

STARTLING VISIONS MAGAZINE

STARTLING VISION FICTION: The Matter of the Meaning

by

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Just what does this magazine mean by the phrase *Startling Vision Fiction*? It's a term I've coined to identify what I see as a certain general class of story. Put very simply and inadequately, a Startling Vision Fiction story can be thought of as a tale that deals with and is driven by some aspect, such as a concept or event, that the general audience considers to be impossible in Reality.

Obviously, though, there must be much more to what constitutes a Startling Vision Fiction story than the simplistic definition just given above. After all, if Reader A subscribes to the axiom that there's no such thing as ghosts, Reader A will consider all ghost stories to be tales of the "impossible". Whereas if Reader B not only believes in the existence of ghosts, but even claims to have discussions with some on a regular basis, Reader B may naturally look on ghost stories as very "realistic" fiction. People believe all kinds of things, often on a very subjective basis. Therefore, for the purposes of making distinctions in fiction, a more definitive, more objective dividing point is needed, and the most logical one (for me, at least) is *scientific consensus* (and by "scientific" I'm referring to the now-common usage of the word, meaning "of or relating to *the sciences* or *scientific disciplines*"; i.e. geology, chemistry, mathematics, biology, astronomy, physics, genetics, etc.). By using scientific discoveries, laws, and theories as a measure of what may reasonably be recognized as "possible" we are able to distinguish what we may refer to as the "impossible"—at least as far as the fields of science are concerned.

Therefore, stories dealing prominently with ideas that are generally considered to be scientifically plausible, and/or scientifically possible,