

# Children Science Fiction For Sustainability

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# What is Sustainability?

- “Sustain” and “Ability”
- Sustain to be Able or Ability to Sustain?
- Is there a difference between ‘Children’ and ‘Adult’ Science Fiction, from a sustainability standpoint?

# Why Children Science Fiction and Sustainability?

- Because it is – “A pot of green and a pot of orange paint spilled on the floor and forms a murky brown together which does not belong to any pot but who cant distinguish that is also a fool” – (McDowell 58, Nodelman, Hidden Adult 188)..
- Because as Roger Sale wryly says – “Everyone knows what children science fiction literature is until one is asked to define it”!!
- Trust it or not, Sustainability is exactly having these two above characteristics!!!!

# So why the idea of merging children science fiction and sustainability emerged?

1. Can depict a schematic moral view of life (Mcdowell, Nodelman)
2. Active (full of action) and ruminant (full of introspection, reflection and liberation) at the same time
3. Simple, formulaic as well as abstract, open ended at the same time
4. A dialectics between a small and large vision within the storytelling

To do that – What was essential is to understand  
the history

And hence the historical exploration started ...

# Sustainability in Mythology and Early Scripture Context?

- Lessons from Old Testament – the ship of Noah - A pair of animals to secure a sustainable lifecycle
- Lessons from Mahabharata – Khandava Dahan?
- Lessons from Indian scriptures like the Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, Bhagavad Gita, Manusmriti, Arthashastra
  - Sustainability is about - *human beings*, make people capable of joint performance, to make their strengths effective and their weaknesses irrelevant by imbibing culture, common goals, shared values, commitment, communication

# Historical Narrative

Name	Year	Author	Genre	Content
Utopia	1516	Thomas More	Scientific Voyages	Imaginary voyage to an unknown land
Somnium	1632	Johannes Kepler	Lunar voyage	How earth's motion looks from moon
Gullivers Travels	1726	Jonathan Swift	Voyage to an imaginary land	Fiction on gulliver's experiences in a Lilliput land
Frankenstein	1818	Mary Shelley	Limits of scientific understanding and humanity's relationship to created beings	Innovation in the realm of science rather than supernatural
Critique of science fiction	After 1818	Paul Alkon	Defined as narrative use of science to create myths to bring in novel view points	Science to create myths allowing novel points of view
Amazing stories	1926	Hugo Gernsback	Scientifiction to Science fiction	Codified an already existing literary form which included fantastic voyages, utopia, disaster fictions, invention tales, scientific romances

# Historical Narrative

Name	Year	Author	Genre	Content
Future Shock	1970	Alvin Toffler	Contemporary western cultures grappling with rapidity of technological and social change	Technological and social change acting as a centre point of change
Pulp Magazines	1940	John W Campbell	Focusing on pulp science fiction	Science fiction culture
Le Zombie	1941	Bob Tucker	Relationship between enthusiastic group of fans and emergence of science fiction in magazines	Practicing science fiction
Brave New World	1932	Aldous Huxley	Science fiction practice of generic attribution	Sites of both high and low culture
The Time Machine	1895	Jules Verne	Polarization of humans into two bleak species	Vision of an alien and an alienating planet
Some fiction works	Over a long range of time	H.G. Wells	Focuses on philosophical and social implications of scientific discoveries	Understanding of ethical choices and perceptions of material world changes over time
M.S Found in a Bottle	1833	Edgar Allen Poe	Range of engagements with the sublime nature	Transmutation into the comforting sense of wonder
The Sentinel	1951	Arthur C Clarke	Human confrontation with a manufactured than a natural object	Evolutionary time scale of a technology

# Historical Narrative

Name	Year	Author	Genre	Content
Argosy	1882 – 1978	Story Magazine	Sensationalist novels	Science fiction with a special magazine culture
The Strand	1891 – 1950	Story Magazine	Mixture of story types	Transformed market place with different story mixes
The War of Worlds	1898	H.G. Wells	Alien invasion	Centred around anthropocentrism
The New Atlantis	1624	Francis Bacon	Scientific discoveries demonstrate our lack of empire over matter	A world powerful than ours
The War of the worlds	1898 (first hardcover) and serialised first in 1897	H G Wells	Challenges the way of understanding the world. The superior imperialist British race is outweighed by Martian technology	Martians are doing the same thing as done by British in their colonies. Comparisons are drawn with extinction of bison and dodo by human activities, extinction of Tasmanians by European immigrants. Questions the anthropocentric view of religion, Christianity which poses humanity above nature, whereas science has no special interest in homo sapiens. Gives us a more heterogenic view of the world making humans conscious of future given life exists in Mars.
Ralph 124C41+	1911 – 1912	Gernsback	Adventure story of Ralph saving his girl in an	Ralph moves from one future technology to the other viz. television, video phone, solar

# Historical Narrative

Name	Year	Author	Genre	Content
Martian Odyssey	1934	Stanley G. Weinbaum	How to communicate with aliens	Questions the paradigm of human and alien friendship in an alien landscape of Mars by questioning whether reason or technology should decide such friendship
A Door Into Ocean	1986	Joan Slonczweski	Understanding off planetary life	Rational differentiation between ecofeminist and technorationalist approach to understand planetary life
Astounding Stories to Astounding Science Fiction	1937	John W. Campbell	Bringing in technology for explaining nuances of social life	Technocratic rationalism to replace emotions to explain the social world
Who goes there	1938	John W. Campbell	Explores the value of science fiction conceived as a rationalist worldview	Discovery of a long buried spaceship in Antarctica and the crisis amongst men stationed in the research camp where alien body is discovered. The conflict between nature and human science is explained when the alien starts taking the form of any life with which it has contact
That only a mother	1948	Judith Merril	Intersections of public science and domestic life	A mother writing a letter to her husband posted in a secret station related to nuclear warfare about possibilities of mutation in her baby

# More Narratives for the Birth of Lucy

- **Liar (1941)** - **Isaac Asimov** - Misunderstandings launched by a mind reading robot - deception by robot and misunderstandings between human race
- **Runaround (1942)** - **Isaac Asimov** - The law of robotics - A robot should not harm a human being or through inaction will not allow the human being to harm the robot. A robot will follow the orders of a human being unless and until there is a defiance of the first law.
- **Reason (1942)** - **Isaac Asimov** - The conflict between reason and logic. In a space station, the scientists try to convince a robot that he has been created by the humans and the robot disagrees to acknowledge that fact.
- **Forbidden Planet (1956)** - **Wilcox** - The robot refuses to attack a monster as a human being is behind the monster attack and this follows the discourse of robotic law of Asimov
- **The Female Man (1966)** - **Joanna Russ** - DNA derived artificial lover who scares another woman

# More Narratives for the Birth of Lucy

- **Culture Novels** (1987 - 2012) - **Ian.M. Banks** - AI Mind Citizens in human relationships
- **We Who Are About To** (1976) - **Joanna Russ** - Talks of a civilization where women are reduced to the role of breeders
- **Fondly Fahrenheit** (1954) - **Alfred Bester** - It comments on what science fiction has overlooked due to its attachment to rational explanation. The story is about the master slave relationship where the master creates an android and the android starts to trouble and the master has to change his identities again and again due to that. Finally, a point comes where the master decides to sell the android when the android makes the claim that he cant be sold following the law of Robotics. Projection of the master's mind onto the slave - it is not clear. Is the android a subconscious depiction of the psychology of the master.
- **Childhood's End** (1953) - **Arthur C. Clarke** - Alien Overlords come to the earth and owing to their superior technology they become Gods to humans and establish a peaceful, equal society on earth. The overlords create a new set of telepathic, human species who work for a better future. So the human civilization's doubts of colonization here progresses towards a betterment.

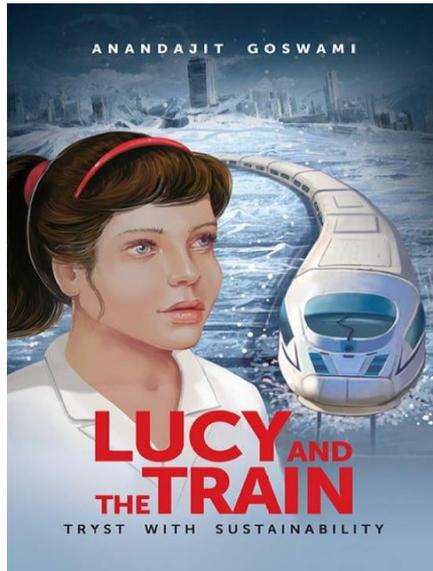
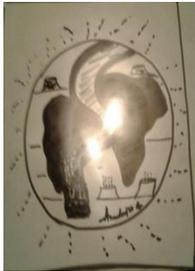
# More Narratives for the Birth of Lucy

- **The Liberation of Earth (1953)** - **William Tenns** - also highlights about alien invasion - Two alien invasion - one trying for betterment and the other not for betterment and human race caught in between two superpowers of space - just like USSR and US.
- **The Day Earth Stood Still (1951)** - **Wise** - Is about a nuclear warfare race and its impact on environment
- **Aleutian Trilogy, White Queen (1991), North Wind (1994), Phoenix Cafe (1997)** - **Gwyeneth Jones** - are all about the complex exploration of cultural difference and misunderstandings arising from not able to accommodate the cultural differences. Not able to understand the aliens immortality, telepathic aspects.
- **When we went to see the end of the world (1972)** - **Robert Silverberg** - Highlights the conspicuous consumption nature of middle class and their constant race to go high up in the ladder of the society in comparison to others by getting a better vacation package to conduct a time travel vacation towards seeing the end of the world without actually worrying about the end of the world

## The journey of Lucy in the Context

- Journey within a train (like a nemesis in compartments), and
- In a ship (like a Sindbad)

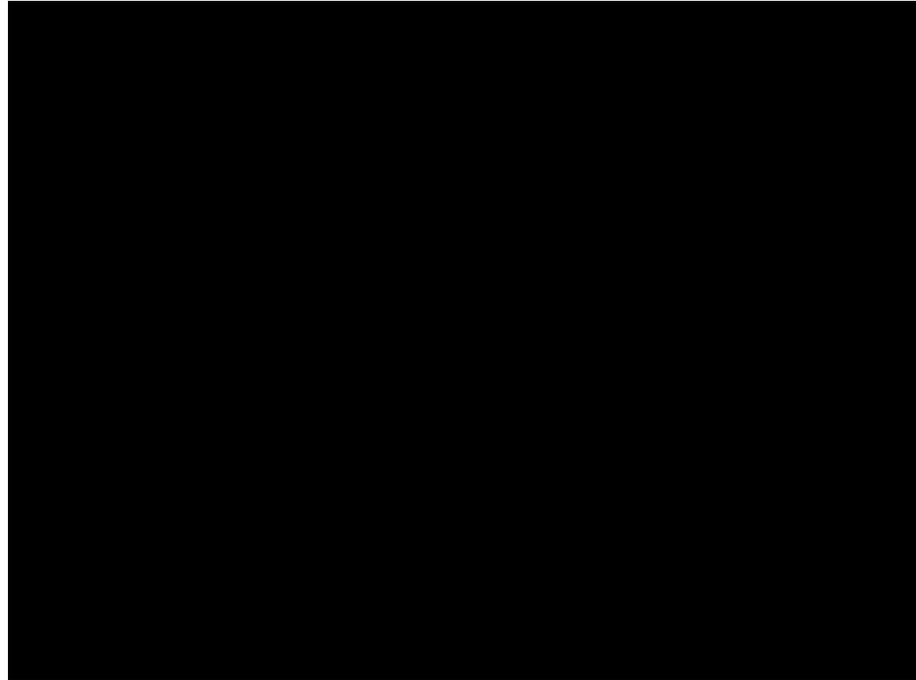
# And hence LUCY (Love, Understanding, Creation and Youth) and her tryst with Sustainability was born



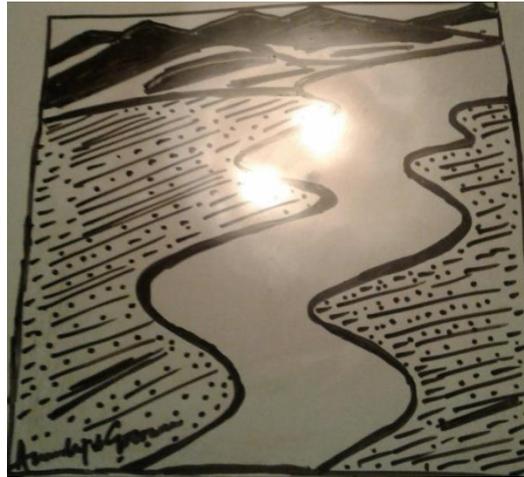
Within a train (like a nemesis in compartments) moving through challenges in order to be able to sustain

In a ship (like a Sindbad) - towards future unknowns with an unknown vigilance of Artificial Intelligence

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## MORE EXPLORATIONS TO COME



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