



SCIENCE-Fiction Fanzine

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**Israel Space Week (Jan31-Feb05) 2016:** <http://space.gov.il/event-map/1320>  
**and:** <https://www.algemeiner.com/2016/02/01/nasa-astronauts-arrive-for-israeli-space-week/>

### חדשות האגודה – פברואר 2016 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

מועדון הקריאה של חודש פברואר

יעסוק באסופת הסיפורים "היה יהיה 7" (2015). עותקים של הספר הוגרלו במועדון ינואר, מתנת האגודה.

כל האירועים של האגודה מופיעים בלוח האירועים (שפע אירועים מעניינים, הרצאות, סדנאות, מפגשים ועוד)

לקבלת עדכונים שוטפים על מפגשי מועדון הקריאה ברחבי הארץ ניתן להצטרף לרשימת התפוצה או לדף האגודה

בפייסבוק. Society information is available (in Hebrew) at the Society's site: <http://www.sf-f.org.il>

### In this issue:

This month, we're beginning a new series on Aliens as the main subject matter. We begin with the unfortunate passing away of the song-master and sometime actor David Bowie who put in an impressive performance as an alien in the movie "The Man Who Fell to Earth" (which we review here).

- 1) David Bowie – In Memorium
- 2) MOVIE REVIEW: The Man Who Fell to Earth (starring David Bowie)
- 3) ALIENS – Part I: Good News, Bad News
- 5) Sheer Science: Cold Is as Cold Gets

– Leybl Botwinik (CyberCozen editor)

## David Bowie (1947–2016) – In Memorium

Prepared by Leybl Botwinik



David Bowie had just turned 69 this past January 8<sup>th</sup>, when barely 2 days later the celebratory news had become the tragic news of his passing away due to cancer. A very talented musician (considered one of the most influential writers of pop music), many of his themes (surely the earliest), and much of his lifestyle were SF-futurist oriented.

These include:

- His 1969 debuting song "Space Oddity," which was released at the time of the moon landing. Despite the fact that the literal

meaning of the lyrics relates to an astronaut who is lost in space, this song was used by the BBC in their coverage of the moon landing, and this helped it become such a success

- The album, which followed "Space Oddity," and the two that follow (one of which included the song "The Man Who Sold the World") were also futuristic
- The 1972 "Ziggy Stardust," album about a space-age rock star. This album was followed by others in a similar vein, rock albums built around a central character and concerned with

futuristic themes of Armageddon, gender dysfunction/confusion, and other contemporary themes

- The 1976 cult movie "The Man Who Fell to Earth" [See review below]. With his different-colored eyes and skeletal frame, he looked very much the part of an alien
- In 1977, he released "Station to Station," containing some of the material he had written for the soundtrack to the movie "The Man Who Fell to Earth" (which was not used due to some contractual disagreements)

### **1) More to read/see:**

<http://www.gamesradar.com/11-reasons-david-bowie-is-a-sci-fi-icon/>

[Click the left/right arrows on the main Bowie pictures, and read the texts below, on the same screen]

### **2) Even the Smithsonian has a tribute in his memory:**

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/ist/?next=/smart-news/how-david-bowie-helped-shape-science-fiction-we-know-it-180957774/>

### **3) Here's a great write-up worth looking into, with external links and video clips**

## **David Bowie Made The World a Safer Place for the Alien in Us All**

— Charlie Jane Anders

David Bowie, who [just died of cancer aged 69](#), had an incalculable impact on pop culture throughout his shape-shifting career. But perhaps more than any other musician, he also had a tremendous impact on science fiction. He changed the way we thought about the alien, the uncanny, and the familiar. Bowie's first hit single, "Space Oddity," established him not just as an artist who sang about science-fictional topics like space travel, but also as someone who embraced the discomfort of humanity juxtaposed against the cosmos. The song's churning guitar riffs and psychedelic

[Read more here: <http://io9.gizmodo.com/rip-david-bowie-the-musician-who-changed-science-ficti-1752187018> ]

noises convey something of the disorientation of floating in a tin can, far from home. Over the years that followed, Bowie produced some of the most poignant representations ever of alien visitors, doomed grandeur and tormented supermen. I recently listened to his song "The Man Who Sold the World" on a loop while writing, and it reveals more and more layers of pathos, remorse and arrogance the more you hear it. Bowie's greatest gift to science fiction was that combination of pathos and dissociation, which comes across in a lot of his best songs...

**4) The above article has a link to a PBS digital animation/interview with David Bowie. See at:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFIDXXDsxAo>

**5) Another article worth looking at, with multiple YouTube links to his songs and movie roles: RIP David Bowie: Exploring the Starman's legacy in genre and sci-fi – Aaron Sagers**

<http://www.blastr.com/2016-1-11/rip-david-bowie-exploring-starmans-legacy-genre-and-sci-fi>

## MOVIE REVIEW:

### The Man Who Fell to Earth (1976) Starring David Bowie

- By Leybl Botwinik



Saturday night, the 9th of January, was my birthday and I decided to give myself a present and watch a movie before going to bed. Having gotten a list of SF movies worth seeing from the late Aharon Sheer (o'h), our founding editor, I decided on the 1976 movie "The Man Who Fell to Earth". It was a movie that I had never seen before, but it was on Aharon's list, and I had just heard that David Bowie had turned 69 – so I thought it appropriate. It was also on my list of 'Alien'-related stories that I wanted include in this series of articles for CyberCozen (I'd covered *Zombies* and *AI* in previous series, and it was time for a new series on *Aliens*).

According to Wikipedia, the film is a "1976 British science fiction drama film directed by Nicolas Roeg and written by Paul Mayersberg, based on Walter Tevis' 1963 novel of the same name, about an extraterrestrial who crash lands on Earth seeking a way to ship water to his planet, which is suffering from a severe drought. The film maintains a strong cult following for its use of surreal imagery and its performances by David Bowie (in his first starring film role), Candy Clark, and Hollywood veteran Rip Torn. The same novel was later remade as a less successful 1987 television adaptation."

It's interesting, that the film is British, but everything in it other than Bowie himself, is American. Maybe they thought it was a good story to exploit, showing up aspects of American callowness, ruthlessness, and otherwise inhumaneness and corruption. The British still begrudge the Americans for breaking away during the US War of Independence 230 years ago ...

The opening 10 minutes of the movie jumps us through several scenes that set the tone of the

movie's mysteries and put a stamp on (or foreshadow) the events in the rest of the movie:

- A space scene of a rocket of sorts, followed by an entry into the atmosphere with a crash landing into a lake
- Blurred close-up shots of a man in a hooded jacket walking down a hill and then towards a highway – while another man looks on from a distance
- The hooded man removing his hood to reveal a pale red-headed David Bowie walking into a small town – apparently in New Mexico – startled by cars and the people and sites he initially encounters
- Bowie sells his wedding ring for 20\$ to a jeweler claiming he is a British citizen going by the name of Thomas Jerome Newton (he has a booklet that looks like a passport with him, for identification)
- He then takes a drink of water at a nearby stream, seemingly gorging

himself on the one cup of water, licking his lips afterwards

- After the one drink, he pulls out a roll of 100\$ bills and counts them (looks like about 20), and then a garland of similar wedding rings (looks like about 50)
- From this moment on, his main drink is water (until he later discovers and becomes addicted to alcohol)

A very thin, but very well dressed Newton next meets Oliver Farnsworth a patent lawyer (and his boyfriend), and hands him 10000\$ in cash to take on his patents. Farnsworth is amazed that he's looking at 9 basic patents which he estimates to be worth about \$300000. Newton says it's not enough. From that moment on, they become business partners.

Newton's company World Enterprises has as its goal to build a spaceship so he can go back home. His planet is apparently dying from draught, and Newton has flashbacks throughout the movie – or we see scenes of his family there walking in special suits in desert-like scenes.

At this point, the movie continues with many philosophical, surreal, and otherwise stimulating scenes that place the movie into a special bracket – and may have added to its mythos – creating a cult following: For starters, it's for adult consumption (18+) only, with various scenes of nudity, promiscuity, and the portrayal of a homosexual couple. At the same time, there are the beginnings of strange hints as to Newton's origins, and what makes him different than earth beings – and how ordinary people, big business competitors, and the government react to and deal with him – on a one-to-one basis. He is never exposed to more than a small group of people at any one time.

One of the first new people that is introduced is Rip Torn playing Nathan Bryce, a science professor whose female students frequently share his bed. In the first scene with him and such a student, she's taking 'Polaroid' like shots of them together, which instantly comes out in a sequential roll of about a dozen self-developed photos (original Polaroid film could only develop one shot at a time and took about a minute to develop each shot). He is impressed – it was created by Newton's

company. In a following shot, after his bed partner has left, Nathan Bryce is flipping through an Art book and stops at a water scene by the artist Breughel, and the poet/artist Auden's accompanying text the includes the inscription: "... something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky..." (see:

<http://www.gradesaver.com/w-h-auden-poems/study-guide/summary-mus%C3%A9-des-beaux-arts>).

Of course the book is published by one of Newton's subsidiary printing companies). Nathan then tells the university dean that the company that makes the self-developing film has decided to replace their computers with humans (now that's an interesting technological twist).

He claims: "... You want to know why? They want to bring back human error, because that's the way you get new ideas – by making mistakes".

Newton soon meets a hotel maid Mary-Lou, and he hires her to be his assistant. She eventually falls in love with him.

The movie continues with Newton so fascinated by Earth life, that he sets up a virtual wall of television sets, each tuned to another channel, and he sits for hours watching everything at once (back on his home planet all they could receive were radio signals, so that's how he knew a little about Earth). Mary-Lou, is none too happy about the lack of attention and he and she get into an emotional argument. In response, Newton removes his disguise and confronts Mary-Lou who is totally repelled and shocked by the Alien form of Newton she had come to love. She freaks out, leaves him, but soon returns. Her love and dependence on him is too great.

As the monies from his patents and various successful hi-tech and other companies pour in, a spaceship is close to being completed within Newton's project timeline (he must get back to his planet in time to save his family), but at the future launch site with the partly completed spaceship in the background, he is kidnapped by government agents who close down the project. Others kill Farnsworth and his boyfriend. An image of his tragically dead family is screened for a moment soon after he is confined by the government agents.

The movie touches a lot on our social foibles, and with respect to the innocent Newton – how we perceive 'aliens' and those who don't

exactly fit into our regular or traditional scheme of things – including the homosexual

couple who, like Newton, are harmless in their own way.

The man, David Bowie, had exceptional talents. In the movie, as Newton the Alien, he is stuck here on Earth and everyone around him ages – but he doesn't age at all. In a way, Bowie lived up to that image of the Alien Newton – a special person, with special skills. In Bowie's case – a human being that had a great influence on popular culture, and in particular: Science Fiction and pop music.

## The Aliens are Coming – Part I: Good News, Bad News

By Leybl Botwinik

:::: FIRST – THE GOOD NEWS ::::

1) <http://learningenglish.voanews.com/content/invasion-of-earth-unlikely-say-researchers/2972922.html>

### Invasion of Earth Unlikely, Say Researchers



#### Invasion of Earth Unlikely, Say Researchers

Aliens not likely to visit anytime soon.

Birds prefer to pick their own mates. And more from the world of science.

[View on learningenglish.voane...](#)

Preview by Yahoo

2) <http://www.blastr.com/2011-12-21/astronomer-6-reasons-why-aliens-would-never-invade-earth>  
Astronomer: 6 reasons why aliens would NEVER invade Earth



#### Astronomer: 6 reasons why aliens would NEVER invade E...

Phil Plait is an astronomer and major sci-fi geek. He writes the Bad Astronomy Blog for Discover Magazine and is also the host of the Discovery Channel's science sh...

[View on www.blastr.com](#)

Preview by Yahoo

3) <https://esct.wordpress.com/2012/09/26/five-reasons-why-aliens-will-never-attack-earth/>  
Five Reasons Why Aliens Will Never Attack Earth



#### Five Reasons Why Aliens Will Never Attack Earth

Statistics tell us a number of things. They tell us how many people in the world are educated (not a lot), what the probability of an earthquake occurring in the we...

[View on esct.wordpress.com](#)

Preview by Yahoo



:::: AND NOW - THE BAD NEWS ::::

1) <http://tvblogs.nationalgeographic.com/2011/05/19/10-reasons-why-aliens-would-attack-earth/>  
10 Reasons Why Aliens Would Attack Earth



## 10 Reasons Why Aliens Would Attack Earth

In sci-fi books and movies, aliens are continually trying to conquer our planet. But this question is seldom, if ever, answered: why would beings from a distant, ad...

View  
ontvblogs.nationalgeogra...

Preview by Yahoo

2) <https://www.google.co.il/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=aliens+%26+john+brandenburg>

Brandenburg has numerous articles and much to say on the subject

**NEXT MONTH:** More on Aliens – The good, the bad, and the ugly.

## ***Sheer\* Science: Cold, Cold, Cold***

(\* In memory of Aharon Sheer (ז"ל) – Founding Editor)

### **Predicting the Next Ice Age**

- Prepared by: **Doron Calo\*, PhD** (\*our CC Sheer Science editor ☺)

The prospect of humanity surviving an Ice Age is not easy to fathom. Sure, we've done it before (just barely), but it's obvious that our culture, our society, will not be the same after such a crisis. Let's be honest: thick ice sheets covering entire continents and endless snowstorms lasting for years and years are not ideal conditions for advanced societies, or any society actually. Life would be akin to a bunch of people huddling in a cave.

Extended, global Ice Ages occurred fairly frequently during the **Pleistocene** era, with relatively brief inter-glacial periods between them, in which conditions were similar to what we have today (multiple changing seasons). The Pleistocene officially ended about 12000 years ago, giving way to the **Holocene** (which is what our current era is called) that hasn't seen any Ice Ages – not yet anyway.

So, having some clue as to when the next big cold is going to hit, is of major interest, especially since **global warming** seems to be the order of the day (largely induced by massive accumulation of **carbon dioxide** [CO<sub>2</sub>] in the atmosphere). The recent climate conference held in Paris gave voice to a serious concern regarding the dangers of continuing to pump emissions into the

atmosphere, and formal steps have been taken to try and eliminate or at least slow this down.

However, looking at the history of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions can also do us a service in trying to predict the future impact of the accumulating CO<sub>2</sub>. A new climate study presented a simple model that uses historic data to correlate CO<sub>2</sub> levels and the onset of glaciation. To do that, the scientists used a modelling method called **pertrubed physics**. Different scenarios were run through the model, each time with one parameter changed. The findings read like a classic piece out of an alternative history novel. It seems that CO<sub>2</sub> levels due to agriculture, before the industrial revolution, were high enough to postpone the next Ice Age by **50000 years**. To put it another way, if man would not have “invented” agriculture at all, we would all be sitting on a glacier today.

So we invented farming and had a narrow escape from an Ice Age. This good fortune came back to bite us, though, when humanity invented industry. Carbon dioxide has been released in massive amounts, adding **500 gigatons** of the gas into the atmosphere. The new model predicts that this amount, along with expected future emissions, will push the next Ice Age even further away. In total, **100000 years** will pass until the massive glaciers return. This number is especially amazing considering the fact that it's the result of only a few centuries worth of emissions.

What should we do? Should we resort to hysteria, or maybe apathy: 100000 years is a

long time. We knew that humanity's achievements are staggering, but this kind of after-effect is absolutely enormous. If we won't take some urgent actions today in order to cut emissions, we will simply boil, and make future generations (even those of the **far future!**) yearn for a nice Ice Age to cool things down a bit.

We must also remember, that climate models are far from perfect, and that there are also some considerable gaps in our understanding of CO2 changes that might play a role in the formation of glaciers.

At any rate, the imagined Ice Age depicted in the SF masterpiece **Fallen Angels**, in which a hyper-environmental humanity bans almost all CO2 emissions, is now firmly in the realm of fantasy.

**Link to an editorial in the journal Nature:**

<http://palgrave.nature.com/nature/journal/v529/n7585/full/529162a.html>

## Yet another follow-up: Aliens in KIC 8462852 after all?

In the last few months we've been following the weird story of the faraway star **KIC 8462852** (also known as **Tabby's Star**), whose brightness has been dipping weirdly for some time, suggesting that an irregular body (or bodies) have been transiting across the star. Among several not-very-likely explanations for this, the prominent one talks about a bunch of **comets** that happen to pass in front of the star, transiently decreasing its visible light.

According to new research findings, the comet theory just became **extremely** unlikely. This conclusion was reached after scientists took a second look at images of the star dating back a century, and discovered that KIC 8462852 was actually **dimming** between 1890 and 1989. To get this effect, one would need no less than **648000** comets, each about **200 km** wide! which is absolutely crazy by any measure.

I know that the odds are slim that the whole Tabby's star phenomenon is caused by an alien equivalent of a **Dyson Swarm**. The real explanation might be something totally unimaginable, and it may not be revealed in our lifetime, but I find comfort in the thought that Something is indeed Out There...

**Link to a relevant article in New Scientist magazine:**

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn28786-comets-cant-explain-weird-alien-megastructure-star-after-all/> and: <http://www.space.news/2015-11-04-is-star-kic-8462852-a-dyson-sphere.html>

***We'd love to hear your thoughts on any of the above subjects and we may publish some of them!***

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