

# *Origin 29* July 2020



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Edited by John Thiel, 30 N. 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Lafayette, Indiana 47904, [kinethiel@mymetronet.net](mailto:kinethiel@mymetronet.net) , for the National Fantasy Fan Federation. Published on a monthly basis and distributed to the membership. This is the fmz of the History and Research Bureau.

## STAFF

JOHN THIEL, bureau head

JUDY CARROLL, columnist, 975 East 120 South, Spanish Fork, Utah 84660,  
[BlueShadows2012@gmail.com](mailto:BlueShadows2012@gmail.com)

JEFFREY REDMOND, publicity, 1335 Beechwood NE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505-3830,  
[raymondjeff@hotmail.com](mailto:raymondjeff@hotmail.com)

JON SWARTZ, historian and researcher, 12115 Missel Thrush Court, Austin, Texas 78750,  
[jon\\_swartz@hotmail.com](mailto:jon_swartz@hotmail.com)

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## EDITORIAL



### Looking Over the Other Viewpoints

A lot of people have suggested that my attitude as an editor is too much one toward the progressive and that I am apt to go ahead with what I am doing without even being sure I'm right. We have people who don't like things moving or changing too rapidly and who are of the opinion that we should be looking at our present problems before attempting to move forward.

There is not much I would really dispute in this attitude as it is not fully contrary to my own. More contrary, however, is the attitude that we should not bother with improvements as, why do so? The assumption is that science fiction is in a decline and is apt not to last very much longer. One cannot ignore this, as there exists considerable evidence that would be useful in substantiating this point, but I prefer not to sit and look at a decline. I'd rather be doing things to the contrary of one. That's saying that things are looking morbid, so get morbid along with it or face disappointment. Which is to say, become part of negative tendencies and be what other people are looking at when they are looking at how badly things are going. Asking that people do this is asking that they look at things realistically, and have a view of things that is more one of working with things as they are. However, the more progressive viewpoint is one of changing things as they are, and disengaging from some of the things that brought us to this pretty pass.

The negative attitude insists that things are going so badly in the world around us that they would go badly with the things we are doing also. That seems to me an unwelcome influx from things outside our own doings. But our writers do express things that are happening, and a post-holocaust story is common in science fiction of the

present, and the stories contain less active and adventurous writing than such stories used to have. The mood of the stories is one of subjective ruin, based on experience the earlier writers had not had.

This reminds me that there is a lot of fighting going on among readers of science fiction at the present time, and what is called "feuding" in fandom. This is true even here in the N3F, where I have seen many bitter words being exchanged. This has been leading to communications interruptions where everyone's approach to things is being blocked, as in warfare. We have some comments by Jeffrey Redmond about this matter coming up in this issue. I know that the communications difficulties lead to serious obstructions in doing anything, and I suspect that such blocking is keeping the membership as silent as it has been for a long while; I'm used to there being more enthusiasm than there is now when subject matter is placed before people. It's like they can think of nothing to say, but I know that they can think of things. And so there will be more writing in Origin about problems we have that are keeping us from getting things done than there has been. Complaining about our problems is that very same negative attitude of which I spoke, but we can maintain a good attitude otherwise and try to stay out of the actual conflicts as we study these problems. We must recall that problems have reasons for them. It seems that they do not because blocking is such a mute activity. But why not get right to work going over the problems? Talk is much better than the interruption thereof, for everyone involved.

Things are in such a hopeless mess now, in so many ways, that the reaction to them is to lose all hope and develop the attitude toward which I have referred. Here I would say that what we ought to do is to extend the matter involved by being a little creative in our approach, which we are still capable of being. Suppose the "sense of wonder" were brought back and on visible display? Nothing has chased that away; people are still wondering about it all. I suggest that if the sense of wonder re-emerged and became a viable alternative, the effect this would have on changing things for the better would be a great one. That's what I've been trying to do with effective art which has a sense of wonder to it and might succeed in restoring an appreciation of the beautiful and mysterious which when it is not there is a serious lack in the science fiction field, where the sense of wonder has always been present and often promoted, but where it is now in serious abeyance. Artist Hardy, now active at the facebook forums and displaying his art there, has some of this quality in that art and I suspect he is going for improvement.

*Time now for something in the mode of contents—*

## **PSYCHIC SCIENCE FICTION** by Jeffrey Redmond



After yet another abysmal premiere of a recent miniseries, people's reactions to the various twists seemed to suggest a question was forming in the minds of science fiction fans everywhere:

Why, exactly, are psychic or telekinetic powers considered to be an acceptable plot device in sci-fi? It's certainly a divergence from most of the other tropes of sci-fi. After all, one of the ground rules that separates sci-fi from fantasy is "technical possibility".

We believe aliens could exist; we believe Artificial intelligences are possible; traveling through the stars in massive spaceships? Well, we're already halfway there. Sure, the execution isn't always terribly realistic, but those are generally concessions to storytelling more than deliberate breaks from reality. STAR TREK's aliens mostly look like humans because Star Trek is a TV show and the characters have to be played by human actors (at least, until very recently with CGI). Psychic powers are the one exception that's still often considered to be part of the sci-fi writers' workbag. So why?

The simple answer is the obvious one: once upon a time, psychic powers WERE considered a technical possibility. It sounds ludicrous today, but it goes all the way back to the original John Carter of Mars series from the 1800s. But the modern sci-fi tropes were first codified in the days of pulp SF in the 1930s to 1950s, and that includes psychic powers.

E.E. Doc Smith's LENSMAN series is one of the first space operas, and centered

around "The Lens of Civilization", which could grant psychic abilities. The basic idea behind this kind of thing in pulp SF was essentially that the development of psychic abilities in humans was an evolutionary inevitability. Keep in mind that this was at a time when even famous psychologists (like certain interpretations of Jung's "collective unconscious") considered it a possibility.

In Star Trek's case, being produced originally in the 1960s means that psychics have been there since day one. The second pilot, "Where No Man Has Gone Before", deals extensively with the "evolutionary" development of psychic powers in humans, and Kirk's good friend Gary Mitchel begins manifesting those powers upon exposure to the Galactic Barrier.

And while psychic powers in actual humans are something that more or less disappeared after The Old Series (with a few exceptions), it continued to surface in alien species, like the Vulcans and their touch-telepathy, or the telepathic/empathic abilities of the Betazoids, as seen in Counselor Troi, and that's not even getting into technological telepathy like the Borg. In this case, it makes sense; those psychic abilities were already a part of that world, so it would be waste not to make use of them in future series.

But other sci-fi shows, much more modern shows, continue to make use of psychic abilities, even though they've been thoroughly discredited and they're not bound by old continuity the way that long runners like Star Trek and Doctor Who are. Why is it allowed to persist?

To some extent, it's the influence of these long runners. They're still around, and still popular, and so as part of the attempt to emulate them, psychic abilities are brought into the plot. If anyone questions it, then you can point to them as precedent.

Occasionally, it's mentioned or implied how strange it is. FIREFLY makes it clear that, if not the very first, only an incredibly small group has ever displayed any kind of psychic ability like River's. It's why she's so valuable to the Alliance and the major plot point of SERENITY. For a show that otherwise strove for realism, with no faster-than-light or sentient aliens or anything else, the psychic powers absolutely stood out as a weird point.

Mostly, psychic powers tend to persevere in spite of how tired the trope is in sci-fi because they're just so darn useful from a plot perspective. Can't communicate with the various aliens around you? A telepathic field connecting the two of you and enabling you to understand each other, like that employed in Doctor Who, comes in handy.

Telepathic or telekinetic abilities also stand out as a great way to make your aliens more “alien”. There’s nothing like that anywhere on Earth, so clearly they operate on very different rules of evolution, like the Vulcans of Star Trek. It can also be used to make the enemy seem even more powerful and dangerous.

How do you defeat someone who can read your mind, who can tell what you’re doing before you do it? You can’t resist telepathic interrogation, like that performed in BABYLON 5 by the Psi Corps. It can even be used as a way to defeat certain otherwise immutable physical rules, like information traveling beyond the speed of light (as also seen in Babylon 5). And it can be hard for a writer interested in milking all the drama he can to discuss the allure of premonitions or precognition, which allow for all kinds of fretting over the future or complicated fake-outs that would otherwise have been fulfilled with prophecy in a fantasy tale.

Which boils it down to one specific reason: psychic powers are basically the SF equivalent of magic.

The Borg’s hive mind is the technological manifestation of a collective unconscious.

Another way that this has been dealt with in more recent series is by moving the burden of proof from biology. Another way that this has been dealt with in more recent series is by moving the burden of proof from biology to technology. That is, rather than having psychic powers be a direct evolutionary or natural state, the psychic abilities in question are generated by technology that simply functions in a way that’s equivalent, story-wise, to psychic powers.

Cyborg characters, for example, might communicate with each other *via* radio signals, rather than speaking, in what is essentially telepathy (the basis behind the Borg hive mind). In one episode of VOYAGER, Seven of Nine is hit with stray memories of other Borg, left behind by the latent communications that are ever-present for drones. If you delete the fact that she’s a Borg from the script, it could just as easily be psychic visions instead. This gets particularly interesting for Star Trek when characters with legitimate psychic abilities are assimilated, like Tuvok, who finds the experience particularly difficult as a result. Nanotechnology might also fill this role, allowing characters to act invisibly on objects from afar.

This all basically comes down to an application of Clarke’s Third Law, “sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic”. Technology used to replicate the end result of psychic powers is, from a story standpoint, indistinguishable from actually using psychic powers. Whether this is an advancement of the genre by leaving the idea



of psychic evolution behind, or just another way of dressing it up with the latest buzzwords (in much the same way as Spiderman's radioactive spider bite turning into a genetically engineered spider bite) is up to the reader. Many prefer a technological explanation to be given, even if it's a weak one.

But, regardless, the psychic sci-fi sub-genre will continue to be a popular one. And one we will be experiencing (and even enjoying) for a long time.



**From Clarke's 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, the final psychic experience**



*Nostalgia for some, a new delight for others, those early sf paperbacks*

## **SCIENCE FICTION IN THE EARLY POCKET BOOKS**

by Jon D. Swartz, N3F Historian



Pocket books produced the first mass-market, pocket-sized paperback books in America in early 1939 and revolutionized the publishing industry. German Albatross Books had pioneered the idea of a line of color-coded paperback editions in 1931 under Kurt Enoch; Penguin Books in Britain had refined the idea in 1935, and had one million paperback books in print by the following year.

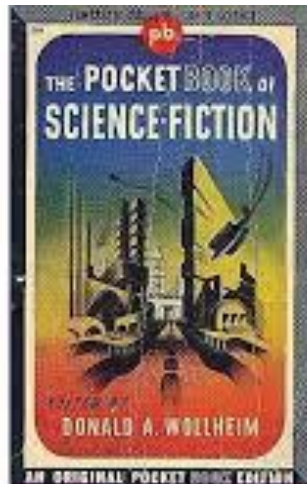
Penguin's success inspired publisher/entrepreneur Robert de Graff to bring Pocket Books to the American market. Priced at twenty-five cents, the books featured the logo of Gertrude the Kangaroo (named after the mother-in-law of artist Frank Lieberman).

Pocket Books' editorial policy of reprints of light literature, popular non-fiction, and mysteries was coordinated with the strategy of selling books outside the traditional distribution channels.

In 1943 Pocket Books published the first paperback in the United States to have the word "Science Fiction" in the title. This was true for a number of years, as other paperback publishers avoided the term in describing their genre books.

### **THE POCKET BOOK OF SCIENCE FICTION (1943)**

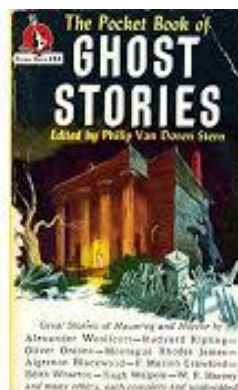
edited by Donald A. Wollheim



This anthology contained a brief introduction by Wollheim, and stories by Stephen Vincent Benet ("By the Waters of Babylon"), Ambrose Bierce ("Moxon's Master"), John Collier ("Green Thoughts"), H.G. Wells ("In the Abyss"), T.S. Stribling ("The Green Splotches"), Stanley G. Weinbaum ("A Martian Odyssey"), Wallace G. West ("The Last Man"), Theodore Sturgeon ("Microcosmic God"), Don A. Stuart [John W. Campbell, Jr.], ("Twilight"), and Robert A. Heinlein ("—And He Built a Crooked House"). Wollheim thanked two of his fellow Futurians (Robert W. Lowndes, John B. Michel) for their help in editing this book, as well as Philip Van Doren Stern, who edited the next two volumes discussed below.

My dad ordered this book from the publisher for me when I saw a reference to it somewhere. My friends were quite envious when I got my copy and showed it to them, and some of them later ordered copies for themselves. It is generally credited today with being the first book to use the term "science fiction" in its title.

### **THE POCKET BOOK OF GHOST STORIES (1947) edited by Philip Van Doren Stern**

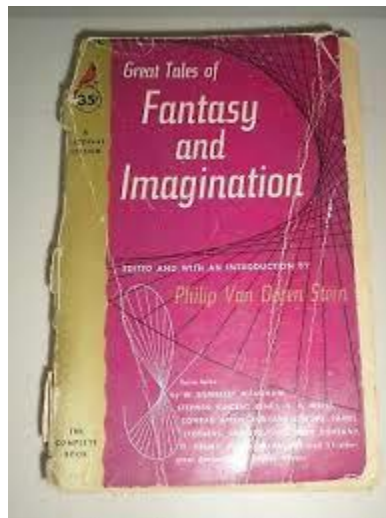


This anthology was published a few years after *The Pocket Book of Science Fiction*, and was seen by the publisher as a sort of companion volume.

It contained an introduction by the editor, and thirteen "great stories of haunting and horror" by some of the genre's most famous authors. Stories were included by authors such as Edgar Allen Poe, Rudyard Kipling, Alexander Woollcott, M.R. James, Algernon Blackwood, Oliver Onions, and Sheridan Le Fanu, all of whom had also written classic SF/fantasy tales.

Stern edited other anthologies for Pocket Books in the 1940s-1950s, including the genre title listed below.

**GREAT TALES OF FANTASY AND IMAGINATION (1954)**  
**edited by Philip Van Doren Stern**



Pocket Books created another imprint, Cardinal Editions, a thirty-five cent line, and published such books as this one, a reprint of the earlier book, *THE MOONLIGHT TRAVELER*, originally published in 1943.

Stories included were "The Celestial Omnibus" by E.M. Forester, "Desire" by James Stephens, "Enoch Soames" by Max Beerbohm, "The Man Who Could Work Miracles" by H.G. Wells, "The Bottle Imp" by Robert Louis Stevenson, "Adam and Eve and Pinch Me" by A.E. Coppard, "Lord Mountdrago" by W. Somerset Maugham, "All Hallows" by Walter de la Mare, "Our Distant Cousins" by Lord Dunsany, "Cobbler, Cobbler, Mend My Shoe" by Jan Struther, "The Man Who Missed the Bus" by Stella Benson, "Sam Small's Better Half" by Eric Knight, "Mr. Arcularis" by Conrad Aiken, "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" by F. Scott Fitzgerald, "William Wilson" by Edgar Allan Poe, "The Curfew Tolls" by

Stephen Vincent Benet, "The Most Maddening Story in the World" by Ralph Straus, "Phantas" by Oliver Onions, "Roads of Destiny" by O. Henry, "Wireless" by Rudyard Kipling, and "The Music on the Hill" by Saki.

**SCIENCE FICTION TERROR TALES (1955)**  
**edited by Groff Conklin**



This was another early SF anthology, this one edited by longtime SF anthologist Groff Conklin. Included were stories by several Golden Age SF authors, including Ray Bradbury ("Punishment Without Crime"), Isaac Asimov ("Flies"), Anthony Boucher ("The Other Inauguration"), Fredric Brown ("Arena"), Theodore Sturgeon ("Memorial"), Murray Leinster ("Pipeline to Pluto"), and Robert Heinlein ("They").

In addition, some of the SF authors who became popular a few years later—such as Robert Sheckley ("The Leech"), Richard Matheson ("Through Channels"), Margaret St. Clair ("Prott"), and Chad Oliver ("Let Me Live in a House")—were included.

**Science Fiction Novels**

Classic genre novels in the late 1930s and early 1940s from Pocket Books included LOST HORIZONS (one of the first ten books published), GULLIVER'S TRAVELS, DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, DRACULA, and THE WEREWOLF OF PARIS. Other early SF books from Pocket Books were MR. ADAM, NEW TALES OF SPACE AND TIME, SPACE PLATFORM, THE WAR OF THE WORLDS, THE PLANET OF THE DREAMERS, NO BLADE OF

GRASS, THE INVISIBLE MAN, and THE WINDS OF TIME. In 1945 Pocket Books also published the related non-fiction work, THE ATOMIC AGE OPENS.

### **Pocket Books Over the Years**

Pocket Books has over the years included several imprints, including Baen, Cardinal, Permabooks, and Timescape.

Timescape Books, now defunct, was a SF line operating from 1981 to 1985. Some of the SF titles published under the Timescape imprint were: GOLEM (Alfred Bester), OATH OF FEALTY (Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle), WINDHAVEN (George R.R. Martin and Lisa Tuttle), THE WAR HOUND AND THE WORLD'S PAIN (Michael Moorcock), THE CITY OF THE SINGING FLAME (Clark Ashton Smith), THE SWORD OF THE LICTOR and THE CLAW OF THE CONCILIATOR (Gene Wolfe), THE DIVINE INVASION (Philip K. Dick), and NO ENEMY BUT TIME (Michael Bishop).

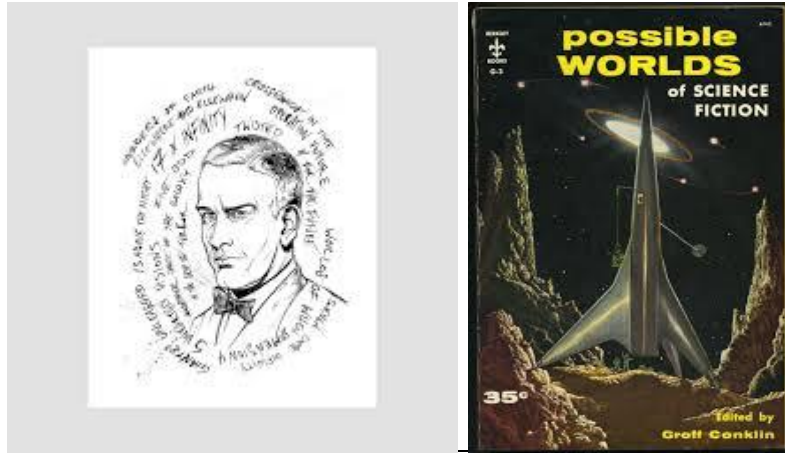
### **Donald A. Wollheim**



Donald Allen Wollheim (October 1, 1914—November 2, 1990) was a SF fan, author, editor and publisher. One of the leaders of the famous Futurians of New York, Wollheim is responsible for several publishing firsts in the field of SF. As pointed out earlier, in 1943 he was editor of the first SF paperback to use the term "science fiction" in the title. He also edited the VIKING PORTABLE NOVELS OF SCIENCE in 1945, the first hardcover book in the United States to collect SF novels in book form.

He was responsible for several other firsts, including the first collection of original SF stories (for Avon), introducing many new SF authors (for Ace), and later establishing his own SF publishing company, DAW Books (with his wife Elsie Balter Wollheim).

## Groff Conklin



Edward Groff Conklin (September 6, 1904—July 19, 1968) was an American SF anthologist. He edited more than forty genre anthologies, one of mystery stories (co-edited with physician Noah Fabricant), wrote books on home improvement, and was a freelance writer on scientific subjects as well as a published poet. From 1950 to 1955, he was the book critic for **Galaxy Science Fiction**.

After his first SF anthology, *THE BEST OF SCIENCE FICTION* (1946), weighing in at seven hundred and eighty-five pages, he followed with *A TREASURY OF SCIENCE FICTION* (1948).

Readers of SF soon began to seek out books with his unusual name on the cover, including *THE SCIENCE FICTION GALAXY* (1950), *THE BIG BOOK OF SCIENCE FICTION* (1950), *POSSIBLE WORLDS OF SCIENCE FICTION* (1951), and other genre anthologies.

## Robert F. de Graff

Robert de Graff (1885-1981) had long experience with reprints as head of the Garden City Publishing Company, the reprint division of Doubleday & Company.

De Graff believed that the public would buy cheap, paperback books if, through adequate distribution, the books were brought to them. At Garden City, he had put out hardcover reprints of books priced as low as thirty-nine cents.

## Some Conclusions

Pocket Books was enormously successful during its early days, had several best sellers, and even the SF titles helped in their sales. It has been written that the owners of Penguin Books were very jealous of the success of Pocket Books.



Much of the success of Pocket Books was attributed to the success of the Armed Service Editions (ASE) distributed free to our troops during World War II. Millions of readers were introduced to free and/or cheap, paperback editions of books because of the ASE books, and Pocket Books was a leader in the field at the time.

Pocket Books was later known for publishing works of popular fiction based on film and TV series, such as the Star Trek franchise. Since first obtaining the Star Trek license in 1979, Pocket Books has published many original and adapted works based upon this franchise and others, such as BUFFY, THE VAMPIRE SLAYER.

In recent years, Pocket Books has issued many of Stephen King's bestsellers—and distributed them throughout the world.

### **Sources**

Bonn, Thomas L. UNDERCOVER: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF AMERICAN MASS MARKET PAPERBACKS. NY: Penguin Books, 1982.

Davis, Kenneth C. TWO-BIT CULTURE. Boston, MS: Houghton-Mifflin, 1984.

Lovisi, Gary. COLLECTING SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY. Brooklyn, NY: Alliance, 1997.

Lupoff, Richard A. THE GREAT AMERICAN PAPERBACK. Portland, OR: Collectors Press, 2001.

Schick, Frank L. THE PAPERBOUND BOOK IN AMERICA. NY: Bowker, 1958.

Note: This article was written several years ago. It has been revised somewhat for reprinting in Origin.



### **NOTE ON POLICY by Jeffrey Redmond**

Currently in the N3F there seems to be two different ideas about membership and recruiting. One is the plan for growth and development. New people are desired and requested to join the Facebook groups, and hopefully become dues-paying members. The other is the desire to keep the organization smaller and more elitist. Quality instead of quantity. Anyone who doesn't fit the same pattern of thinking and behaving cannot belong.

Years ago the N3F had hundreds more members, until so many of them left or didn't renew. It has been smaller and stagnant now for awhile. This can, of course, continue without any disruptions or problems.

But if the N3F is ever to become a larger organization, it has to accept more people with new and different ideas. Remaining so exclusive and exclusionary prevents progress and growth. The N3F will continue as it has been in recent years.

As a part of the Membership Recruitment Bureau, I have been honored to try to do all I have been asked and tasked. I am always happy when someone decides to join because of receiving information from me. This is always rewarding, and I'm certainly proud to show what I can do.

However, the N3F needs to decide what it actually wants to be. Will it stay smaller and concise, or will it expand and branch out to become larger and more varied? Is it to be Fantasy and Science Fiction kept limited with cute things such as pixies and unicorns? Or can it be more grown up with harder and stronger themes?

In all probability, the N3F will not grow much for the remainder of this year. But perhaps by next year it can decide how to make itself bigger, better, larger, and greater. I will certainly continue to strive for this worthy goal.



Ulysses, as portrayed in art

## FANDOM GUIDES by Garth Spencer

Fans—of every sort of fandom—have been constructing guides to their fandoms for a long, long time. When I first became aware of guides to science fiction fandom, I was struck by the persistently dated air of these guides, as if the editors did not know anything about SF fandom after 1966 except in fanzine and fannish fandom; or as if Star Trek, Star Wars, comics, costuming, filk and gaming lay outside their definition.

Today, many guides to fandom cover these specialized fandoms exclusively, as if everyone claims the term “fandom” for their own turf, alone. This happens even in sports fandom, and the fandom of casino games of chance.

The following list attempts to cover currently available guides to SF Fandom. Many of these are available on websites, or in fact they ARE websites.

Date: 2019. Title and URL: [www2.vcn.bc.ca/~garth2](http://www2.vcn.bc.ca/~garth2) . Description: the initiative of Garth Spencer, last updated in 2019 (to be updated soon).

Date: ?. Title and URL: Canadian SF Fanzine Archive [www.cdnsfzinearchive.org](http://www.cdnsfzinearchive.org) .

Date: ?. Title and URL: [Canfancylopedia.ca](http://Canfancylopedia.ca)

Date: ?. Title and URL: [Fanac.org](http://Fanac.org)

Date: ?. Title and URL: [Fancylopedia.org](http://Fancylopedia.org) .

Date: 2020. Title and URL: FANDOM—Community Central, [Community.fandom/wiki/Help:Fandom\\_Basics](http://Community.fandom/wiki/Help:Fandom_Basics) . Description: Very contemporary.

Date: ?. Title and URL: [File 770, File770.com](http://File770.com) .

Date: 2020. Title and URL: Harry Potter Alliance Resources, [www.thehpalliance.org](http://www.thehpalliance.org) resources

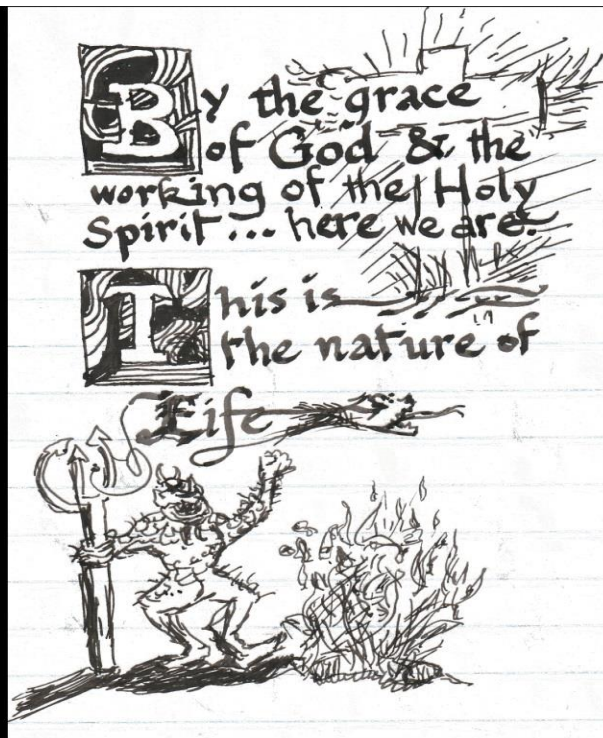
Date: 2012. Title and URL: Northwest Science Fiction Resources, [Sfnorthwest.org](http://Sfnorthwest.org) . Description: The initiative of Jack Beslanwitch, last updated in 2012

Date: 2020. Title and URL: Southern Fandom Resource Guide. [www.southernfandom.com](http://www.southernfandom.com)

Date: 2013. Title and URL: The NCF Guide to Canadian Science Fiction and Fandom, [www.edu.uleth.ca/~runte/ncfguide/default.html](http://www.edu.uleth.ca/~runte/ncfguide/default.html). Description: The initiative of Dr. Robert Runte, last updated in 2013.

Date: 1973 08, (1955 02). Title and URL: The Neo-Fan's Guide, <https://efanzines.com/NeofansGuide1/>  
Description: A guide to fandom written by Bob Tucker and published in 1955. It was revised in the mid-70s by Linda Lounsbury and Linda Bushyager as a fund-raiser for TAFF. —Fancylopedia 3 (2020)

Date: 1981 08. Title and URL: The Edmonton Science Fiction & Comic Art Society's Guide to Science Fiction and Fandom. Description: 18 page introductory guide to sf & fandom by Robert Runte.



Drawing by Gary Labowitz

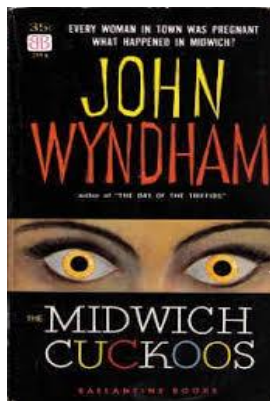
## DRAMA IN SCIENCE FICTION by Judy Carroll



The Midwich Cuckoos



John Wyndham



Once I discovered science fiction I couldn't let it go. If I couldn't talk my parents into taking me to see a new science fiction movie at the theater, or the drive-in, I would have to settle for the movies on TV. I would find old and not-so-old movies on Friday and Saturday nights—the only nights my mother would let me stay up late, and, as I recall, the only nights in the entire week that TV would allow such an indulgence.

One of the movies that really stayed with me, and is still vivid in my memory, is *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED*—the black and white 1960 version starring George Sanders and Barbara Shelley and directed by Wolf Rilla. Following is the storyline by [Wolters—wolters@strw.LeidenUniv.nl](mailto:wolters@strw.LeidenUniv.nl) :

“In the small English village of Midwich everybody and everything falls into a deep, mysterious sleep for several hours in the middle of the day. Some months later every woman capable of child-bearing is pregnant and the children that are born out of these pregnancies seem to grow very fast and they all have the same blond hair and strange, penetrating eyes that make people do things they don’t want to do.”

I loved this movie. I was so fascinated by it that I began taking mental and physical notes of little things I had seen or read in connection to it. I got out my small, colored paper tablet and my colored pencils and began drawing one pair of blue eyes on several pieces of paper. Then I wrote the following on another set of papers—BEWARE THE STARE. The third set of papers read—Can a master race be sired by a fearsome force from outer space? Can it happen here, in our time, in your town? (Please forgive me if these quotes are incorrect. I don’t wish to look them up for accuracy and spoil a fond childhood memory.)

Now, I want to make it clear that I love my mother. She was a very wonderful lady and she put up with my pranks and my strange ideas and what-if attitude. She supported me in what I wanted to do and put up with my stubbornness in rejecting new ideas that were not my own. Sometimes, though, people need to get a little jolt of the unexpected.

One day, when my mother was out of the house, I found a place for all my colored papers. My mother spent the next several weeks discovering my tribute to Village of the Damned. She would find them behind doors, inside her dresser drawers, taped to mirrors, in the utensil drawer in the kitchen, and any place I thought would surprise her.

I am aware that in 1964 a movie was released called CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED, starring Ian Hendry and Barbara Ferris, and directed by Antonon M. Leader. I’ve seen it. I don’t like it. This is not a sequel to the 1960 movie. The title is just to draw in people who think it is connected to the original.

In 1995 a remake, if you wish to call it that, of Village of the Damned was released. It starred Christopher Reeves and Kristie Alley and was directed by John Carpenter. Following is a storyline by an unnamed writer:

“Ten months after the small California town of Midwich was struck by a mysterious event during which everyone in the village fell unconscious at once. Ten local women give birth on the same day. As the unsettlingly calm and unemotional children grow at an abnormally fast rate, it becomes clear that they can read adults’ minds and force people to harm themselves. Local doctor Alan Chaffee (Christopher Reeve) and federal



agent Susan Verner (Kristie Alley) must team up to battle the alien children.”

I have also seen this movie. I like it. It is well done and has better special effects than the original—which should be expected since it was filmed 35 years later.

If you wish to watch these movies, alas, you will have to do the research on your own.

If you wish to read the book on which Village of the Damned is based, I can help you with that. The book is THE MIDWICH CUCKOOS by John Wyndham.

[Editor’s note: there is also a third movie titled the same as the book.—JT]



## **THE DECADE OF THE WEIRD by Will Mayo**

Back around fifty years ago I had a weird fascination with Von Daniken’s theory of ancient astronauts from the stars above. It took some convincing from my betters back in the mid-70s that it was simply a racist belief to claim that long ago native people in Africa and the Americas could not just master astronomy and architecture all by themselves without any need for extraterrestrial visitors to lend them a hand. But for a while with me the belief in ancient astronauts held strong along with other more esoteric stuff like ghost ships in the Bermuda Triangle and extrasensory perception. It was an interesting time to be a kid. Yes, that was the Seventies, the decade of the weird.

Last Page—we'll see you all next issue.

