

Starting this month, *Brainwave* will tell you amazing visual stories that will enervate your soul, dislocate your jaw and thrill the very fibre of your being! You have been warned! A hearty welcome, tasteful reader, to the very first chapter of the very first edition of B\W comics' brand new graphic SF series!

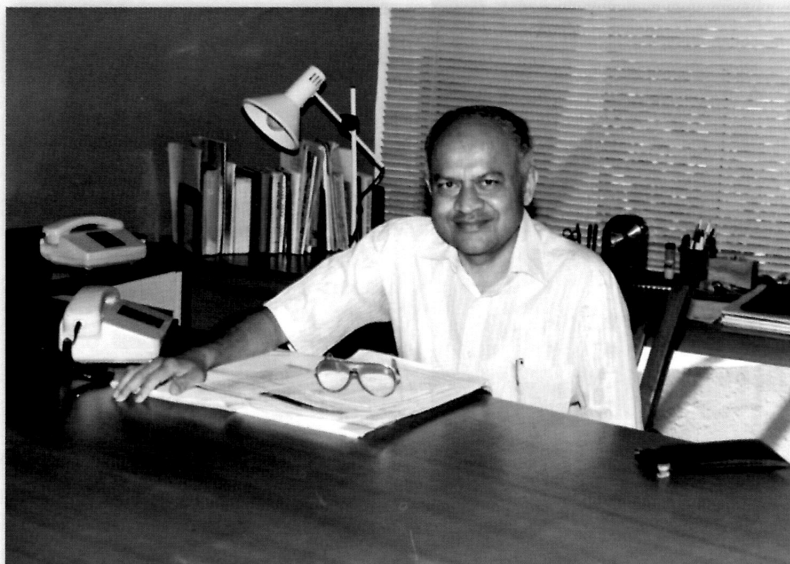
An Introduction

SETI (or the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence) is the name given to a bunch of activities, conducted by people across the world, to look for aliens. These activities often use microwave signals, which can travel through really vast distances.

Because space is infinite, SETI researchers have to find ways to narrow down the search. One way is to assume that an alien civilisation, which is technologically advanced, will work a bit like ours. For instance, our Earth emits all kinds of radio waves as radiation – from our TVs, radios and other broadcasts. These waves are clearly artificial because they happen at very specific frequencies. In 1971, NASA studied SETI and proposed a thing called Project Cyclops. Cyclops was to consist of a huge system of radio telescopes that could send and receive distant radio signals, to search space for a planet emitting Earth-like radio signals.

Project Cyclops was too expensive – the report estimated it would cost \$10 billion – so it never actually got built. But what if it had been? ●

Our first featured graphic story, **THE MESSAGE FROM ARISTARCHUS**, takes place in a world in which Project Cyclops was built and scientists could actually use its telescopes to search space for intelligent life forms.



Dr Jayant Narlikar, the author of this amazing tale, is an eminent Indian astrophysicist. He lives in Pune, and is the Founder-Director of the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) there. Among other things, he headed a project that found bacteria of extra-terrestrial origin high up in the Earth's atmosphere.

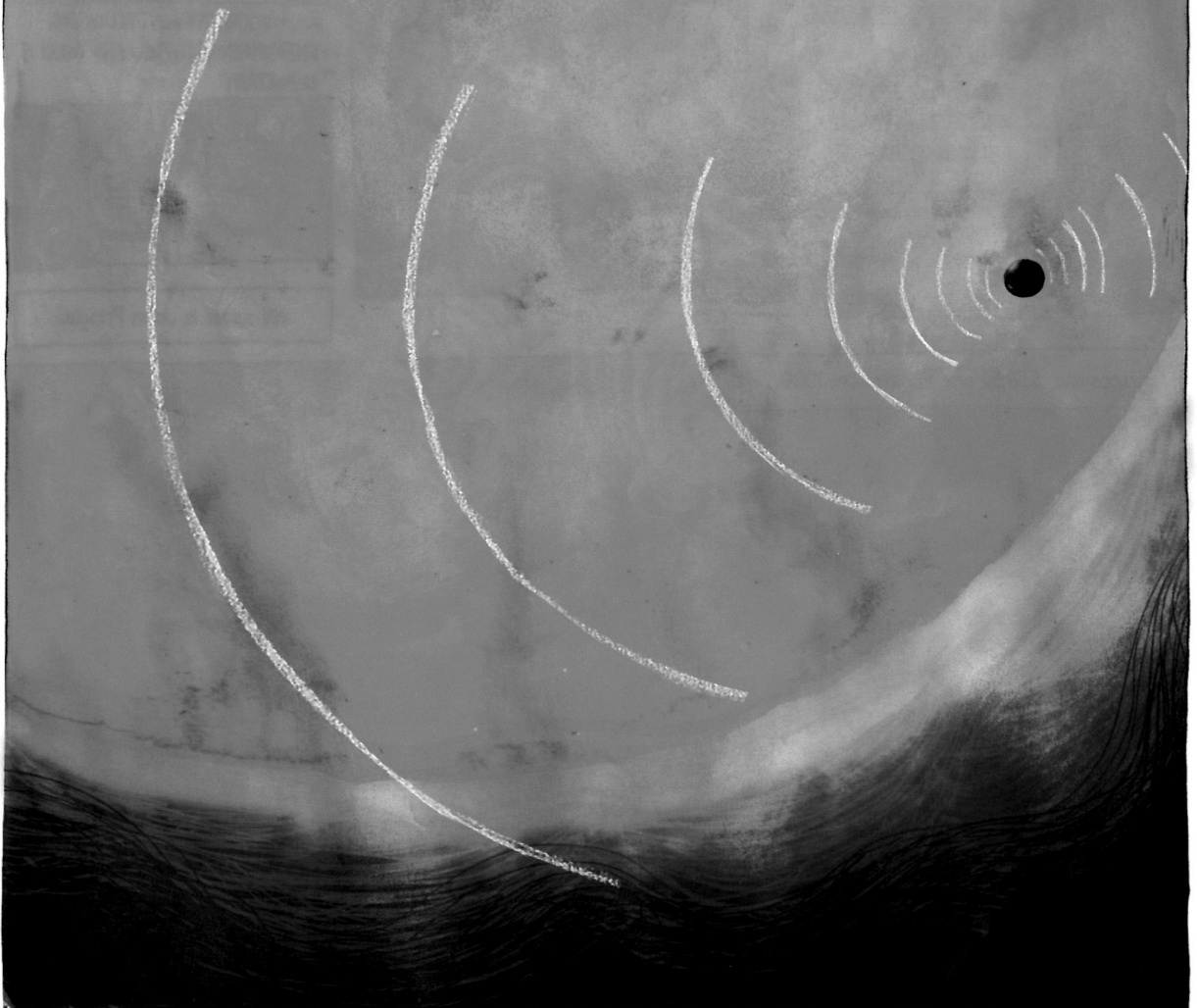
His favourite science fiction writers are Arthur C Clarke, Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, Jules Verne and HG Wells.

B\W COMICS PRESENTS

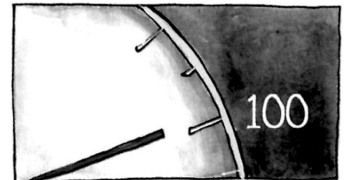
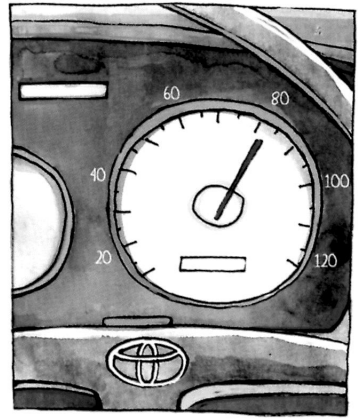
THE MESSAGE FROM ARISTARCHUS

EPISODE 1: JOHN PRINGLE

SCRIPT BY SHALINI SRINIVASAN \ ARTWORK BY RAJIV EIPE
BASED ON A NOVEL OF THE SAME NAME BY DR. JAYANT NARLIKAR



December 4th, 1985

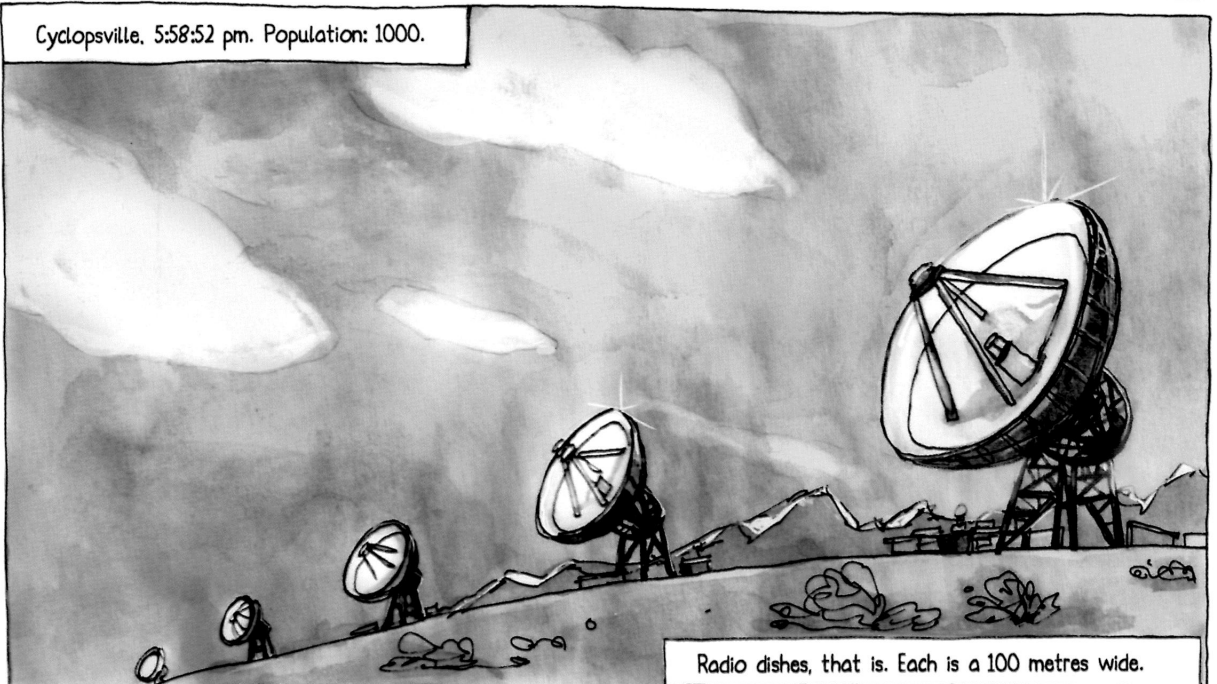


A GOOD SCIENTIST MUST ALLOW FOR UNFORESEEN OBSTACLES. AND TODAY IS IMPORTANT.



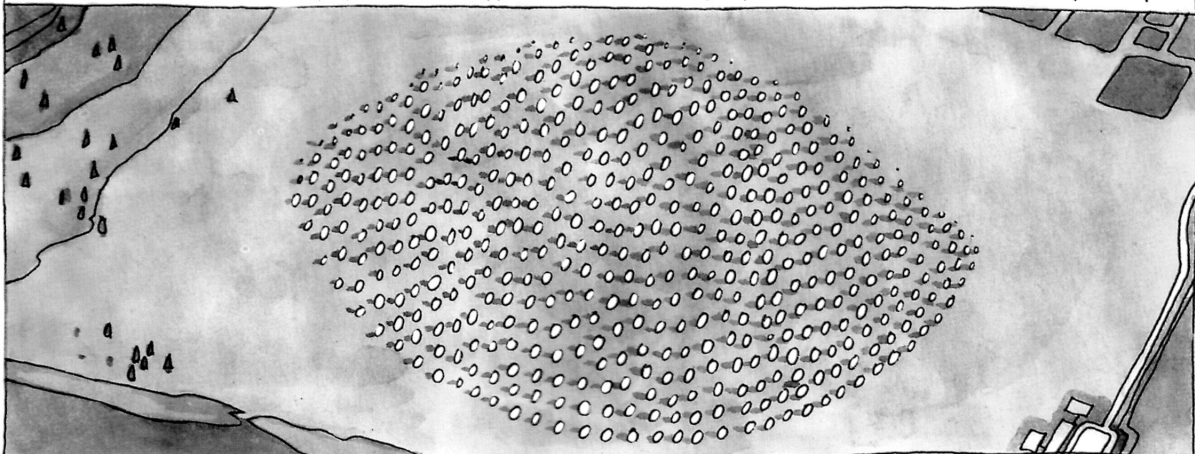
His name is John Pringle.

Cyclopsville. 5:58:52 pm. Population: 1000.



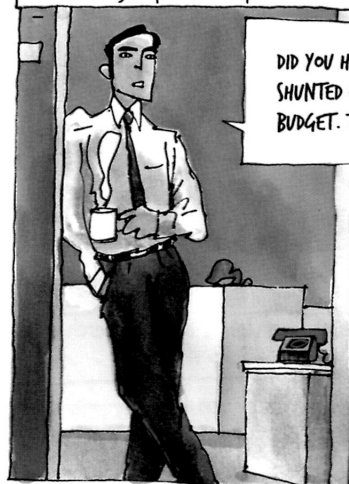
Radio dishes, that is. Each is a 100 metres wide.

It is only from above that their purpose becomes apparent: the dishes of Cyclopsville form a giant eye, staring deep into space.



Cyclopsville had been built some years ago, as a part of SETI, the search for extra-terrestrial intelligence. Its dishes were made to send messages at light speed, deep into space, in the hope of reaching intelligent life on other planets.

But the Cyclops was expensive, and there came a day when the government decided they could no longer afford it.



DID YOU HEAR, JOHN? WE'RE GOING TO BE SHUNTED OFF INTO THE SIDELINES IN THE NEXT BUDGET. THE MILITARY WANTS CYCLOPS.



WHAT?



OUR EYE IS GOING TO STOP LOOKING FOR LIFE IN SPACE, AND START DOING SURVEILLANCE FOR THE ARMY. I SUSPECT MOST OF US WILL BE OUT OF A JOB SOON.

BUT WE'RE ON THE RIGHT TRACK, PETER! I'M CERTAIN! THEY CAN'T END OUR PROJECT MID-WAY (CAN THEY?)

They could and they did. Peter and most of the other scientists were asked to leave. But John stayed back.

The army needed scientists to program and operate Cyclops. Officially, John carried out mundane military tasks.

WHY WOULD YOU STAY IN CYCLOPS?

I NEED ACCESS TO CYCLOPS. AS LONG AS I FINISH MY OFFICIAL WORK, I THINK IT'S OK IF I USE CYCLOPS FOR ITS' REAL PURPOSE IN MY FREE TIME.

AH! BLACK SCIENCE. MUCH LIKE BLACK MONEY. PROFITABLE BUT WHOLLY ILLEGAL. YOU COULD GET INTO A LOT OF TROUBLE IF YOU'RE FOUND OUT.

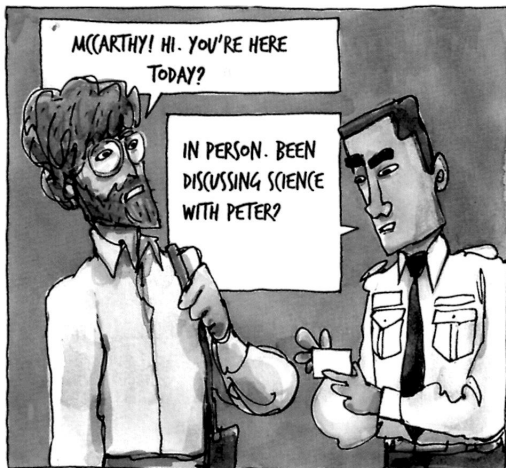
IT'S JUST REGULAR SCIENCE, PETER. I'M SEARCHING FOR NEW LIFE-FORMS.

THEN WHY ARE YOU DOING IT ON THE SLY?

So the name stuck, and John's black research grew steadily.

December 4th, 1985. John Pringle couldn't quite contain his excitement as he walked into Cyclops.

GOOD EVENING, JOHN.



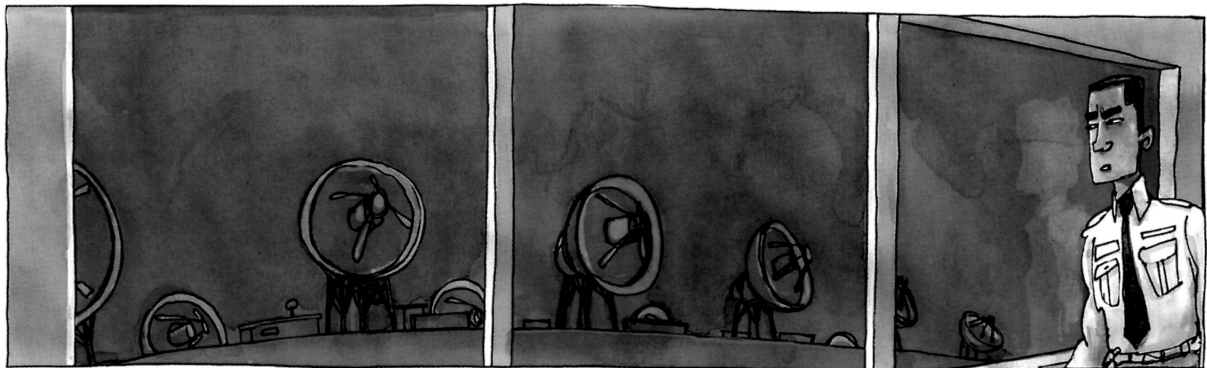
McCarthy made him uneasy, somehow. John wondered if he suspected about black science.



8 pm. John finished his scheduled work. He tried to squish his excitement and forced himself to walk slowly to the control room.



>EXECUTE SETI_



To be continued...