The Lovecraftian Madness of Dr. Blair

by Michael H. Hanson ©2018

To quote Claus Appel: “If you read Lovecraft, you will notice that he carefully stacks the deck against the occasional unlucky soon-to-be-psychologically-challenged protagonist. Said characters tend to be ‘educated,’ ‘isolated,’ and end up in ‘mortal danger.’

These characters experience a long string of escalating disquieting discoveries which, coupled with isolation, leaves them extremely nervous and unhinged. The character then experiences one or more shocking revelations of the paranormal coupled with mortal danger. It is the combination of all these factors that can drive a man insane**.**”

And so we come to classic 1982 Horror/Sci-Fi flick, John Carpenter’s THE THING. In this movie, Dr. Blair, a physician (thus a man of above-average intelligence) is stuck with twelve other men in one of the most isolated outposts on the face of the planet. He soon finds himself confronting a terrifying and deadly mystery.

The pressure is on to get to the bottom of recent macabre events before death claims them all. Thus, Blair comes face to face with the stark reality of the savage situation he is in… a mostly unstoppable and insidious alien invasion is occurring all around him. It started 100,000 years ago when an extraterrestrial flying saucer crashed into Antarctica and was put on temporary hold because of the intensely cold and hostile environment.

But now, unthawed, this leviathan of infection has begun to spread, engulf, and copy all the lifeforms around it. Blair quickly realizes that the practicality of ‘containment’ at this point is laughably implausible, and with the aid of a computer his worst fears of how long it will take this horror to spread across the Earth is confirmed.

The planet is doomed (and has been for over 100,000 years)… a delayed doom that is now beginning to progress. Blair knows there is no real way to completely stop this apocalypse… but he can **Delay It**…. He can delay it by immediately isolating Outpost 31 from the surrounding world, destroying the helicopter and ground transportation, destroying the radio equipment, destroying…everything.

And so Dr. Blair completely and utterly surrenders to the overwhelming horror that drowns his intelligence and imagination with a vision of unstoppable cosmic slaughter expanding around him. He indulges his inescapable fear and utter helplessness in a feral orgy of destruction and madness.