



## More Than Human

*Theodore Sturgeon*

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## **More Than Human** Theodore Sturgeon

There's Lone, the simpleton who can hear other people's thoughts and make a man blow his brains out just by looking at him. There's Janie, who moves things without touching them, and there are the teleporting twins, who can travel ten feet or ten miles. There's Baby, who invented an antigravity engine while still in the cradle, and Gerry, who has everything it takes to run the world except for a conscience. Separately, they are talented freaks. Together, they compose a single organism that may represent the next step in evolution, and the final chapter in the history of the human race.

In this genre-bending novel - among the first to have launched scifi into the arena of literature - one of the great imaginers of the twentieth century tells a story as mind-blowing as any controlled substance and as affecting as a glimpse into a stranger's soul. For as the protagonists of *More Than Human* struggle to find who they are and whether they are meant to help humanity or destroy it. Theodore Sturgeon explores questions of power and morality, individuality and belonging, with suspense, pathos, and a lyricism rarely seen in science fiction.

## **More Than Human Details**

Date : Published January 1999 by Vintage (first published October 1953)

ISBN : 9780375703713

Author : Theodore Sturgeon

Format : Paperback 186 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction, Fantasy

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## From Reader Review More Than Human for online ebook

### Stephen says

4.0 stars. Ground-breaking science fiction novel that first explored the concept of the "gestalt" consciousness while dealing with emotional issues of identity and fitting in to society. This is on my list to re-read as it has been some time since I read this.

Nominee: Hugo (Retro) Award for Best Science Fiction Novel

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### Felicia says

Were I to take an in-depth Sci-Fi course I would definitely want to explore the deeper meanings of this book, lots of layered psychological here. I'm already reserving it for a re-read. It is disturbing and fascinating, the story of an...evolved group of creatures, the only way I can describe it. Just try it, it's short but packed with wonderment.

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### Terence says

*More Than Human* is not an easy read. Theodore Sturgeon was never shy about pushing boundaries and trying to shake up a reader's comfortable little world.

The theme of the novel is certainly fascinating -- the emergence of a new human species - homo gestalt (though the ending and hints earlier in the book suggest we've always been it). But Sturgeon left me wanting more - it ended too soon and too patly.

I enjoyed it well enough and am interested in reading more of his work but I don't think I can recommend this one unless you're already a Sturgeon fan.

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### Lena says

The first Gestalt character I had ever read was in Daniel O'Malley's *The Rook*. I was completely blown away by this odd and frightful concept, the sheer alienness in human form. O'Malley's Gestalt was born quadruplets (three male, one female), all mentally one organism. It (them?) was an amazing fighter as it could coordinate four separate bodies as easily you coordinate four separate limbs.

Part of the joy of reading Classics is learning where your favorite contemporary authors got their ideas. O'Malley certainly read Sturgeon.

The most fascinating concept Sturgeon raised is if perhaps special needs people are meant to be part of a greater whole. Maybe instead of our norm of uniform circles and squares they are jigsaw pieces, never meant to function individually. What if they were a piece of the next stage of evolution, homogestalt, just awaiting

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connection?

This might have all sounded like communist propaganda in the 1950s but today it's speculation science fiction you can sink your teeth into.

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### **Jim says**

A group read with the "Evolution of SF" group. I've read this in paperback a couple of times & enjoyed it, but it's probably been 15 or 20 years. Blackstone's audio version has Rudnicki & Ellison narrating. Rudnicki is always great. Ellison does some voices well & I can think of a couple of good ones for him. Hopefully they'll keep him to that. In any case, it was worth buying.

It was! Ellison read the middle part, "Baby Is Three", the original novella (1952). It is told from Gerry's point of view & his voice was perfect for it. Rudnicki read the other 2 parts: "The Fabulous Idiot" & "Morality". (Great titles!) What a great way to enjoy this classic.

Parapsychology was a thing at the time. I don't think the Rhine experiments from the 1930s had been fully discredited yet & there was a lot of interest in it. Sturgeon then took it on a trip into an evolved human, a gestalt - many humans making one being. The way he breaks them up, their powers, & the circumstances all make it interestingly chaotic, a realistic touch that I really appreciated. It knocks the legs out of any strict logic or psychology that might have otherwise been applied. IOW, things are what they are, no matter what our current views of psychology might have to say about it.

Sturgeon's descriptions were fantastic, almost poetic. Here's the first 2 lines from "The Fabulous Idiot", the first part of the book:

*The idiot lived in a black and gray world, punctuated by the white lightning of hunger and the nickering of fear. His clothes were old and many-windowed.*

A fantastic beginning that went on with plenty plain action to carry the story forward.

The characters were well drawn & the ending was a surprise - the first time, anyway. Don't read any spoilers about that. Highly recommended.

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### **Palmyrah says**

One I missed back in the early Eighties when I was going through the classics of science fiction like a hot knife through butter. Maybe I'd have liked it better if I'd read it back then. Probably not.

It's an act of charity to call this SF at all. It's supposed to be about the emergence of a new species, but from an evolutionary point of view the emergence described could not possibly take place – the whole concept is ridiculously unscientific. The story does contain one authentic science-fictional device – an antigravity generator – but this has only peripheral relevance and the author doesn't even bother to make it credible. In fact, his account of how the thing is made and used positively insults the reader's intelligence.

The real story here is about a group of subnormal or disturbed young people with parapsychological powers. That's right, telepathy, telekinesis and so forth. Such mumbo-jumbo, good reader, makes up the 'scientific' content of this 'science fiction classic' – justified by one lame paragraph in which the author asserts that credible evidence for such things exists. It does? *Show me.*

Oh, all right then, never mind. Let's shove the 'science fiction' definition, then, and ask how this works as fantasy. I think the answer is: it probably works all right if you're a lonely, disturbed teenager who wants to believe your social ineptitude is a sign that you're different and special. Readers over the mental age of sixteen, however, are likely to find it all a bit infantile and pathetic.

The writing has moments of genuine quality, but Sturgeon tries too hard and is much too fond of the egregiously quirky metaphor or syntactical conceit to be able to write good prose consistently. The general structure of the novel is messy and contains several confusing chronological shifts, which seem to exist only because the author couldn't find a better way of telling the story. The consistent tone of juvenile anxiety is exhausting and, if you're a grown-up, tedious to a degree. As for the ending, it is irritatingly moralistic and even the genuine surprise at the end is spoiled by too much preaching.

So why was this ever a classic? I suspect the answer lies with those lonely, disturbed teenagers mentioned above. It spoke to them. It told them they were special – that maybe, just maybe, they were... *more than human*.

But they weren't special, and neither is this book.

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## Whitaker says

I think the only meaningful ratings on GR are \*, \*\*, and \*\*\*\*\*. Those are pretty clear: "I disliked it", "it was okay", and "it was amazing". \*\*\* and \*\*\*\* exist in that intermediate stage between "meh" (\*\*) and "wow" (\*\*\*\*\*). "I liked it" and "I really liked it". WTF? How exactly do I differentiate between "liking" something and "really liking" it?

A lot of how we respond to stories is so personal to what we enjoy and what we've read before. One thing that I usually like in books is when it throws up an idea that I've not come across before. That's my little spark that can turn a "like" to a "really like". It can be a really small thing that makes that difference and is so intimately intertwined with my personal reading history that it's essentially meaningless for anyone else. Whatever it is, however, this book had that little difference for me.

To talk about it would require me to talk about the ending, so before I get to that, a little bit about how I responded to the rest of the book. This is how it starts:

The idiot lived in a black and gray world, punctuated by the white lightning of hunger and the flickering of fear. His clothes were old and many-windowed. Here peeped a shin-bone, sharp as a cold chisel, and there in the torn coat were ribs like the fingers of fist. He was tall and flat. His eyes were calm and his face was dead.

That first paragraph drew me in. The images (lightning, chisel, fist) were strong and compelling. We feel the harshness and violence of his world before we are even told about it. The long, flowing, imagistic sentences at the beginning end in the flat and mimetic "His eyes were calm and his face was dead." That's good stuff.

We're pretty much in *2001 / Many-Coloured Land* territory: the so-called next stage of human evolution. This invariably seems to involve some step up to a more powerful being, and that's actually pretty iffy science since evolution isn't directed and no one can tell what's better or worse. The next step up for some reason always involves psychic powers: less body, more mind. Sturgeon's spin on this (and not the nifty idea that I liked) is the notion of homo gestalt. It sort of makes sense: cells came together to form more complex organisms, so why not those complex organisms themselves coming together in a similar fashion:

He says he is a figure-outer brain and I am a body and the twins are arms and legs and you are the head. He says the 'I' is all of us.

Or explained in another way:

I'm the central ganglion of a complex organism which is composed of Baby, a computer; Bonnie and Beanie, teleports; Janie, telekineticist; and myself, telepath and central control.

The novel itself is made up of three parts. Parts two and three essentially involve a recounting of past events: the conflict is supplied by a character struggling to understand himself through an uncovering and recounting of the past. It's a relatively brisk and efficient technique that allows a great deal of exposition to be covered in a short amount of space, while still keeping a certain amount of forward dramatic tension going. I'm not sure the story could have withstood a more detailed labouring over the details of the formation of the gestalt, so that was good too.

All of this was enough for it to get the "I liked it" tag, but Sturgeon does bring one additional idea to the table that lifted it for me above "liked it". (view spoiler)

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## Stuart says

More Than Human: Introducing the "Homo Gestalt"

(Also posted at Fantasy Literature)

This book must have been quite an eye-opener back in 1953 in the Golden Age of Asimov, Heinlein and Clarke, where robots, rocket ships, future societies and aliens ruled the roost. For one thing, it hardly features any credible science at all, and in tone and atmosphere owes more to magic realism and adult fantasy. In fact, the writing reminds me most of Ray Bradbury, full of poetry and powerful images. Try reading just the opening paragraph for instance:

"THE IDIOT LIVED IN a black and gray world, punctuated by the white lightning of hunger and the flickering of fear. His clothes were old and many-windowed. Here peeped a shinbone, sharp as a cold chisel, and there in the torn coat were ribs like the fingers of a fist. He was tall and flat. His eyes were calm and his face was dead."

The story involves the forming of a "homo gestalt" group organism assembled from various misfit and mistreated children, and the book is broken into three parts, "The Fabulous Idiot", "Baby is Three", and "Morality". Apparently "Baby is Three" was written first as a novella, and I wonder if anyone has picked up on the idea that the book itself is a cobbled together construct that, in my mind at least, adds up to less than the sum of its parts. What would that make it, then? I don't know the antonym of "gestalt" in German or English.

I found the first section "The Fabulous Idiot" to be the best written and most involving, and while the next two sections became interesting midway through, they both involved the main characters spending dozens of pages lost in their own identities, painstakingly trying to piece together who they were. As a result, this reader at least felt equally disoriented. And there were many times when I had to re-read a passage several times to tease out who was saying what. Although I imagine this was the effect that Sturgeon was going for, I found it a bit difficult to read at times.

I did like the ending, despite some heavy exposition about morality (at least it was concise), and overall the story does not read like something written in the fifties. So I give it props for pushing the envelope of the times with its heavy focus on psychology, ethics, and abuse of children, but it didn't add up as a fully

developed novel, which is so often the case for something expanded from a shorter novella.

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## Jeff says

I'd heard that Sturgeon was a man of words, and a self-educated man, at that. *More Than Human* is the first book I've ever read by him. At first it was surprising and startling and odd, but his style and pace are easy enough to learn and then it became a book that couldn't be put down.

Sturgeon writes like a poet, thinks like a psychiatrist, and understands like a philosopher. "His clothes were many-windowed" (p.1). "he lived inside somewhere, apart, and the little link between word and significance hung broken" (p.1). "...they were the last words she had said, and they hung shimmering in the silence" (p.121). "Janie in a peasant blouse, with a straight spear of morning sunlight bent and molded to her bare shoulder and the soft upper curve of her breast. Janie dancing, bending away and cleaving to him as if he and she were the gold leaves of an electroscope" (p.132). "He said only that the command might be removed by a reverse abreaction...Moving backward, mentally, to the incident itself" (p. 166).

In three chapters - 'The Fabulous Idiot,' 'Baby is Three,' and 'Morality' - Sturgeon introduces us to Lone, Janie, Beanie and Bonnie, The Baby, Gerry and Hip - characters like you've never met before. I won't describe them here: they are more worth discovering on your own than the plot is. Here's the plot in two sentences: the first six - Lone, Janie, and the rest - make up "the next step upward...a psychic evolution instead of a physical" (p.175); together they are *Homo Gestalt*. The seventh - Hip - saves *Homo Sapiens* from extinction by the mind of *Homo Gestalt*.

If I'm making the plot sound straight-forward, in a way it is. But how deliciously novel and captivating that straight-forward path. This is a book worth wrapping your mind around.

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## Bill Kerwin says

If you have ever been lonely and longed for completion, you will be drawn to this book. But if you are one of those rare souls who sense that completion demands more than a wife or a husband, who yearn to find a small group of friends like yourself--but different--who can believe and will the same thing and yet still manage to preserve their distinctive humanity, then this book is the thing for you.

*More Than Human* is about six people—each with a distinct and extraordinary power—who wander lost and damaged until they discover one another. When they do, they begin to realize that together they constitute a new form of life—*homo gestalt*, they call themselves—which might just be the next step in human evolution.

This is an extraordinary, resonant book. Stylistically and structurally, it's *The Sound and the Fury* of science fiction novels: the tale of an idiot not an quite idiot, whose tale--not as simple as it seems—is bound up with the narratives and lives of others which give his story its meaning. It has passages of loneliness as fierce as anything you will find in *Job*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Hunger*, or *Native Son*, and yet everything in it points toward love, despite the bleakest of conditions. Best of all, it ends with a surprising revelation that leaves the reader with the conviction that there is indeed hope for the future without in any way diminishing the challenges and the loneliness of the individual human life.

Sturgeon was always an accomplished writer, but in this book he outdid himself. This is one of the science fiction books that—even now, more than fifty years later--needs to be read.

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## Megan Baxter says

What is the next step in human evolution? Where will we go from here? How will we fundamentally change, as technology continues to emerge. It feels like this is an obsession of a particular time and place. While science fiction has continued to examine how a changing world will alter humans, at their core they seem to remain fundamentally human.

Note: The rest of this review has been withheld due to the changes in Goodreads policy and enforcement. You can read why I came to this decision [here](#).

In the meantime, you can read the entire review at [Smorgasbook](#)

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## Lyn says

You pick up the book, turn to the back cover and are confronted with the man. So this was Kurt Vonnegut's model for Kilgore Trout. Staring back at you is a gaunt image: a scraggly, bearded man who but for the pipe and the contented look might offer the same aspect from a homeless person or from a Jethro Tull album jacket.

Turn to the first page and read - "The idiot lived in a black and grey world, punctuated by the white lightning of hunger and the flickering of fear. His clothes were old and many windowed. Here peeped a shinbone, sharp as a cold chisel, and there in the torn coat were ribs like the fingers of a fist. He was tall and flat. His eyes were calm and his face was dead."

Damn.

And you're hooked. Sturgeon has lured you into his most renowned work and you are held by this quiet, out of the way brilliance that compelled you siren-like from the bottom shelf of the used bookstore.

Bradburyian in its poetic beauty, akin to Philip K. Dick in its unabashed inimitability, *More Than Human* evokes a standard whereby science fiction ceases to be a genre, defies label and containment, and becomes simply a very good story. Lacking the epic quality of Arthur C. Clarke or the brash, but approachable engineering sensibility of Robert A. Heinlein, Sturgeon has crafted a story unique in its time and place and yet one that heralds a greater creation. Sturgeon quietly, but confidently ushers in a new age of speculative fiction.

This is not altogether "hard science fiction" but more well rounded, introspective and psychologically challenging, the kind that Philip K. Dick or Ursula K. LeGuin would write (this reminded me very much of Dick's *Dr. Bloodmoney*) and there are also elements of horror that would have made proud King, Matheson, or even Lovecraft.

First published in 1953 and winner of the International Fantasy Award and nominated for the 1954 Hugo, a nominee along with Arthur C. Clarke's *Childhood's End* (of which *More Than Human* bears a thematic

resemblance), missing the mark only to Ray Bradbury's epochal Fahrenheit 451.

More Than Human is just a very well written book and defies an easy categorization.

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### **Williwaw says**

I thought I had already reviewed this!

Perhaps not.

It's difficult to decide if this book (a "fix-up" novel) deserves 4 or 5 stars. Sometimes, Sturgeon's style reminds me of passages in Faulkner's Sound and Fury, when Faulkner is writing from a child's perspective. Other times, it's like he's channeling J.D. Salinger.

Initially, Sturgeon wrote a story called "Baby is Three," published in Galaxy Science Fiction in the early 1950s. That story is the heart of the novel, and the most engaging part of it. The setting of "Baby is Three" is a psychoanalyst's office. A back-story unfolds as part of the dialog between the patient (a shrewd young boy with a very unusual problem) and the analyst.

Sturgeon sandwiched "Baby is Three" between two additional sequences in order to to expand it into a novel.

I believe that this book has universal appeal. It's very emotionally charged, and the characters are easy to relate to, despite the fact that they are what we might call idiot savants: people with deep flaws but paranormal talents. The basic premise is that these flawed humans can come together to form a "homo gestalt," a unitary being which is greater than the sum of its parts.

Although "More Than Human" is a science fiction/fantasy book, it is also much more than a simple genre piece. The first half builds into the fantastic and speculative themes so slowly that one barely notices it. Ultimately, the best thing about "More Than Human" is that it is so very human!

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### **Kathryn says**

This is my first novel by Theodore Sturgeon and it most certainly will not be the last. I read the book in one sitting. I'm not sure now if that was a good idea but I was entranced, could not sleep, and it is rather short. I was certain the book would be listed on my favorites shelf but the ending, or certain characteristics of the ending, forced me to withdraw from the book and look at it from the outside, not from within as I had the majority of the story.

I knew before beginning that Sturgeon initially wrote *Baby is Three*, the middle section of the novel. This publication and what Sturgeon was critically acclaimed for, was essentially 3 novellas combined, with the same characters but each separated by a few years. *The Fabulous Idiot* was added as the beginning and *Morality* the end. *Baby is Three* is my uncontested favorite and I wish I could place it solely on my favorites shelf but the work is complete and needs the other pieces to be enjoyed.

The book centers around a number of neglected and abused children who eventually meet and begin to form a gestalt group. I found the idea fascinating and was blown away by the knowledge that this book was published in 1953. Sturgeon's prose was riveting and shocking at times. I do not want to mention anything more about the plot as I went into the book knowing nothing, not even about the gestalt topic, so the less you know about the book, I think the more you will enjoy it. I guess this is nothing new. Many reviews give away too much.

The reason for the 4 stars, as I mentioned, is due to my problems with the ending. First off, reading a book about children who rarely spoke like children but did on occasion act like children worked for me. It was all very believable. But in the final section, I thought the dialogue took a turn downward. When Sturgeon began to write about adults acting like adults and speaking like adults, he lost me. I no longer felt connected through the dialogue at all and consequently, this kicked my head out of the story and the ending fell a little flat. I liked the ending and thought it was perfect otherwise. Sturgeon's prose was beautiful throughout the rest of the book.

In the end, if you are a fan of classic science fiction then this is a required read.

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### **Rose says**

I liked it but I thought there would be more to this story than there was.

Written back in the 50's, so it's a bit dated but not so much you can't enjoy it, this is the story of the evolution of the human race. We've just begun to move away from being a solitary creature to one where a group comes together to act as one. Each has powers that add to the whole, one is incredibly brilliant, twins who can transport themselves, a boy who can influence your thought and make you do things or forget things, etc. This is the story of how they came together and learned what they can do as a group.

The book ends right at a big revelation to the group. A good ending but if this were written today, that would have been the end of the first in a series. You could really write the hell out of a set up like this one. I'm almost surprised someone hasn't picked up where Sturgeon left off...or rewritten it to bring it up to date. I wonder if Scalzi's read this one.

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### **Amanda says**

OK- what to even say about this masterpiece- which it undoubtedly is! For all u fools out there who do not think science fiction can be literature of the highest degree, u obviously haven't read a book like More Than Human- because if this book doesn't blow that dense, dull-witted notion out of your mind, nothing will and u should be publicly shunned forevermore.

Written in the 50's and it still didn't seem dated at all! That alone is an astounding feat. Anyway, i don't even think i can begin to praise it like it deserves, so i won't. I'm gonna go find another Sturgeon book to read

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### **Lark Benobi says**

I have no explanation for my deep love of this novel. It's hokey and ridiculous and overwrought and leaves bushels of interesting themes all over the place, unassembled. It's hopelessly dated. I love it. I connect with

these very implausible characters. I revere this author for writing with such careless abandon of form or plot and who still keeps me riveted. This may have been my fourth or fifth reading of this particular novel. It's one of my security-blanket books.

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## Addie says

Not an easy read for me. Extremely well-written with incredibly brilliant concepts, but difficult to wrap my brain around completely. There were many passages that I had to reread three or four times. A fair bit of the narrative seemed to go over my head, and I have to admit that there were a few times that I thought maybe I was not smart enough to fully appreciate this book. But then, inevitably, everything would come to light and I came out of my confusion right alongside the characters.

Original and intriguing, I will be thinking about this book for some time.

I would like to own a copy of this book so that I may study it in-depth in the future. More Than Human has all the right pieces to become a favorite book of mine, but I think it may take a while for me to understand the awesome concepts put forth by Sturgeon.

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## Apatt says

*"We're not a group of freaks. We're Homo Gestalt, you understand? We're a single entity, a new kind of human being. We weren't invented. We evolved. We're the next step up. We're alone; there are no more like us. We don't live in the kind of world you do, with systems of morals and codes of ethics to guide us. We're living on a desert island with a herd of goats!"*

*More Than Human* is all about "Homo Gestalt" a group of humans with different psi abilities living together as one unit. It is not about a hive mind like the creepy kids in *The Midwich Cuckoo*. It is closer to the X-Men with specialized individual abilities, but still not quite the same thing as the emphasis here is on their symbiosis; not to mention the themes that Sturgeon explores throughout the book. This is my third reading of *More Than Human*, a book I loved as a teenager, I read it again in 2011 and reviewed it briefly here, now six years later and having written hundreds of book reviews since, I believe I can be more analytical in my reviews, or perhaps simply more spectacularly longwinded.

*More Than Human* is divided into three parts, each part has its own conclusion and there is always a change in the narrative the point of view, and even prose style, in each part. There is a feeling of a fresh start at the beginning of each part then the narrative gradually approaches and reconnects with the novel's main story arc and the central characters. The book reads a little like a fix-up novel, consisting of three interrelated novellas. However, they do form a cohesive story by the end of the book.

### **PART ONE The Fabulous Idiot:**

The book begins with the story of Lone, the fabulous idiot who has no communication skills but manages to survive by somehow always getting whatever he needs from strangers just by looking at them. One day he comes across a girl who immediately forms a psychic link with him, things go badly with this girl thanks to her insane father. Sometime later he meets a girl with telekinesis, a pair of twins with teleportation ability, and adopts a strange mongoloid baby; and so the nucleus of the "gestalt" is formed. This section of the book is mainly about being society's outcasts, loneliness and the natural imperative to find a family and a home, to belong.

### **PART TWO Baby is Three:**

The narrative point of view is shifted to Gerry Thompson, a young man with psi ability similar to Lone's. He appears to be suffering from partial amnesia and he is consulting a psychiatrist to help dig out the buried memory. His session with the shrink forms a frame story for a flashback narrative about how he is introduced to Lone and becomes integrated into the gestalt. The ending of this section is unexpected and rather grim.

The narrative of this section is in the first person and written in a colloquial prose style. This section is a little like a sci-fi horror story while exploring the themes of prejudice and misanthropy; how nothing good ever stem out of them.

### **PART THREE Morality:**

The narrative is told in the third person again for this concluding section of the book. The protagonist of this section is Hip Barrows, a young man who is a brilliant engineer, he was an up and coming lieutenant until he is mysteriously dismissed from the military. Like Gerry in the previous part, he has lost his memory, though his case is more extreme as he can barely remember who he is. At the beginning of this section, Hip is in prison for attacking a man, and he has no memory of what made him do it. Fortunately, he is rescued from prison by a mysterious girl who helps to nurse him physically and mentally back to health. The girl is linked to the gestalt and Hip slowly learns his own backstory through a process called "reverse abreaction". The theme of moral and ethical responsibilities is the focus of this last section, with lots of cool psychic battles to keep the narrative lively.

Every time I read this book (years apart) I find something new to appreciate. This time I particularly like the mix of lyrical prose and the occasional whimsy, the prose style reminds me a lot of Bradbury. Like Bradbury, Sturgeon goes in and out of the lyrical mode as the story requires. However, sometimes I feel Sturgeon overdoes it, and at unsuitable points in the narrative, to the detriment of the narrative's pacing; this is just a minor flaw, though. By the end of the book, I realized what thematic idea Sturgeon is trying to convey in this book. Power corrupts, and you know what they say about absolute power, but what if there is another step above absolute power? Is ethos this next step? In spite of its title, *More Than Human* is about humanity, it is a very humane and compassionate book.

On the sci-fi side, *More Than Human* is clearly soft sci-fi, there is practically no real science behind all the psychic goings on. There is an anti-gravity device which plays a surprisingly significant part in the plotline. While the narrative has a linear timeline it is oddly constructed, probably for some poetic effect. The shift in narrative style in each part is a little disorienting, but Sturgeon always gets back on track before any real confusion sets in, the book is less than 200 pages long after all.

*More Than Human* is a classic sci-fi book that has not been out of print since the 50s. You may have heard of "Sturgeon's law" that reads "ninety percent of everything is crap." This book is definitely in the 10% non-crap segment. What amazes me is why Theodore Sturgeon is not more popular or well known today, most of his books are out of print. A single paragraph from this book is worth more than the entire Twilight saga put together.

### **Notes:**

- There are some violence and nastiness in the book. One poor lad is afflicted with acne rosacea for crossing the wrong mutant. There are also several murders which are referred to but not depicted.
- Kurt Vonnegut fans may already know this, Kilgore Trout is based on Theodore Sturgeon, who was a good friend of his.

**Quotes:**

*“Like a stone in a peach, a yolk in an egg, he carried another thing. It was passive, it was receptive, it was awake and alive. If it was connected in any way to the animal integument, it ignored the connexions. It drew its substance from the idiot and was otherwise unaware of him.”*

*“Softly, she sang. It was strange to hear for she did not know music; she did not read and had never been told of music. But there were birds, there was the bassoon of wind in the eaves sometimes; there were the calls and cooings of small creatures in that part of the wood which was hers and, distantly, from the part which was not. Her singing was made of these things, with strange and effortless fluctuations in pitch from an instrument unbound by the diatonic scale, freely phrased.”*

*“The night he cried, he discovered consciously that if he wished, he could absorb a message, a meaning, from those about him. It had happened before, but it happened as the wind happened to blow on him, as reflexively as a sneeze or a shiver.”*

An audio book in vinyl format, read by Sturgeon.

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**Franco Santos says**

4.5

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