, DON'T YOU?  
GODS GIFT TO THE **UNIVERSE!**



YOU THINK HAVING **RED BLOOD** MAKES YOU  
**THE TOPS**... **GREEN** IS JUST NOT GOOD  
ENOUGH FOR YOU, IS IT? OH NO, IT HAS  
TO BE **RED** AND WHAT'S **MORE**...  
**WARM** TOO!! ?YECOF! YOU HOMO  
SAPIENS... YOU MAKE ME **PUKE!**



MY GUT **WRETCHES** WHEN  
I LAY SENSORS ON YOU!  
AND YOU KNOW  
WHAT ELSE ?!!



YOUR HEARTBEAT **ANNOYS** ME...



ER... SORRY



SORRY! SORRY!  
AHA HA HA HA HA!  
DID YOU HEAR THAT?

HE'S SORRY!



WHY YOU MISERABLE LITTLE TURD, IF YOU WERE REALLY SORRY YOU'D DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT NOW, WOULDN'T YOU?!



YOU JUST BETTER WATCH YOUR STEP, YOU MANGY MAMMAL... I'M GONNA BE LOOKIN' FOR YOU FROM NOW ON!



HEY LORD, NOBODY KNOWS THE TROUBLE I SEEN...

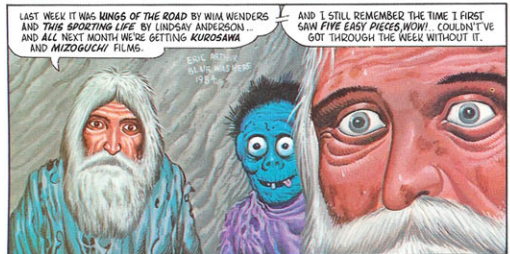


OOOH! MY ACHING BACK... MY POOR ARMS, MY LEGS MY FINGERS... MY FINGERNAILS!

YOU'LL GET USED TO IT! PRETTY SOON YOU'LL BE SO NUMB YOU WON'T EVEN KNOW YOU'RE IN PAIN...

THE DAYS WILL BLUR INTO WEEKS... THE WEEKS INTO YEARS... THE YEARS, CENTURIES... CENTURIES, MILLENNIA, MILLENNIA IN FINITY. MUMBLE MUMBLE GIGGLE? BURP... THE DAYS WILL BLUR INTO WEEKS... THE WEEKS INTO YEARS... THE YEARS, CENTURIES... CENTURIES, MILLENNIA, MILLENNIA IN FINITY...

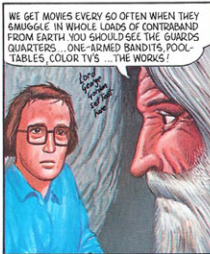
DON'T LET HIM BOTHER YOU, SURE, THINGS ARE BAD BUT THEY COULD BE WORSE! WE GET FILMS FROM EARTH TWICE A WEEK.



LAST WEEK IT WAS *KINGS OF THE ROAD* BY WIM WIENDERS AND *THIS SPORTING LIFE* BY LINDSAY ANDERSON... AND ALL NEXT MONTH WE'RE GETTING *KUROSAWA* AND *MIZOGUCHI* FILMS.

ERIC MITCHELL ALIVE WAS HERE 1984

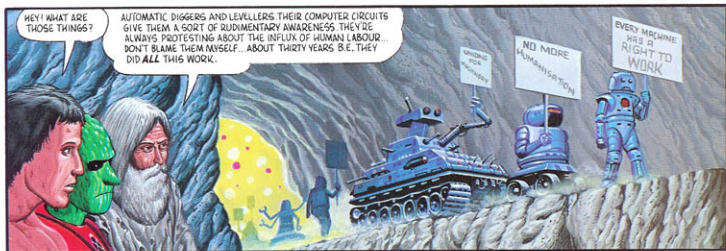
AND I STILL REMEMBER THE TIME I FIRST SAW *FIVE EASY PIECES* NOW! COULDN'T GET THROUGH THE WEEK WITHOUT IT.



WE GET MOVIES EVERY 60 SECONDS WHEN THEY SMUGGLE IN WHOLE LOADS OF CONTRABAND FROM EARTH. YOU SHOULD SEE THE GUARDS QUARTERS... ONE-ARMED BANDITS, POOL-TABLES, COLOR TV'S... THE WORKS!

Lord George, James Earl Ray, and the American





HEY! WHAT ARE THOSE THINGS?

AUTOMATIC DIGGERS AND LEVELLERS. THEIR COMPUTER CIRCUITS GIVE THEM A SORT OF RUDIMENTARY AWARENESS. THEY'RE ALWAYS PROTESTING ABOUT THE INFLUX OF HUMAN LABOUR... DON'T BLAME THEM MYSELF... ABOUT THIRTY YEARS B.E. THEY DID **ALL** THIS WORK.

B.E.? WHAT'S THAT?

**BEFORE ENTROPY!** ONCE UPON A TIME EVERYTHING IN THE GALAXY WAS HUNKY DORY... UNTIL SOME **SMART ASS** FIGURED OUT THE THERMODYNAMICS OF EXISTENCE... LISTEN EVERYBODY! YOU CAN ALL GET **OUT** MORE THAN YOU PUT IN...

SO NOW WE HAVE TO SPEND OUR LIVES DOWN HERE MINING FOSSIL FUELS SO **THOSE FUCKERS** UP THERE CAN HAVE THEIR CAKE AND EAT IT...

DON'T THEY **KNOW** THERE'S ONLY **SO MUCH** ENERGY THAT'S AVAILABLE FOR WORK?

**IDIOT!** OF COURSE THEY KNOW! WHY DO YOU THINK THESE GORILLAS ARE WALKING AROUND WITH TRUNCHEONS AND DEATH RAYS?!

THE **DUMB SHIT!** HE ONLY GOT **HALF** THE PICTURE OF COURSE

**SURE.** IT WAS POSSIBLE TO GET OUT MORE THAN YOU PUT IN... BUT ONLY FOR **SOME**... FOR THE **REST** IT WAS A CASE OF PUT IN MORE AND GET OUT **LESS**

IT'S AN IRRATIONAL FEAR OF THE MOB, MATE. AN IRRATIONAL FEAR OF THE MOB!

WELL, WELL, WELL... IT'S OUR LITTLE FRIEND WITH THE HEARTBEAT DISCUSSING ENTROPOLITICS... A **FORBIDDEN** SUBJECT!!

THIS TIME YOUR IN TROUBLE BOY! COME HERE!



THEY'RE IN CORRIDOR SIXTEEN SUB-SYSTEM FOUR... LOCKED THEMSELVES IN THE GUARDS MESS-ROOM COMMANDER

OKAY... BURN YOUR WAY IN.

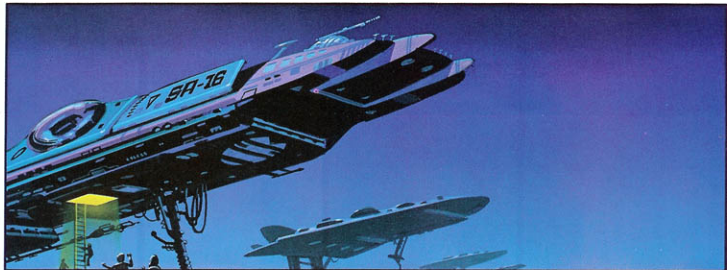
WHY DON'T THEY JUST SURRENDER WE ALL HAVE TO **COMPROMISE** DON'T WE?

LET ME AT 'EM! I'LL **RIP** THEIR THROATS OUT AN **DRINK THEIR BLOOD?**









TITAN. WHY HAS IT BEEN GETTING *DARKER* FOR THE LAST FEW HOURS?

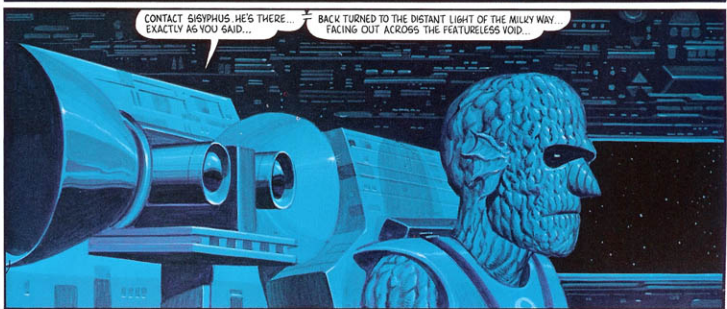
WE'RE AT THE VERY *EDGE* OF THE GALAXY, WILLY...

JUST AHEAD OF US THERE'S A *BILLION* LIGHT-YEARS OF NEAR TOTAL VACUUM.



CONTACT SISYPHUS. HE'S THERE... EXACTLY AS YOU SAID...

BACK TURNED TO THE DISTANT LIGHT OF THE MILKY WAY... FACING OUT ACROSS THE FEATURELESS VOID...







W...WHAT IS IT?!

A **ROBOT**... ONCE UPON A TIME IT  
USED TO BE THE **MOST SENTIENT**  
BEING IN THE UNIVERSE

WHAT  
HAPPENED?!

GUESS IT ALL GOT **TOO MUCH**

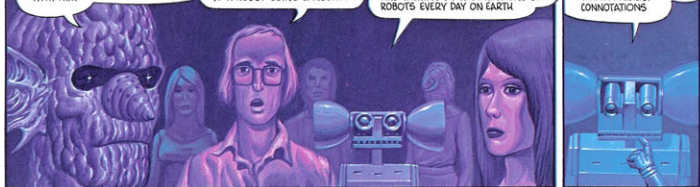


OPEN THE COMMUNICATION RELAYS  
TITAN, I NEED TO HAVE A FEW **WORDS**  
WITH HIM

AREN'T THERE CERTAIN WELL  
DEFINED PHILOSOPHICAL OBJECTIONS  
TO A ROBOT USING LANGUAGE?

I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT IT TOO MUCH  
WILLY. THERE'S AN AWFUL LOT OF THINKING  
AND TALKING DONE BY MILLIONS OF  
ROBOTS EVERY DAY ON EARTH

INTERESTING WORD, **ROBOT**.  
IT'S ETYMOLOGY DISPLAYS  
CERTAIN **SOCIALIST**  
CONNOTATIONS



GOD! WHAT'S THAT  
INCREDIBLY LOUD MUSIC  
BLASTING OUT?!

WE'RE IN LUCK!  
HE'S IN!

**I GOT NO REASON IT'S ALL TOO MUCH  
YOU'LL ALWAYS  
FIND ME  
OUT TO LUNCH** ♪



IT IS SAID THAT HE TRANSFORMED HIMSELF INTO THIS  
AUTOMATION AND CAME OUT TO THE VERY EDGE THE  
GALAXY TO HIDE FOREVER FROM THE SIGHT OF BEINGS-  
FOR-THEMSELVES. HE HASN'T BROKEN TO ANOTHER  
CONSCIOUS BEING FOR OVER A **THOUSAND YEARS**

JESUS  
CHRIST



HEY MAN... TELL ME...  
WHAT'S IT LIKE





YES...BUT I CAN'T COMPLAIN...  
I CONCEDE, THERE IS NO PLEASURE  
BUT... THERE IS NO PAIN  
I AM FREE FROM DESIRE...  
IN MY UNIVERSE THERE IS  
NO WOMAN CONSEQUENTLY  
NO MAN IS MY ENEMY

ONCE I USED TO DEBATE PASSIONATELY  
WITH MY PEERS THE GREAT INTELLECTUAL  
PROBLEMS OF OUR AGE... NOW I REALIZE  
THAT SEMI-CONDUCTORS AND CIRCUITRY  
IS ALL THERE IS...MY PREOCCUPATION IS  
WITH BEING ABLE TO KNOW WITHOUT  
FEELING...

EVERY DAY IN EVERY WAY  
I AM GETTING NUMBER  
AND NUMBER

I PERCEIVE YOU ARE SELF-CONSCIOUS ENTITIES  
HOW CAN YOU STAND IT! YOU ARE OUT THERE  
IN THE FEARFUL REALM OF EXISTENCE! WHY  
DO YOU NOT SCREAM... BECOME NAUSEOUS  
ARE YOU NOT AWARE OF THE WISE  
OLD SAYING...

...IN ORDER TO ACT WISELY  
IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO BE WISE



DOES THIS THOUGHT NOT FILL YOU WITH **TERROR**  
YOU ARE AT THE **MERCY** OF THE ELEMENTS  
YOU POSSESS **ONLY** WHAT WILL NOT BELONG  
IN A **SHIPWRECK** ... AND THE **REEFS** ARE  
ALL AROUND YOU ... AND...

YOUR PARENTS HAVE NOT TAUGHT YOU  
HOW TO SWIM



WHAT'S HE ON ABOUT, MY  
PARENTS TAUGHT ME

WOW! THAT GUY SOUNDS LIKE A  
**BORN PESSIMIST**

LISTEN YOU **WHINER** OPTIMISM AND  
SELF-PITY ARE POLES OF **CONTRADICT**



GREETINGS  
FELLOW **COWARD**



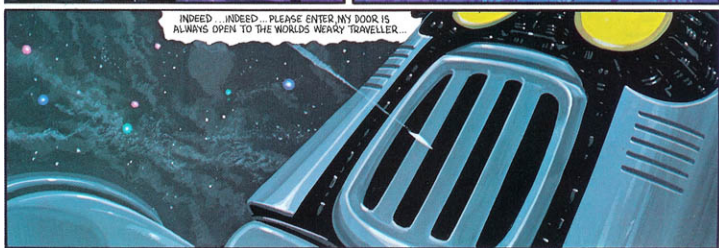
SISYPHUS HERE ... YOU REMEMBER ME? A THOUSAND YEARS  
AGO I LEFT SOMETHING HERE ... SORRY I'M LATE BUT I  
GOT DELAYED SOMEWHAT ...

BY ABOUT SEVEN CENTURIES.

WELL ... YOU **KNOW**  
HOW THINGS ARE ...



INDEED ... INDEED ... PLEASE ENTER, MY DOOR IS  
ALWAYS OPEN TO THE WORLD'S WEARY TRAVELLER...





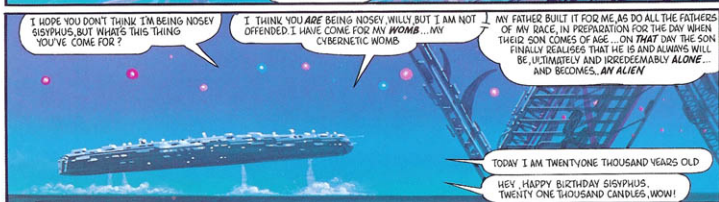


THERE'S SOME FUNNY  
THINGS GOING ON  
INSIDE THIS GUYS  
HEAD

I HOPE YOU DON'T THINK I'M BEING NOSEY  
SISYPHUS, BUT WHAT'S THIS THING  
YOU'VE COME FOR?

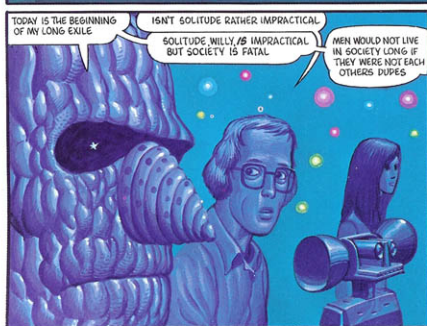
I THINK YOU ARE BEING NOSEY, WILLY, BUT I AM NOT  
OFFENDED. I HAVE COME FOR MY WOMB... MY  
CYBERNETIC WOMB

MY FATHER BUILT IT FOR ME, AS DO ALL THE FATHERS  
OF MY RACE, IN PREPARATION FOR THE DAY WHEN  
THEIR SON COMES OF AGE... ON THAT DAY THE SON  
FINALLY REALIZES THAT HE IS AND ALWAYS WILL  
BE, ULTIMATELY AND IRREDEEMABLY ALONE...  
AND BECOMES... AN ALIEN



TODAY I AM TWENTY-ONE THOUSAND YEARS OLD

HEY, HAPPY BIRTHDAY SISYPHUS.  
TWENTY-ONE THOUSAND CANDLES, WOW!



TODAY IS THE BEGINNING  
OF MY LONG EXILE

ISN'T SOLITUDE RATHER IMPRACTICAL

SOLITUDE, WILLY, IS IMPRACTICAL  
BUT SOCIETY IS FATAL

MEN WOULD NOT LIVE  
IN SOCIETY LONG IF  
THEY WERE NOT EACH  
OTHERS DUDES



HERE'S A TIP WILLY, ALWAYS REMEMBER  
WHAT KIERKEGAARD ONCE SAID...  
LIFE MUST BE LIVED FORWARD  
AND UNDERSTOOD BACKWARDS

OH, GEE, ER  
THANKS

LOOK!



A VAST  
CONTROL  
ROOM

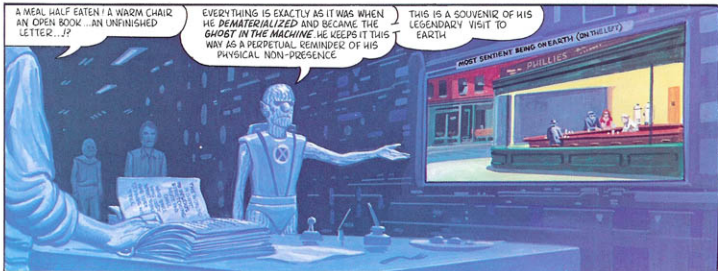
THE BRAIN, INFORMATION  
POURING IN FROM EVERY  
CORNER OF THE UNIVERSE

AND NOBODY  
HERE TO  
MAKE SENSE  
OF IT

A MEAL HALF EATEN / A WARM CHAIR  
AN OPEN BOOK ...AN UNFINISHED  
LETTER...?

EVERYTHING IS EXACTLY AS IT WAS WHEN  
HE DEMATERIALIZED AND BECAME THE  
**GHOST IN THE MACHINE**. HE KEEPS IT THIS  
WAY AS A PERPETUAL REMINDER OF HIS  
PHYSICAL NON-PRESENCE

THIS IS A SOUVENIR OF HIS  
LEGENDARY VISIT TO  
EARTH





YOU ARE FROM EARTH! IF YOU EVER COME BACK THIS WAY AGAIN PLEASE BRING ME A COPY OF HUGO'S THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTREDAME IT IS MY FAVORITE BOOK IN THE WHOLE UNIVERSE

THE ONE REMAINS, THE MANY CHANGE AND PASS; HEAVEN'S LIGHT FOREVER SHINES, EARTH'S SHADOWS FLY; LIFE, LIKE A DOME OF MANY COLOURED GLASS, STAINS THE WHITE RADIANCE OF ETERNITY

OH OH, HE'S FADING AWAY HE CAN'T MAINTAIN COHERENCE FOR VERY LONG, HE ALWAYS DECIDES SHELLEY OR SHAKESPEARE JUST BEFORE HE LOSES IT ALL



BUT THAT I AM FORBID TO TELL THE SECRETS OF MY PRISON HOUSE...



I COULD A TALE UNFOLD...



...WHOSE LIGHTEST WORD WOULD HARROW UP THY SOUL...



FREEZE THY YOUNG BLOOD, MAKE THY TWO EYES, LIKE STARS, STARE DOWN THEIR SPARK...

GONE POOR FUCKER



POOR FUCKER?! HUM, WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS JESUS CHRIST? IT ALL SEEMS A BIT OVERPLAYED TO ME

WHADY MEAN!?

YEAH WELL IT WOULD TO YOU, WOULDN'T IT?



I'VE SUFFERED TOO Y'KNOW

DON'T GIVE ME THAT CRAP WHAT DO YOU REALLY KNOW ABOUT IT... LOOK AT YOURSELF TALL, DARK, HANDSOME EVERY ADVERTISING SIGN ON EARTH SCREENS AT US THAT WE GOT TO LOOK LIKE YOU YOU'VE EVEN GOT THE SAME FUCKING NAME AS THE BIONIC MAN.



DOO STEVE YOUR SO MASCULINE STEVE! HAHAAH! WHAT A DUMB SHIT OF A NAME, WILLY IS BAD BUT STEVE IS WORSE

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT BEING A REAL LOSER IS LIKE SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU'RE ON THE WINNING SIDE... YOU'RE OK... YOU'RE DESIRABLE... YOU'RE THE PARADIGM OF THE SUPERHERO YOU BASTARD EVERYBODY WANTS TO BE LIKE YOU

YES WILLY EVEN YOU

YES FUCK IT EVEN ME!



YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THE WORD ALIENATION MEANS BECAUSE YOU'VE HAD THE BASIC EXISTENTIALIST CORE OF YOUR BEING VERIFIED BY AFFAIRS WITH A MILLION BEAUTIFUL WOMEN

OH I WOULDN'T SAY THAT WILLY... NINE HUNDRED THOUSAND MORE LIKE



Y'SEE! YOU'RE SO GODDAM FUCKING SECURE THAT YOU'RE IMMUNE TO CRITICISM. YOU CAN AFFORD TO JOKE ABOUT IT ALL

WELL, YOU'RE ALWAYS JOKING ABOUT IT

NOW YOU'RE JUST SHOWING YOUR IGNORANCE STEVE STEREOTYPE I NEVER JOKE

IT JUST SOUNDS FUNNY TO YOU LOS YOU THINK LIFE IS ONE BIG JOKE

PLEASE GENTLEMEN! I SYMPATHIZE WITH YOU BOTH. LIFE SEEMS LIKE A JOKE TO ME. BUT A JOKE IN SOMEWHAT QUESTIONABLE TASTE



SOUR GRAPES. YOU'VE JUST GOT THAT FEELING 'COS YOU'RE THE ONE THE JOKE IS ON

NOW THERE'S A WINNER TALKING

LIFE TO ME IS LIKE A CHILDISH PRANK SOMEWHAT BENEATH THE DIGNITY OF A GOD IMAGINE BEING GIVEN A BEAUTIFUL PRESENT... A BOOB OR A TOY... BUT THE BOOK IS A DETECTIVE STORY WITH THE LAST PAGE TORN OUT THE TOY IS A JIG-SAW PUZZLE WITH ONE PIECE MISCHIEVOUSLY MISSING

ONE FEELS RATHER FOOLISH AND SILLY... YOU HAVE THIS IMAGE OF YOURSELF AS A MATURE INDIVIDUAL BUT ALL YOU WANT TO DO IS GET YOUR OWN BACK ON THIS INFANTILE-MINDED CREATURE

IN SHORT... I DON'T SEE HOW WE CAN POSSIBLY CONCEIVE OF GOD AS A LEVEL-HEADED, FREETHINKING, RESPONSIBLE ADULT



IF I EVER MEET THE SPITEFUL LITTLE BASTARD...

I'LL RAM HIS TEDDY BEAR DOWN HIS FUCKING THROAT!

? AH! NOW, IF YOU'LL JUST EXCUSE ME, I'LL CLIMB BACK INTO MY WOMB AND BE GONE

AU REVOIR I'M GOING TO SEARCH THE UNIVERSE TO SEE IF I CAN FIND MY SENSE OF HUMOUR AGAIN



THAT'S THE FIRST TIME IN TEN THOUSAND YEARS I'VE SEEN SISYPHUS SHOUT

IT HAPPENS TO US ALL SOONER OR LATER TITAN

WELL, WHERE TO NEXT?

WHO CARES, IT'S THE GOING THAT COUNTS

OKAY WE'LL GO TO SIRIUS THEN, I'VE ALWAYS FANCIED... ANYWHERE, BUT SIRIUS

SORRY I BLEW UP BEFORE, STEVE I GUESS IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT YOU'RE TALL DARK AND HANDSOME

WE MUST ALL SHARE THE BLAME FOR THAT



O GOD! I COULD BE BOUNDED IN A NUTSHELL,  
AND COUNT MYSELF A KING OF INFINITE SPACE,  
WERE IT NOT THAT I HAVE BAD DREAMS



TURN THE MUSIC UP  
LOUD



I CAN'T GET NO



SATISFACTION

TO BE OR NOT TO BE: THAT IS THE QUESTION:  
WHETHER 'TIS NOBLER IN THE MIND TO SUFFER  
THE SLINGS AND ARROWS OF OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE,  
OR TO TAKE ARMS AGAINST A SEA OF TROUBLES;  
AND BY OPPOSING END THEM? TO DIE: TO SLEEP;  
NO MORE; AND BY A SLEEP TO SAY WE END  
THE HEARTACHE AND THE THOUSAND NATURAL SHOCKS  
THAT FLESH IS HEIR TO, 'TIS A CONSUMMATION  
DEVOUTLY TO BE WISH'D.

THE BEGINNING,  
THE MIDDLE  
AND THE END

This is a Faroutboy Scan

