

Science Fiction

September 26. Hamilton and Stone.

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last time

Lovecraft / Lovecraft

1. the indescribable / the excess of description
2. desire for / fear for explanation
3. rejection of / identification with outsiders
4. claims on literary seriousness /
traces of pulp community (form, pseudobiblia)
5. reaction / the new
(like any other literary modernity)

“a fighting word”

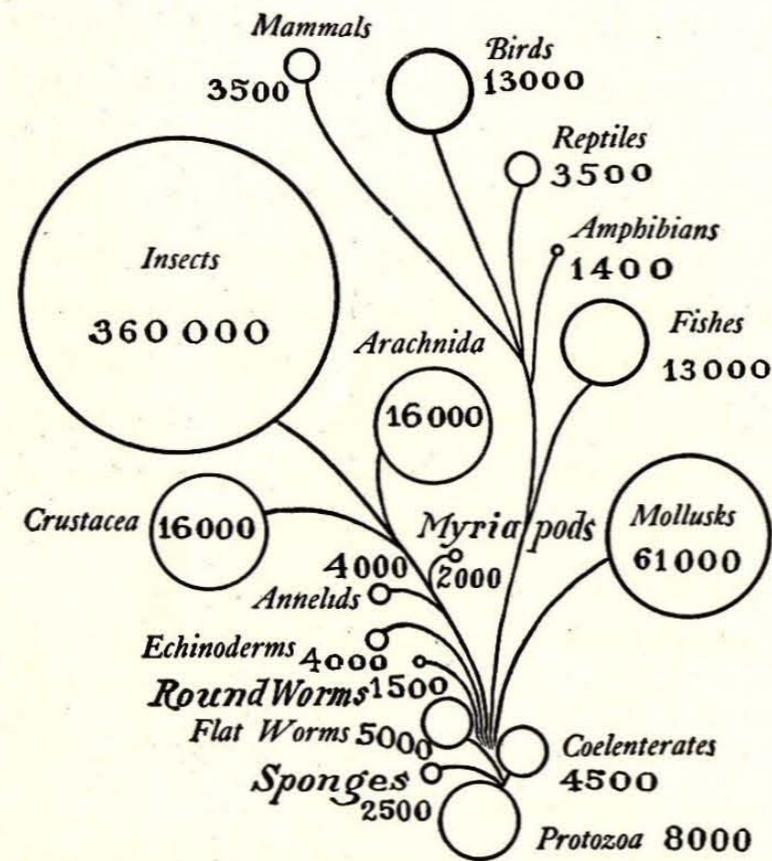
“I suppose you’re aware of the fact, however, that life on this earth began as simple uni-cellular protoplasm, and by successive evolutionary mutations or changes developed into its present forms and is still slowly developing?”

“We know that much—just because we’re not biologists you needn’t think we’re totally ignorant of biology,” Dutton said.

“Shut up, Dutton,” I warned.

Hamilton, 82–83

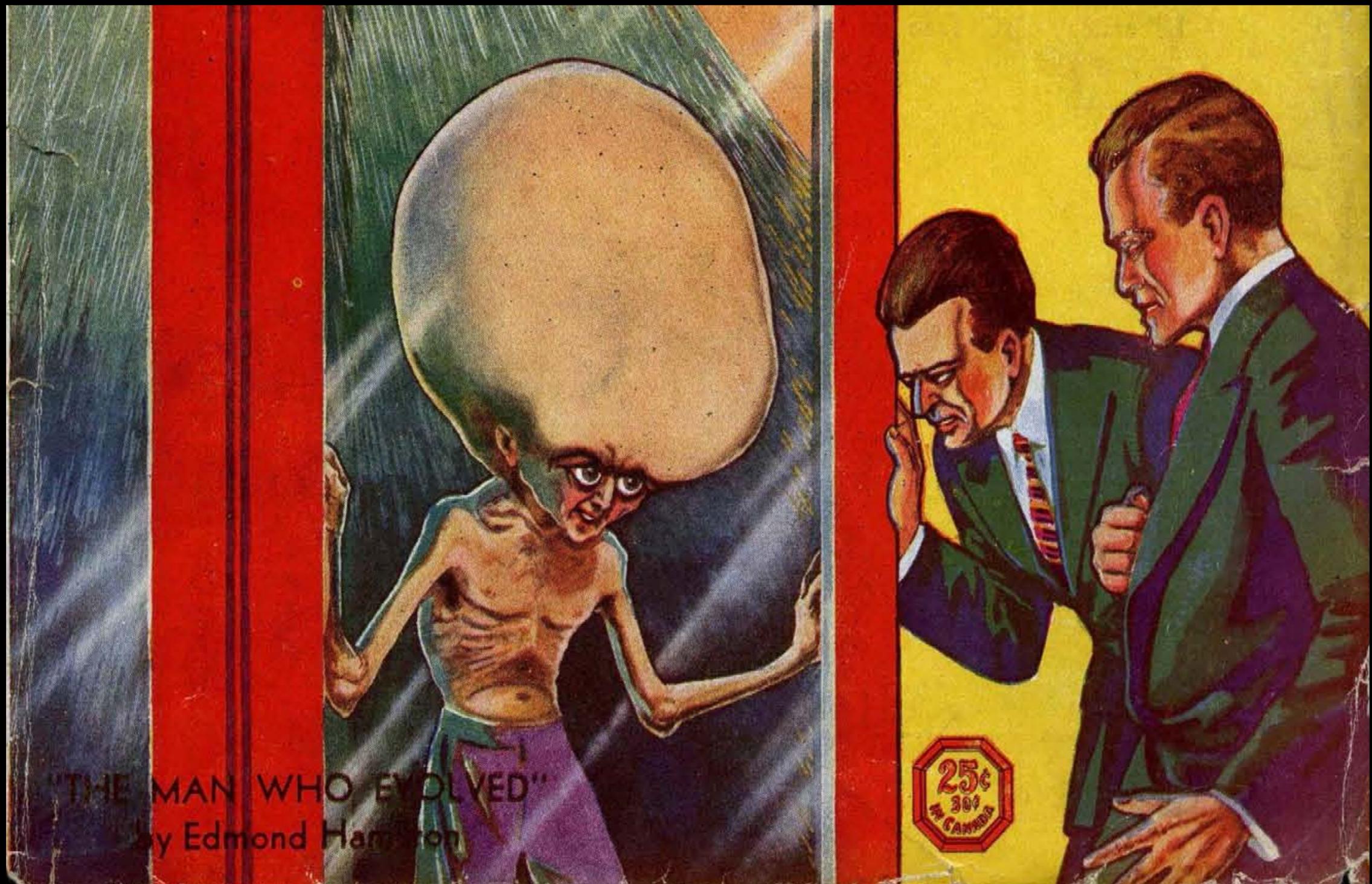
The Doctrine of Evolution. — We have now learned that animal forms may be arranged so as to begin with very simple one-celled forms and culminate with a group which contains man himself. This arrangement is called the *evolutionary series*. Evolution means



The evolutionary tree. Modified from Galloway. Copy this diagram in your notebook. Explain it as well as you can.

change, and these groups are believed by scientists to represent stages in complexity of development of life on the earth. Geology teaches that millions of years ago, life upon the earth was very simple, and that gradually more and more complex forms of life appeared, as the rocks formed latest in time show the most highly developed forms of animal life. The great English scientist, Charles Darwin, from this and other evidence, explained the theory of evolution. This is the

belief that simple forms of life on the earth slowly and gradually gave rise to those more complex and that thus ultimately the most complex forms came into existence.



Cover of *Wonder Stories* 2, no. 11 (April 1934)

What Is Your Knowledge Of Science?

Test Yourself By This Questionnaire

1. What are two well known theories to account for man's evolution? (Page 1267)
2. What is known about the cosmic rays? (Page 1269)
3. What is the "walking leaf"? (Page 1291)
4. What speed is necessary to circle the earth at a height of 500 miles, as a free satellite? (Page 1298)
5. What important atomic experiment did Rutherford perform? (Page 1305)
6. What is the Einstein belief as to the shape of our universe? (Page 1213)
7. Name some of the larger asteroids? Page 1236)
8. What is polyandry? (Page 1245)

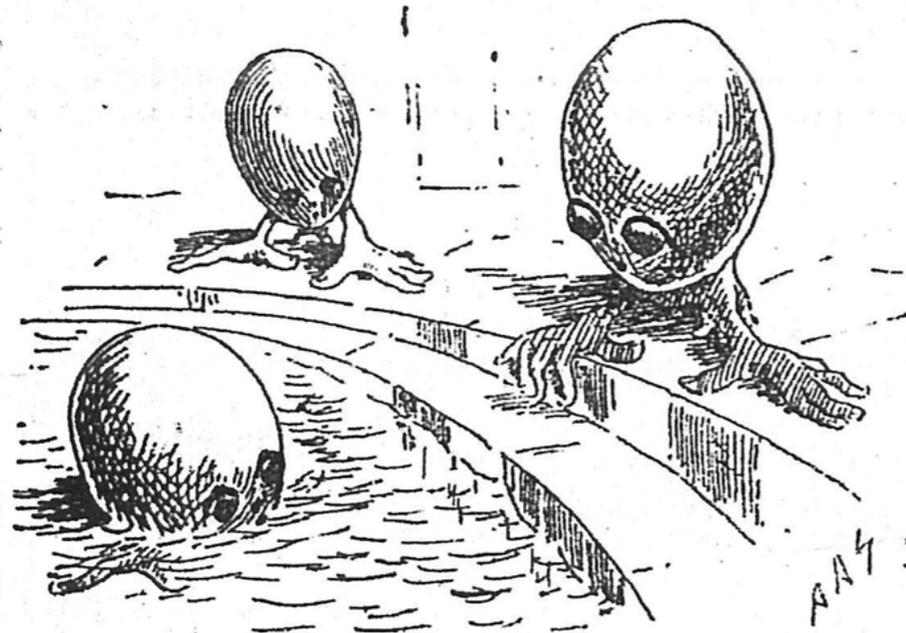
Even today eminent biologists differ as to the forces that raised us from the primordial slime and gave us the intelligence and power to create a great civilization — with its impressive mechanical forces, its art, literature and culture.

The doctrine of Darwin that we changed because only the fittest species could survive does not explain anything. The idea of Shaw that we changed because we wanted to change is more understandable but less convincing. Science is working feverishly to find the true force or forces that cause mutations.

[Gernsback.] (Page 1267)

1,000,000 A.D.

["The descendants of man will nourish themselves by immersion in nutritive fluid. They will have enormous brains, liquid, soulful eyes, and large hands, on which they will hop. No craggy nose will they have, no vestigial ears; their mouths will be a small, perfectly round aperture, unanimal, like the evening star. Their whole muscular system will be shrivelled to nothing, a dangling pendant to their minds."—*Pall Mall Gazette*, abridged.]



WHAT, a million years hence,
will become of the *Genus*
Humanum, is truly a
question vexed ;
At that epoch, however, *one*
prophet has seen us
Resemble the sketch
annexed.

For as Man undergoes
Evolution ruthless,
His skull will grow "dome-
like, bald, terete" ;

And his mouth will be jawless, gumless, toothless—
No more will he drink or eat !

Punch quoting H.G. Wells, "Man of the Year Million" (1893)
(image from A. Stiles, "Literature in Mind," *JHI* 70, no. 2 [2009])

bodies

The greater part of the structure was the brain, sending enormous nerves to the eyes, ear and tactile tentacles. Besides this were the complex lungs, into which the mouth opened, and the heart and its vessels....

Strange as it may seem to a human being, all the complex apparatus of digestion, which makes up the bulk of our bodies, did not exist in the Martians. They were heads, merely heads. Entrails they had none.

Wells, *The War of the Worlds* (London, 1898), 207–8

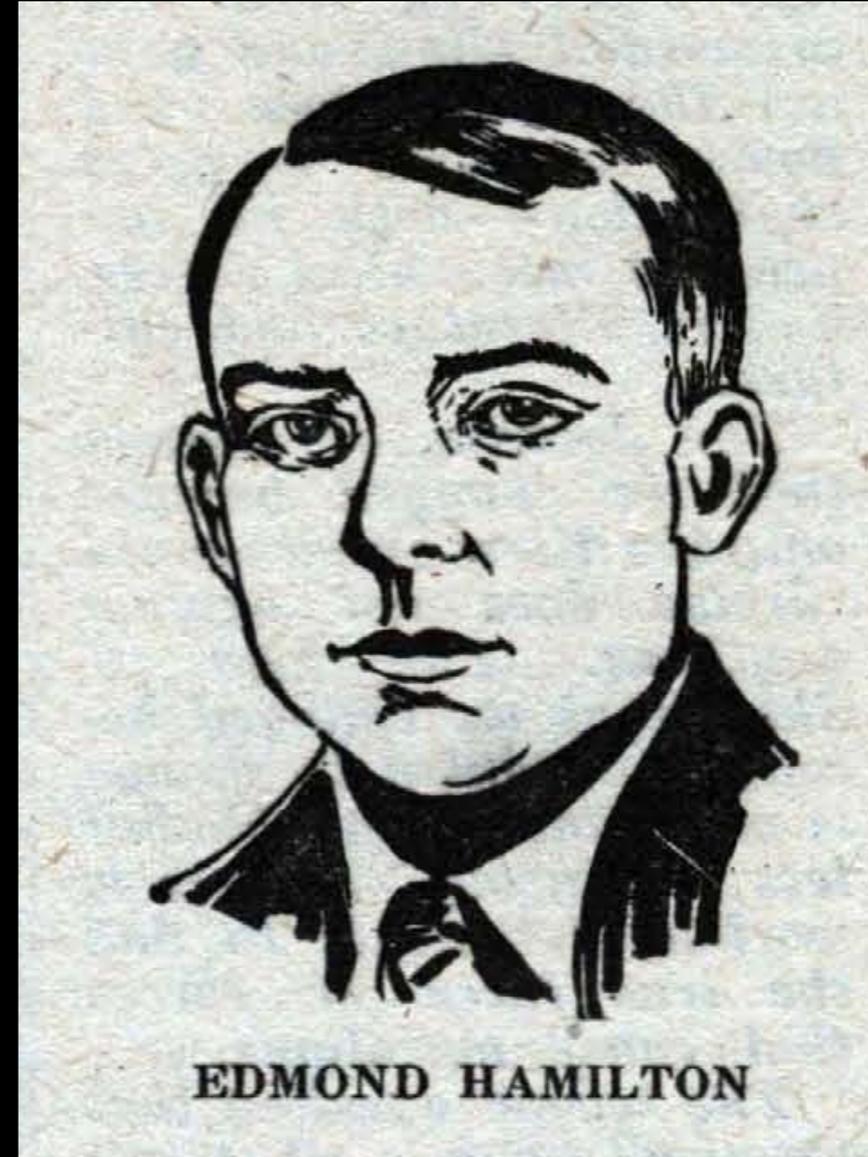
discussion

What responses do Pollard's different forms seem to invite? Consider both the responses enacted by the story's characters and other possibilities...

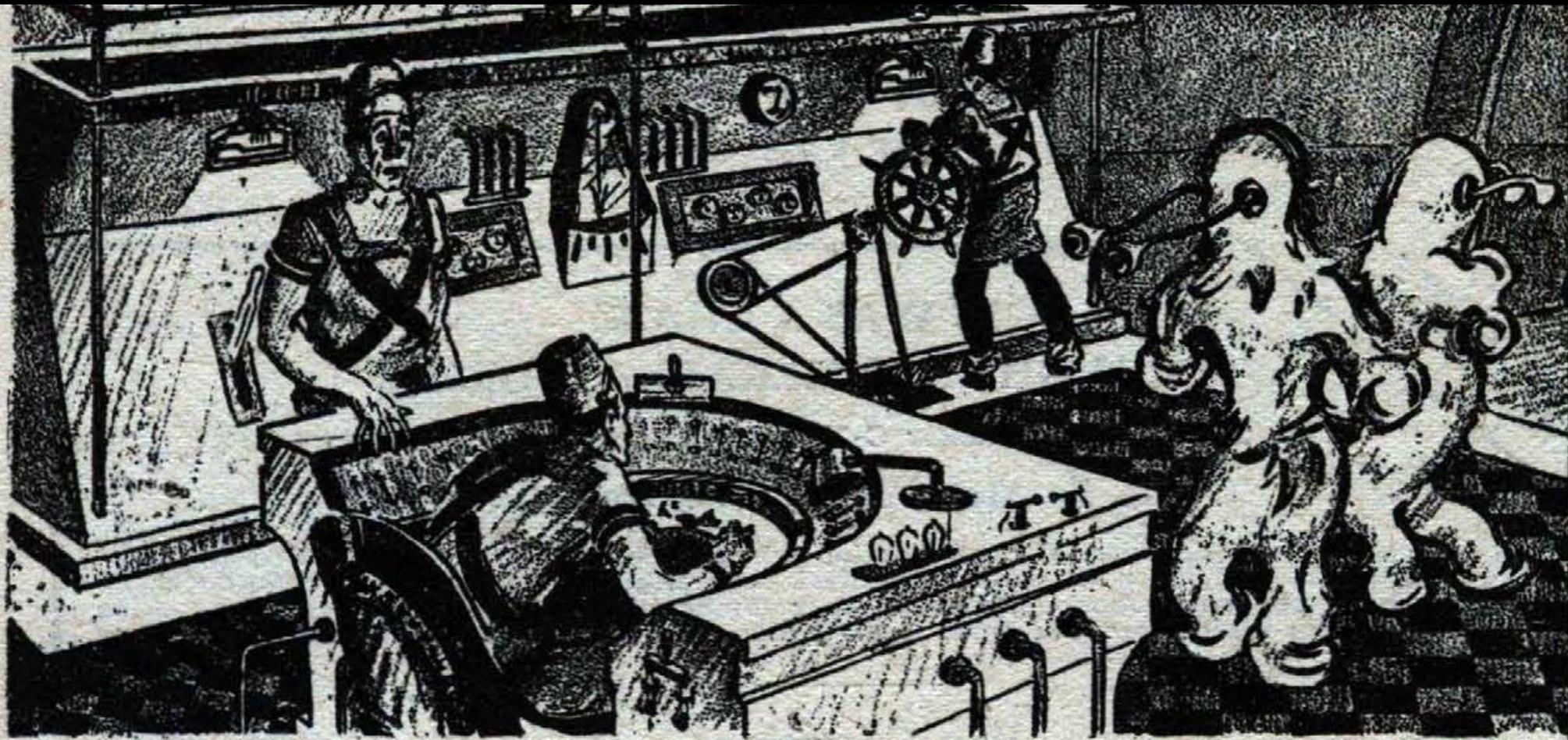
bodies

Imagine a short almost flat body set high upon two slender legs, the body tapering in the middle, several times as broad across as it is through the center, with two arms almost as long as the legs attached to the upper part of the torso. A small column-like neck of only a few inches divides the head of oval shape from the body.... Their bodies were like a patchwork of misguided nature.

Stone, 99



Ibid., 1281, 1268.



HOLA, my daughters (sighed the Mat-riarch) it is true indeed, I am the only living one upon Gola who remembers the invasion from Detaxal, I alone of all my generation survive to recall vividly the sights and scenes of that past era. And well it is that you come to me to hear by free communication of mind to mind face to face with each other.

even as we women are supreme on Gola.

In those bygone days, as now, Gola was enwrapped by her cloud mists that keep from us the terrific glare of the great star that glows like a malignant spirit out there in the darkness of the void. Only occasionally when a particularly great storm parts the mist of heaven do we see the wonders of the vast universe, but that does not prevent us,

Federation as Borg

“Under the orders of the Federation I will have to take you forcibly, for we are determined that Gola become one of us, if you like it or not.”

“Women are all right in their place, but it takes the men to see the profit of a thing like this—er—you are a woman, aren't you?”

Stone, 105, 104

Herlands

Is “The Conquest of Gola” a utopia in the mode of “Sultana’s Dream”? Find evidence, one way or the other. What is Stone’s critique of the existing gender system?

next time

The Wesleyan Anthology: Asimov, Bradbury, Sturgeon
(read headnotes *last*)