



## Exploring the final frontier

*Extraterrestrial Sex Fetish*, by Supervert

Lately, science has not been particularly kind to Supervert's argument against the existence of extraterrestrial life: over the last

eighteen months or so, there have been numerous technological advances and discoveries that would give heart to those our intrepid author would describe as having an alien fetish.

There was the discovery that the number of stars in the universe might be triple previous estimates; there were already up to two hundred billion galaxies in the observable universe, each with hundreds of billions of stars. The number of *Earth*-like planets orbiting newly discovered stars, which are typically more than ten billion years old - long enough for complex life to have evolved - is now perhaps in the trillions. Ponder these numbers for a moment.

Then there was the discovery of a microbe at the bottom of a Californian lake that thrives in an arsenic-rich environment; the microbe takes arsenic - poisonous to terrestrial life as we know it - and uses it as a building block for its

most basic biological structures. Astrobiologists think this vastly increases the likelihood of life - as we do *not* know it - existing

elsewhere in the universe.

And then the international scientific community was in uproar in September when particle physicists working at a laboratory in central Italy appeared to discover that neutrino subatomic particles could travel faster than light. If verified, the foundations of physics would need re-laying in a way that would potentially make some form of time travel a theoretical possibility.

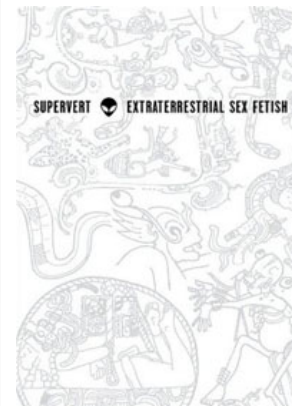
Bizarrely, the discovery of an arsenic-based life form actually moderates the outrageousness of Supervert's depictions of alien worlds and life. What it doesn't do, and what the other potentially revolutionary discoveries do not do, is detract from Supervert's effort to produce a literary and philosophical work of art.

*ET Sex Fetish* employs an unusual structure based on mathematical set theory. This was inspired, the

author says, by the potential of such a structure to portray the "monomania" of the fetishist - in this case, for aliens - and as a

solution to literary problems of form and formlessness. Thus the book is divided into four "sets": the first is a collection of fantasies of the protagonist, Mercury de Sade - Alien Sex Scenes (ASS), the "exploitation of aliens in fantasy"; the second is a serialisation of Mercury de Sade's efforts to satisfy his necessarily insatiable fetish in New York City through the exploitation of a young woman in his real life. The third set is a series of studies of the work of philosophers through the ages who have in some way, even if indirectly, mused on the subject of extraterrestrial life; and the fourth is a "randomised series [of] commentaries, observations, and supplementary materials relating to the case history".

Supervert's own thought on extraterrestrial life unfolds with his historical presentation of philosophical thought on the subject; in the process, he makes his own contribution to the



140 InReview

### Extraterrestrial Sex Fetish by Supervert - InReview - SDK02

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**Footnotes:**  InReview - Extraterrestrial Sex Fetish, continues in a popup window.

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philosophy of speculation (as it must be termed) on the matter. It is with section 15 of his analysis of the philosophers' musings, in this case Kierkegaard, that the tracts on the philosophy of exophilia – "a sexual desire for something that is literally not to be found on earth" – begin to become increasingly focussed and are gradually utilised more forcefully in the support of the author's message. Section 17 of his analysis of the philosophers' ruminations (Henri Bergson) provides the first substantial indication of the basis of the author's outlandish flights of imagination in the first, fantasy set: it is a calculated application of imagination – outrageous, sexualised science fiction derived from philosophy.

If not enthralled by philosophy, most readers who have been tempted to pick up such a book will probably not be disappointed with the standalone micro-stories of Mercury de Sade's sexual exploits with aliens, although they might take note of some thematic repetition regarding the intergenerational sexual customs of a minority of alien cultures, and the author's own apparent fetish for the Crab Nebula... But all is not what it seems; for example, with section 13 of the fantasy set, "Felo de Sex", what begins as a vaguely ludicrous concept replete with black humour ends in a poetical sadness. And then the coldness portrayed in an early fantasy as Mercury de Sade observes the unintended fatal results of his pleasure, expressed in the words "Too bad for them I'm man", serves as a herald of the latent cruelty expressed much later as a real man in New York in section 16.

This is the first of Supervert's books; his subsequent efforts display a development of his literary ability, but *ET Sex Fetish* does have moments of inspiration. And there is a real purpose: by examining humanity's obsession with that which exists outside our own small world of flesh, bone and thought, Supervert furnishes us with a literally unique, if outrageous – and yes, "perverted" – reflection on our petty internal worlds.

The aim of this review is not to debate the validity of the author's conclusions regarding the (non) existence of extraterrestrial life; after all, he does state in his second appendix that his intention was to confront "the *myth* of extraterrestrial life" – and surely, at this point in humanity's history and evolution, we are indeed dealing with myth, romance and longing. So, whether or not the scientific odds are, at least theoretically, beginning to point

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towards a greater possibility of extraterrestrial life, one point that Supervert makes utilising the contemplations of Immanuel Kant is indisputable: until we actually *experience* the reality of extraterrestrial life, whatever other life may in fact exist, does not, *in effect*, exist for us in any practical sense.

More importantly, we cannot detract from what we might suspect is Supervert's more pertinent, underlying message: that everything we desire, everything we need, as well as everything nonconsensually abhorrent, are right here on Earth; that humanity has more than enough to occupy itself in its own identity and emotional and psychological turmoil, which too often manifests in an ugly and destructive psychopathology. In other words, "the final frontier" – to coin the famous and clichéd words of an iconic television science fiction series – is not so much outer space, but our species' own internal space. **SDk**

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### **Additional Info**

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