



# SCIENCE FICTION AND THE MEDICAL HUMANITIES

Workshop 1: Science Fiction and Public  
Engagement with Medicine

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# Programme for today

9.30-10.30 Coffee on arrival

10.30-11.30 Introduction

11.30-11.45 Coffee

11.45-1 Jenny Kitzinger, 'Science Fiction, ethics and the body: clones, coma patients and organ harvesting'.

1-2 Lunch

2-3.15 David Lawrence, 'Costumed Visions of Enhanced Bodies: Ability, Humanity, and the Science of the Superhero'.

3.15-c.4 Closing Reflection

# Introduction to Project

Science Fiction and the Medical Humanities is a project funded under Wellcome's new Seed Awards initiative

Personally motivated by bringing literary (and teaching) interest in SF into my medical humanities research

Sense of an opportunity for something 'transformative':

Research from 'literature and medicine' on topic patchy – disciplinary insecurity about popular genres?

Research from other disciplines (e.g. science studies) more sustained, but some of it rather one-sided.

# Project activities

Themed issue of *BMJ Medical Humanities* (deadline 1 March 2016)

Short-story competition (31 January 2016; published by Freight Books)

[Online database of sources](#)

Workshops on

- Public Engagement with Medicine (27 November 2015)
- Science Fiction, Medicine and Utopia (26 February 2016)
- Politics of Science-Fiction Medicine (c. April 2016)

Concluding Conference (4 July 2016)

# Themes 2 and 3

## 2) Science Fiction, Medicine and Utopia

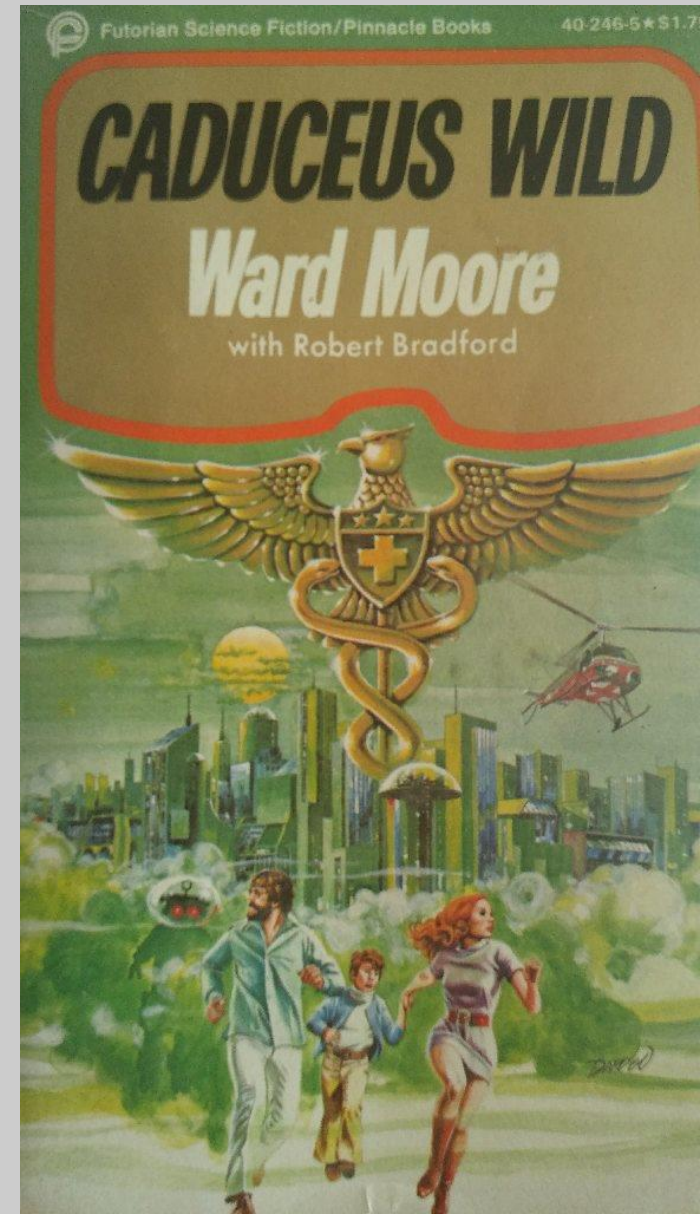
A way of stepping back from 'Science Fiction becomes Science Fact'

*Contesting* the values implicit in medical futurology (ageing is bad; mothering is unimportant; ...)

## 3) The Politics of Science-Fiction Medicine

For SF critic Darko Suvin, SF is *not* futurology.

Rather SF is a 'cognitively estranged' representation of our own social reality.



### 3) Public engagement with medicine

Problem of narrow model of SF and Public Understanding of Science:

e.g. Mark Glassy's patrolling of legitimate technoscientific imagining vs pulp SF distortion

An implicit model of one-way popularization to a public who are scientifically deficient.

Surely we can do better... (We can and will)

