



# The DREAMS OUR STUFF IS MADE OF: HOW SCIENCE FICTION CONQUERED THE WORLD

*Thomas M. Disch*

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## **The DREAMS OUR STUFF IS MADE OF: HOW SCIENCE FICTION CONQUERED THE WORLD** Thomas M. Disch

From acclaimed science fiction writer Thomas M. Disch comes "The Dreams Our Stuff Is Made Of", a keenly perceptive account of the impact science fiction has had on American culture. As only a consummate insider could, Disch provides a fascinating view of this world and its inhabitants, tracing science fiction's phenomenal growth into the multibillion-dollar global entertainment industry it is today. If America is a "nation of liars", as Disch asserts in this dazzling and provocative cultural history, then science fiction is the most American of literary genres. American SF writers have seen their wishes, dreams, and lies accorded the same respect as facts. From the protoscience-fiction tales of Edgar Allen Poe, to the utopian dreams and technological nightmares of European writers H. G. Wells, Jules Verne, and J. G. Ballard, to American conservatives Robert Heinlein and Jerry Pournelle, liberals Joe Haldemann and Ursula le Guin, flakes William Burroughs and Philip K. Dick, and outright charlatans Ignatius Donnelly and various UFO "witnesses," Disch emphasizes science fiction's cultural role as both a lens and a medium for the very rapid changes driven by modern technology, highlighting its powers of prediction and prevarication. Much more than a history of the genre, "The Dreams Our Stuff Is Made Of" is an in-depth study of its ever-growing interaction with all aspects of culture-- politics, religion, and the fabric of our daily lives-- showing how it has become a cultural battlefield while helping us to adjust to new social realities, in everything from Star Trek's model of a multicultural workplace to Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative. Disch is full of high praise and trenchant criticism of the genre, but sees its darker expression in the appearance of suicidal and homicidal UFO cults that blur science-fiction-fueled fantasies with reality. Behind the spaceships and aliens Disch reveals the blueprints of the dizzying postmodern future we have already begun to inhabit.

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