



From the Papers on the Sundial:

Our first special issue of 2003 deals with something with which we have all grown up. From Buck Rogers to *Silent Running*, from *Captain Video* to *Star Trek* (in all its incarnations), from Jules Verne, H.G. Wells and Olaf Stapledon to Robert Heinlein, Isaac Asimov and Orson Scott Card, science fiction has given us a glimpse of the future

and let us contemplate our humanity.

We hope you enjoy our eclectic collection of scholarship (well, we like to think of it as scholarship), story and humor (well, we like to think of it as humor).

But when it's all over, there's nothing left to say except, "Open the pod bay doors, please, Hal."

Science Fiction in the Canon

In terms of genre fiction, the Canon obviously belongs in the mystery category. But within the confines of the mystery, the adventures of Holmes and Watson often veer into different directions. There is certainly the straight mystery (elaborated in cases such as SCAN, IDEN, RESI, and THOR), but there is also horror (CARD, ENGR, SUSS), history (VALL and STUD), and even the political thriller (BRUC and NAVA).

Science fiction does not occur very often within the Canon. In fact, there appear to be only two cases in which science fiction is highlighted. The first is "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot," and the second is "The Adventure of the Creeping Man."

Good science fiction, like good fiction in general, illuminates the human condition and comments in some fashion on humanity and its place on the planet or in the universe. Whether it is the exploration of space (*2001: A Space Odyssey*), the manner in which science can corrupt (*The Invisible Man*), the perseverance of the spirit (*Journey to the Center of the Earth*), how man will grapple with his place in the galaxy (the *Foundation* trilogy), or a warning that what we seek we may not actually want (*The Andromeda Strain*), good science fiction is more than just conjecturing what might happen a number of years from now.

It is interesting to note that both of these stories take place within three years of 1900, DEVI in 1897, CREE in 1903. Does this say something about the magical nature of "two zeros" located at the end of the year?

DEVI begins auspiciously enough, with Holmes urging Watson to tell his readers about the "strangest case I have handled." While vacationing on the Cornish coast, Holmes is called in to investigate what caused Brenda Tregennis to die and her two brothers to go mad. He suspects that the estranged third brother, Mortimer Tregennis, has something to do

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The Adventure of the Missing Lecture

Of all the famous people who have entered our humble abode on Baker Street, there were few who dazzled me more than Jules Verne. Although he spoke through a translator, I found myself mesmerized by the breadth and depth of his knowledge. Sherlock Holmes, however, dismissed him outright when he received a note in March of 1884 that the eminent man of letters wished to see him.

“You mean to tell me that you have not read *Around the World in 80 Days*?” I asked him, remembering how I had thrilled to Mr. Verne’s books during my days at the University of London.

“Whether you can go round the world in 80 or 800 days makes no difference to me,” Holmes said while clenching his pipe between his teeth.

“*From the Earth to the Moon*?”

“Why would we want to go there?”

“*Off on a Comet*?”

“What ever for?”

“*20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*?” This last one was a particular favorite of mine.

“Watson, the man obviously needs to stay on dry land. If he wishes to consult with me, I shall show him respect for his predicament. But apart from that, he could be lost in the center of the earth for all I care. He is a writer, Watson, a mere writer.”

I kept a firm grasp on my tongue, knowing that Holmes’ reputation would not be what it was without the help of a “mere writer” such as myself.

When the knock came at the door, I could scarcely contain myself. I opened the door and bowed before a small, wizened man with a great gray beard. I judged him to be in his late 50s. He took my hand and said, “Bonjour, Monsieur Holmes.” Behind him was a much younger man with dark hair and close-set piercing eyes.

I carefully pointed out Mr. Verne’s mistake and gestured to Holmes, who was still sitting in a fog of smoke. Mr. Verne sat on the sofa across from him, and his translator—who was introduced as Monsieur Tavage—sat next to him.

“I understand you have written some books, Mr. Verne.”

“A few,” he said through his translator.

“If you are looking for more ideas for the fantastic,” Holmes chuckled, “I am not sure that I can find them for you.”

“On the contrary, Monsieur Holmes,” he explained, pausing occasionally to allow the translator to interject in English, “I had hoped that you might provide an explanation for the recent events which have befallen me.”

“What sort of events?” Holmes asked, his pipe still firmly between his teeth.

“Several weeks ago, I was invited by the Royal Society in London to deliver a series of lectures on science and the future. They sent me an advance, as well as provided money for my passage and my lodgings at the Northumberland Hotel.”

“Pray continue.”

“My first lecture was to have been delivered two days ago, but when I arrived at the Royal Society’s offices, no one was aware that I was to make a speech there.”

For the first time, Holmes took his pipe out of his mouth.

“The members gathered there at the time were delighted to meet me, **Continued on page 5**



SCIENCE FICTION MOVIES WE WOULD NOT LIKE TO SEE

The Boscombe Valley Alien. 1992. Adam Sandler, Paul Rubens, Charlton Heston, Diane Lane. Holmes (Sandler) and Watson (Ruben) are called in when the heir to the Vitameatavegimin fortune disappears. The police suspect a local ne'er-do-well (Heston), but Holmes sees a less earthly villain.

The Priory Solution. 1996. Woody Allen, Diane Keaton, Fred Savage. When Dr. Thorneycroft Huxtable (Savage) goes mad and turns his freeze-ray on London, only Holmes (Keaton) and Watson (Allen) can stop him. Peter Boyle gives a terrific cameo as Lestrade trapped in a revolving door.

Mazarin! 1999. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Drew Barrymore, Paul Rubens. When Count Sylvius (Rubens) steals the great yellow diamond, Holmes (Schwarzenegger) is summoned from retirement. Lestrade (Barrymore) suspects a simple burglary, but Holmes has heard of a death ray that makes use of precious stones. Includes Schwarzenegger's use of the famous phrase, "Put it back."

A Preponderance of Threes. 1997. George Clooney, Jennifer Lopez, Dana Carvey. Ron Howard's Oscar-nominated psychological thriller involving pupils at Garrideb Prep. When students are found babbling incoherently and attempting to eat soup through their noses, only Holmes (Clooney) and Watson (Carvey) can save the school. But the solution takes a twist when the headmistress (Lopez) forces the duo to wear plaid vests until they go mad. Screenplay by William Goldman and Whoopie Goldberg won a Golden Globe Award.

A Case of Identity. 1972. Burt Reynolds, Angie Dickinson, Dom Deluise. When Hosmer Angel (Deluise) loses his memory and turns up on Baker Street, Holmes (Reynolds)

and Mrs. Hudson (Dickinson) find that a conspiracy of identity theft abounds. Includes the hit pop song, *You're Not Devoid of Interest.*

The Bodymaster. 1992. Tom Arnold, Bo Derek, Gary Oldman, The Spice Girls. When Moriarty (Oldman) enslaves half of London by having his minions (The Spice Girls) hypnotize them, it is up to Holmes (Arnold) and Watson (Derek) to stop them.

Crossing Thor Bridge. 1965. Lee Marvin, Walter Matthau, Jack Elam, Barbara Eden. Colonel Moran (Elam) plans to take control of Winchester by turning Thor Bridge into a death trap. Holmes (Marvin) and Watson (Matthau) are on holiday when they chance upon the Colonel's schemes. Eden plays Moran's estranged daughter and Watson's latest love interest.

Attack of the Engineer's Thumb. 1954. Gene Barry, Ann Robinson, Martin Balsam. When Victor Hatherley (Balsam) accidentally falls into a vat of electrically-energized machine oil, he is turned into a giant thumb and ravages the English countryside. Holmes (Barry) and Watson's estranged daughter (Robinson) must lure the frantic digit into a giant baseball glove to capture it. This George Pal-produced classic was nominated for a Best Special Effects Oscar.

The Pince-Nez of Death. 1991. Clint Eastwood, Michael J. Fox, Elizabeth Shue, Paul Rubens. A hideous pair of glasses makes people do horrible things until Lestrade (Rubens) discovers how to control them. When the Scotland Yard detective goes mad, he decides to seek revenge against Holmes (Eastwood), Watson (Fox) and Lady Carfax (Shue) for making him look stupid all those years.



Continued from page 1 with it, but when he dies in a fashion similar to his sister, the plot takes a different turn. Holmes experiments with a powder found in Mortimer's room. Although it nearly results in the deaths of himself and Watson, he is certain of the cause of death. Accusing the renowned adventurer Dr. Leon Sterndale of his complicity in the affair, the doctor confesses to being in love with Brenda but unable to marry her because he was unable to divorce his wife. Because not too long ago Mortimer visited him and was so inquisitive about the deadly powers of a root he found in West Africa (*Radix pedis diaboli*—the devil's foot), Sterndale was sure that Mortimer stole some and used it to wreak havoc on his family. Sterndale takes revenge on Mortimer by killing him the same way.

"The Adventure of the Creeping Man" begins similarly, with Watson stating that "we have at last obtained permission to ventilate the facts which formed one of the very last cases handled by Holmes before his retirement from practice." Holmes is asked by the future son-in-law of Professor Presbury to investigate his abnormal habits. Holmes notes that the habits seem to occur every nine days and discovers that the Professor has been taking injections derived from a black-faced langur in order to have the requisite energy to woo a much younger woman, Alice Morphy. However, the serum has unexpected results, as it causes the professor's nocturnal habit of climbing trees and antagonizing the family dog.

Both tales are told in the normal straight-forward mystery fashion for which the Canon is known. It is only the cause of the crime or the misbehavior that is related to science fiction. Taken together, they are cautionary tales of the power of chemistry and pharmaceuticals at the turn of the century.

Science has for centuries been developing compounds from nature in order to cure the ailing body. The abilities of herbs and plants to help humans have been known for quite some time. For example, salicylic acid was used by the Greeks and Native North Americans to counter the effects of fever and pain. Coming from the bark of the willow tree, the acid is bitter and irritates the stomach. But in 1893—four years before DEVI takes place—a German chemist created acetylsalicylic acid, which is much less antagonistic in the gastrointestinal tract. This acid is more commonly known as aspirin.

Although the stories take place three years on either side of 1900, DEVI first appeared in 1910, and CREE in 1923. The medical field during the last decade of the 1800s was rife with discoveries. Antitoxins were discovered in 1890. The plague bacillus was discovered in 1894, followed by the malaria bacillus in 1897, and the bacteria that causes dysentery in 1898. Efforts continued into the early 1900s: Adrenalin was isolated in 1901, and the electrocardiograph was invented in 1903. The chemistry of proteins was being investigated, along with research into genetics. Blood for transfusions was first refrigerated in 1915. And by 1923, the tuberculosis vaccine was developed, bacteriophages were discovered, and insulin was first administered to diabetics.

No one would question the good that was accomplished through all this. But as many people point out, science is neutral; it is what is done with it that is good or evil. One can imagine a certain literary agent—a doctor himself who perhaps would know better than most people the power of technology on medicine—asking Watson if perhaps he had any unusual cases that would highlight medical practices—or the dangers thereof. Perhaps the heady changes occurring during these times required someone to speak to the possibilities of the darker side of cultural and technological change.



Continued from page 2 but none of them were aware of my lecture.”

“They were not expecting you at all?”

“No, Monsieur Holmes. I am puzzled by this as much as you.”

“What happened during the course of your visit with the Royal Society members?”

“I stayed for several hours and had a very enjoyable conversation with the men. They were most receptive to my ideas.”

“And then what happened?”

“They helped Monsieur Tavage and I obtain a carriage and we returned to our hotel.”

“And that is the end of your story?”

“No, no, not quite. I was to deliver two more lectures over the next three days, but obviously there was no need. So I decided to explore London with Monsieur Tavage. Several times I noticed that I was being followed so we always stayed in well-populated areas.”

“What did these men look like?”

“They were of average dress, I suppose. One wore a beret that was blue or black, I am not sure which. I only remember it because I recalled seeing the same type of beret on a man who was asleep with his back against an iron fence on the street across from the Royal Society.”

“Did they accost you in any way?”

“No. But only because we were never alone.”

“Were you followed here?”

“I am not certain. Perhaps.”

Holmes motioned toward the window, saying, “Could you look outside and tell me if you see them?”

Monsieur Verne stood and ambled over to the window. He looked down on the street, taking a long time to survey the scene below.

“I am not certain,” he said turning around, “but that might be the men across the street.”

Holmes stood and walked across the room. He towered over Monsieur Verne, who pointed down at something.

“Very good.”

“I would like you to return to your hotel. Watson, have you your revolver with you?”

I retrieved my Eley’s No. 2 from a drawer in the desk and slipped it into my jacket.

“I would feel much better if my colleague Dr. Watson accompanied you for at least the rest of the day.”

“Monsieur Tavage is an exceptional pugilist and would not hesitate to defend us.”

“Still, Dr. Watson is most esteemed, and I would hope you would indulge me.”

Monsieur Verne bowed his head in acquiescence.

“I will meet you tomorrow morning at your hotel. I have a few things on another case that needs to be handled. If you will excuse me.” And with that, Holmes gathered up his coat and disappeared out the door.

Messrs. Verne and Tavage and I left a few minutes later and took a hansom to the Northumberland. I was a veritable schoolboy and asked Monsieur Verne as many questions as I could about his ideas, his writing, his influences. He was most accommodating, and I found myself enchanted by this wonderful prognosticator.

The three of us dined in the late afternoon, and reluctantly I left well after dark, comfortable in the knowledge that the great man of letters was safe in his room. **Continued on page 7**

THE X FILES²



He had no idea that the earth went around the sun, and yet he seemed to know everything else. He was
The Mystery Man

20th Century Fox Pictures Presents
A Ten Thirteen Production
A Jonathan Frakes Film

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THE X-FILES 2: The Mystery Man

Mitch Pileggi Lucy Lawless Michael Caine

Music by James Horner Co-Producer Prosonby Britt Edited by Peter E. Berger, ACE

Production Designer Herman Zimmerman Executive Producer Chris Carter

Screenplay by Chris Carter Produced by Chris Carter & Frank Spotnitz

Director of Photography Richard Clabaugh, ASC

Directed by Jonathan Frakes

Read the novel by Joe Downs
www.thexfiles2.com

PG-13





Continued from page 5 Returning to Baker Street, I was surprised to find that Holmes had not returned. Retiring early, I had hoped to re-read at least part of one of Mr. Verne's novels, but realized that I had none of his books in my library. I decide I would have to remedy that soon.

The next morning, I found a note slipped under the door. In Holmes' inimitable handwriting, it said, "Meet me at the Northumberland at 11:00 AM. I have news." After breakfast, I caught a cab and was there within half an hour. I met Holmes in the lobby and the two of us went directly to Monsieur Verne's room.

"You were the target of a conspiracy, Mr. Verne."

"Conspiracy?" he said, quite shocked.

"You were lured to London so that you could be kidnapped."

"Why would anyone wish to do such a thing. I am just a writer."

"I believe that the first reason was to create an incident that would sour relations between England and France. One of France's finest man of letters abducted would hardly sit well."

"And the other reason?"

"I believe that the men responsible for this also intended to take from you every idea that you had in the hope of making use of them for their own personal gain. Since you appear to be quite prescient, Mr. Verne, there are those who would surely use your ideas for less than literary purposes."

"But I am willing to talk to anyone about these ideas. They belong to all of humanity."

"There are those," Holmes said grimly, "who do not feel that way."

"How could these people afford all of this? The passage, the hotel, the stipend. That was a lot of money just to lure me to London."

"I must admit that I had no other cases to which to attend, Mr. Verne. When you and Mr. Tavage and Watson left, you were indeed followed by the two men you pointed out. I followed them, even after they left the Northumberland late last night. They reported this morning to an office on Barington Street, where they were for quite some time. It appears, Mr. Verne, that these people have money to lure you to London, but they do not have the money to hire the best of associates. I could not help but overhear the reprimands that were visited upon the two. Your kidnapping was foiled by your own ideas: the man in the beret fell asleep waiting for you to leave the Royal Society, and spent the rest of his time trying to trap you."

"Thank God for English ineptitude."

"I should take my leave, Mr. Verne," Holmes said standing up.

"What is—how would you say?—how much—?"

"The price was in the pleasure, Mr. Verne." Holmes shook Monsieur Verne's hand. "I have taken the liberty of requesting that the London constabulary ensure that you leave London safely. Come, Watson, we have much to discuss."

I was sorry to bid Monsieur Verne goodbye, and shook his hand warmly.

In the cab, Holmes confided more in me. "While this case was not without merit, it has left me a bit unsettled. There is more to come from these people, I fear."

"How do you mean?"

"If they have the money to kidnap a man such as Mr. Verne, Watson, then they are capable of much else."

"Do you know who owns the office to which the gentlemen went?"

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Continued from page 7 "I am endeavoring to find out."

We rode in silence for a few minutes, and then I found myself shaking my head and muttering, "Fantastic."

"Why thank you, Watson. I thought my efforts were rather remarkable."

"No, Holmes, I was referring to my extensive conversations with Monsieur Verne."

"And what would make you exclaim that?"

"The ideas that Monsieur Verne had."

"Yes, Watson. What can we expect?"

"Self-propelled vehicles that use satellites to determine where they are."

"Self-propelled vehicles perhaps, but the other—quite preposterous."

"Telephones that need no wires."

"Twaddle."

"Curing diseases of the heart and lungs using nothing but our own cells."

"Now you tell me, Watson, since that is your specialty, how ridiculous that sounds."

And for once, I had to agree with Holmes.

When we reached Baker Street, a telegram was waiting for Holmes.

"Interesting, Watson."

"What is, Holmes?"

"The office is owned by a Professor Moriarty, late of the University."

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