Richard Scully, "Entry on: Doctor Who's Labyrinth Themed Episodes (Series, Seasons 6,15,17): The Mind Robber / Underworld / The Horns of Nimon / The God Complex by Douglas Adams, Bob Baker, Nick Hurran , Peter Ling, David Maloney, Dave Martin , Kenny McBain, Steven Moffat, Anthony Read , Derrick Sherwin, Norman Stewart , Toby Whithouse", peer-reviewed by Elizabeth Hale and Daniel A. Nkemleke. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/88. Entry version as of November 11, 2026.

Douglas Adams , Bob Baker , Nick Hurran , Peter Ling , David Maloney , Dave Martin , Kenny McBain , Steven Moffat , Anthony Read , Derrick Sherwin , Norman Stewart , Toby Whithouse

Doctor Who's Labyrinth Themed Episodes (Series, Seasons 6,15,17): The Mind Robber / Underworld / The Horns of Nimon / The God Complex

United Kingdom (1968)

TAGS: Argonauts Golden Fleece Heracles Hercules Jason Labyrinth Minoan Civilization Minotaur Orpheus Persephone Talos (Automaton) Theseus



We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.



General information	
Title of the work	Doctor Who's Labyrinth Themed Episodes (Series, Seasons 6,15,17): The Mind Robber / Underworld / The Horns of Nimon / The God Complex
Studio/Production Company	British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	1968
First Edition Details	*The Mind Robber* (14 IX; 21 IX; 28 IX; 5 X; 12 X 1968) / *Underworld* (7 I; 14 I; 21 I & 28 I 1978) / *The Horns of Nimon* (22 XII; 29 XII 1979; 5 I; 12 I 1980) / *The God Complex* (17 IX 2011)
Running time	The Mind Robber – 99 min 49 sec (21:27; 21:39; 19.29; 19:14; 18:00) / Underworld – 89 min 17 sec (22:36; 22:27; 22:21; 22:53) / The Horns of Nimon –100 min 53 sec (25:41; 25:00; 23:26; 26:45) / 'The God Complex' – 50 min

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Date of the First DVD or VHS	May, 1990 (VHS); March 7, 2005 & September 6, 2005 (DVD) / March, 2002 (VHS); March 29, 2010 & June 3, 2010 (DVD) / June 2003 (VHS); March 29, 2010 & June 3, 2010 (DVD) / October 10, 2011 & November 3, 2011 (DVD)
Genre	Science fiction, Television series, Time-Slip Fantasy*
Target Audience	Crossover
Author of the Entry	Richard Scully, University of New England, rscully@une.edu.au
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaounde 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com

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Creators



Douglas Adams (Scriptwriter)

Script Editor



Bob Baker , b. 1939
(Scriptwriter)

Bob Baker (1939) is a highly-regarded TV and feature-film scriptwriter for the British market. As well as writing a number of stories and serials for D*octor Who* (between 1971 and 1979) – in which capacity he collaborated with Dave Martin – he also co-wrote the *Wallace and Gromit* films with the characters' chief creator, Nick Park: *The Wrong Trousers* (1993), *A Close Shave* (1995), *Curse of the Were-Rabbit* (2005), and *A Matter of Loaf and Death* (2008). Baker and Martin invented the Doctor's robotic dog K-9 (from 1977), and several of the series' other iconic characters. Beyond *Doctor Who*, Baker collaborated with Martin on the children's TV show *Sky* (1975) and *Into the Labyrinth* (1981–1982), as well as scripts for *Shoestring* (1979) and *Bergerac* (1981 & 1983). A K-9-themed TV series aired between 2009 and 2010, buoyed by the successful revival of *Doctor Who* from 2005; and co-wrote his autobiography – *K-9 Stole My Trousers* (2013) – with Laurie Booth. Yet another K-9-themed project – *The Essential Book of K-9* (2015) – is his most recent work to-date.

Bio prepared by Richard Scully, University of New England, rscully@une.edu.au

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Nick Hurran (Director)



Peter Ling , 1926 - 2006
(Scriptwriter)

Peter Ling (1926–2006) was a British television scriptwriter. He served in the Second World War as a coal miner, and then in the Army Pay Corps; and post-war convalescence (from tuberculosis) gave him time to write and publish his first novel: *Voices Offstage* (1947). He submitted scripts to BBC Radio – achieving some recognition for work on *Waterlogged Spa* (late 1940s) – before commencing work for television (including 1950's children's programme, *Whirligig*). Ling wrote strips for the iconic British comic *Eagle* (including *The Three J's*, 1952–1959, which was adapted for TV in 1958). By 1955 he was Head of Children's Serials at the BBC, but continued to do writing work – for the soap-operas *Compact* (1962–1965) and *Crossroads* (1964); police drama *Dixon of Dock Green*; and *The Avengers* (1961 & 1963). Ling's contribution to *Doctor Who* was the highly-regarded *The Mind Robber* (1965), starring Patrick Troughton as the Second Doctor. Further work for radio followed (including adaptations of Sherlock Holmes and other stories) as well as several novels (including the novelisation of his own Mind Robber for the *Doctor Who* series). He also wrote a hit song (for Matt Monro): *Why Not Now?* (1961). For many years thereafter, he struggled with Alzheimer's disease, culminating in his death on 4 September, 2006.

Bio prepared by Richard Scully, University of New England,

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rscully@une.edu.au



David Maloney (Director)



Dave Martin , 1935 - 2007
(Author, Scriptwriter)

Dave Martin (1935–2007) was a British TV and film writer who, notably, collaborated with Bob Baker during the 1970s on numerous *Doctor Who* serials (1971–1979). Martin and Baker invented the Doctor's robotic dog K-9 (from 1977), and several of the series' other iconic characters. Beyond *Doctor Who*, Martin collaborated with Baker on the children's TV show *Sky* (1975) *Into the Labyrinth* (1981–1982), as well as scripts for *Shoestring* (1979) and *Bergerac* (1981 & 1983). A *Make Your Own Adventure* book of *Doctor Who – Search for the Doctor* (1986) – also appeared under Martin's name. He was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2007, and passed-away within months.

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Kenny McBain (Director)



Steven Moffat , b. 1961
(Screenwriter, Scriptwriter)

Steven Moffat (1961–) is an acclaimed Scottish TV writer and producer, who has been a significant force in British television and film since the late 1980s. Having studied at the University of Glasgow, he began writing creatively for the stage while working as a teacher in Greenock (near Glasgow). A play – *War Zones* (1985) – and a musical – *Knifer* (1989) – garnered some acclaim, but his big break came with a sample script for a show about a school newspaper. This was picked-up by ITV as *Press Gang* (1989–1993), showcasing much of Britain's up-and-coming young talent. From there, he worked on the series *Joking Apart* (1993–1995) and *Chalk* (1997), before having a huge hit with the relationship-themed comedy *Coupling* (2000–2004). Moffat was a long-time fan of *Doctor Who* – writing a comedy spoof for Comic Relief entitled *The Curse of Fatal Death* (1999) – and when it was re-launched under Russel T. Davies from 2005, he contributed scripts for perhaps the best episodes of the revamped series: *The Empty Child/The Doctor Dances* (2005). He contributed *The Girl in the Fireplace* (2006), and *Blink* (2007), as well as the short charity episode *Time Crash* (2007). *Silence in the Library/Forest of the Dead* (2008) followed; and on the strength of this – and his reputation with the outgoing showrunner, Davies – Moffat took over as executive producer from 2010. Moffat hired Matt Smith to replaced David Tennant as the Doctor (the Eleventh incarnation of the Time Lord), writing or editing in some form on almost every series of the programme from 2010 to 2017. Concurrently, Moffat collaborated with Mark Gatiss on the series *Sherlock* (2010-2017); six episodes of

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Jekyll (2007); and worked with Steven Spielberg and Peter Jackson on feature-film *The Adventures of Tintin: The Secret of the Unicorn* (2011).

Bio prepared by Richard Scully, University of New England, rscully@une.edu.au



Anthony Read , 1935 - 2015
(Author, Scriptwriter)

Anthony Read (1935-2015) was an English TV writer and script editor, who also wrote prose fiction – based on his 1983 TV series *The Baker Street Boys* (2005-2012) – and a number of popular history works (largely focused on aspects of the Second World War). Read's first TV credits were for the series *Detective* (1964), *The Indian Tales of Rudyard Kipling* (1964) and *Sherlock Holmes* (1965) for BBC1. Other works ranged from adventure stories (*The Black Arrow*, 1974-5), courtroom drama (*Sutherland's Law*, 1974), and crime thrillers (*The Professionals*, 1977-1980). Under a pseudonym, and while acting as Script Editor for the series, he wrote *The Invasion of Time* (1978) for *Doctor Who*. He oversaw the remainder of the 1977-78 and 1978-79 series, and was then instrumental in having Douglas Adams appointed as his successor for the 1979-80 series. He was then invited back to pen *The Horns of Nimon* (1979), which treated the labyrinth/Minotaur myth in similar style to *Underworld* (1978). With Bob Baker and Dave Martin, he contributed to the series *Into the Labyrinth* (1981), before perhaps his highest-regarded work: an adaptation of the Sherlock Holmes oeuvre, *The Baker Street Boys* (1983). Further iconic sci-fi work came in the *Chocky* series – *Chocky (*1984); *Chocky's Children* (1985); and *Chocky's Challenge* (1986) – as well as scripts for *Heartbeat* (1998) and his final credits came on *Revelations* (2002-3). A member of the Writers' Guild of Great Britain (and chairman, 1981-2), he was a strong mentor for many younger writers.

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Bio prepared by Richard Scully, university of New England, rscully@une.edu.au



Derrick Sherwin , b. 1936
(Producer, Scriptwriter)

Derrick Sherwin (1936) is a British TV producer, writer, and story editor, best-known for his work on the science fiction series *Doctor Who*. Sherwin's career commenced in the theatre as a junior set designer and scene artist, before a two-year hiatus of National Service in the RAF. Returning to theatrical work as an actor, he also contributed scripts for TV, including *Crossroads* (1964–1988) and *Z-Cars* (1962–1978). Sherwin was hired by BBC's Head of Serials, Shaun Sutton, to work on *Doctor Who* from 1967 through 1969. His script editing duties included work on the iconic stories *The Web of Fear*, *Fury from the Deep*, *The Wheel in Space*, *The Dominators*, and *The Mind Robber* (in which last capacity he actually also write episode one). Succeeded as Script Editor by Terrane Dicks, Sherwin took a leading role behind the scenes, overseeing such serials as *The Space Pirates*, *The War Games*, and the transition from the black-and-white transmissions of the Patrick Troughton era (1966-1969) to the colour of the Jon Pertwee era (1970–1974). As Producer of *Doctor Who* (1969), he gained significant recognition, before moving on to other work, including *Paul Temple* (1969–1971), *The Man Outside* (1972), and *The Perils of Pendragon* (1974). He published his autobiography in 2014 (*Who's Next?*), as well as a novel (*The Perfect Assassin; or, Writon's Law*).

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Norman Stewart (Director)



Toby Whithouse by Gage Skidmore. Retrieved from Wikipedia, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 (accessed: January 5, 2022).

Toby Whithouse , b. 1970
(Actor, Scriptwriter)

Toby Whithouse is an English-born actor, comedian, and scriptwriter for TV. A regular in the BBC drama series *The House of Eliott* (1991-4), he also co-starred in *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* (1997) with Gene Wilder, in London's West End. Whithouse began writing scripts during the long breaks in acting jobs, and penned *Jump Mr Malinoff, Jump* (2000) for the Soho Theatre. He then wrote an episode for the ITV drama *Where the Heart Is* (2004) and BBC One's *Hotel Babylon* (2006), before becoming a noted writer for the revived series of *Doctor Who* (from 2005). Whithouse wrote the fan-favourite *School Reunion* (2006), which included longstanding 1970s character Sarah Jane Smith (played by Elisabeth Sladen) and reintroduced the robot dog K-9 (created by Bob Baker and Dave Martin). *The Vampires of Venice* (2010), *God Complex* (2011), *A Town Called Mercy* (2012), and the two-part story *Under the Lake/Before the Flood* (2015) followed. He has also written an as-yet unnamed storyline for the 2017 season of the series. Work for the *Doctor Who* spin-off series *Torchwood* (2006) then placed him in a good position to create the BBC Three comedy/horror drama *Being Human* (2008-2013). Since that series ended, Whithouse has worked on the Cold War spy thriller *The Game* (2014).

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Additional information

Casting	Patrick Troughton – The Doctor (‘The Mind Robber’),
	Frazer Hines – Jamie McCrimmon (‘The Mind Robber’),
	Wendy Padbury – Zoe Heriot (‘The Mind Robber’),
	Sue Pulford – Medusa (‘The Mind Robber’),
	Tom Baker – The Doctor (‘Underworld’; ‘The Horns of Nimon’),
	Louise Jameson – Leela (‘Underworld’),
	John Leeson – Voice of K-9 (‘Underworld’),
	James Maxwell — Jackson (‘Underworld’),
	Alan Lake — Herrick (‘Underworld’),
	Jonathan Newth — Orfe (‘Underworld’),
	Imogen Bickford-Smith — Tala (‘Underworld’),
	James Marcus — Rask (‘Underworld’),
	Godfrey James — Tarn (‘Underworld’),
	Jimmy Gardner — Idmon (‘Underworld’),
	Norman Tipton — Idas (‘Underworld’),
	Jay Neill — Klimt (‘Underworld’),
	Frank Jarvis — Ankh (‘Underworld’),
	Richard Shaw — Lakh (‘Underworld’),
	Stacey Tendeter — Naia (‘Underworld’),
	Christine Pollon — Voice of the Oracle (‘Underworld’),
	Lalla Ward – Romana (‘The Horns of Nimon’),

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David Brierley – Voice of K-9 ('The Horns of Nimon'),

Graham Crowden — Soldeed ('The Horns of Nimon'),

Michael Osborne — Sorak ('The Horns of Nimon'),

Malcolm Terris — Co-Pilot ('The Horns of Nimon'),

Bob Hornery — Pilot ('The Horns of Nimon'),

Simon Gipps-Kent — Seth ('The Horns of Nimon'),

Janet Ellis — Teka ('The Horns of Nimon'),

John Bailey — Sezom ('The Horns of Nimon'),

Robin Sherringham, Bob Appleby, Trevor St John Hacker — Nimons ('The Horns of Nimon'),

Clifford Norgate — Voice of the Nimon ('The Horns of Nimon'),

Matt Smith – The Doctor ('God Complex'),

Karen Gillan – Amy Pond ('God Complex'),

Arthur Darvill – Rory Williams ('God Complex'),

Spencer Wilding – The Creature ('God Complex').

Sequels, Prequels and Spin-offs

Ling, Peter, *Doctor Who – The Mind Robber*, London: Target, 1987.

Dicks, Terrance, *Doctor Who and the Underworld*, London: Target, 1980.

Dicks, Terrance, *Doctor Who and the Horns of Nimon*, London: Target, 1980.

Summary

The myth of the Labyrinth and the Minotaur has been a fixture of the children's TV sci-fi/drama series *Doctor Who* since the 1960s. The

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familiarity of school-aged children with this myth was doubly-ensured by the persistent emphasis on the Classics in British education (particularly in the middle-class context) well into the last decades of the 20th century. As well as featuring in 'The Time Monster' (1972) – starring Jon Pertwee as the Third Doctor – the theme has underpinned several serials in various forms. The Second Doctor (Patrick Troughton) and his companions, Jamie and Zoe, wander through a labyrinth in 'The Mind Robber' (1968), and encounter not only a Minotaur, but also a fearsome version of Medusa. The maze of the Land of Fiction is a setting for the Doctor's battle with 'the Master', and other fictional and mythological characters (largely drawn from children's fiction and fairy tales, but also comics) are manifested as part of that context. While primarily concerned with the Jason and the Argonauts myth, the setting of 'Underworld' was also a labyrinthine maze, and the race of people encountered by the Doctor (in his fourth incarnation, played by Tom Baker) are called 'Minyans' (a direct reference to the Minoans). 'The Horns of Nimon' saw a return to a more explicit labyrinthine context: in that story, Tom Baker's Doctor actually comments that the whole adventure (involving the maze-dwelling, bull-headed 'Nimon' – a crude anagram of 'Minon') has been reminiscent of Theseus's encounter with the Minotaur. The theme has also featured in the revived series: 'The God Complex' contains an actual Minotaur (only ever referred to as 'The Creature'), which feeds off the fear of those trapped in the labyrinthine hotel complex. But that story is perhaps more heavily influenced by the Stanley Kubrick horror film *The Shining* (1980), and George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1948), than by classical mythology.

Analysis

'The Mind Robber', 'Underworld', 'The Horns of Nimon', and 'The God Complex' are key examples of one of the most iconic and impactful British television series (*Doctor Who*). With individual episodes attracting between 6 and almost 12 million viewers, the serials are notable examples of a science fiction appropriation of Classical myth. The time-and space-travelling premise of the program was a handy device for justifying the incursion into mythical and actual history; and the Doctor and his companions serve as useful avatars for the young audience-members as they are introduced to and familiarised with the pseudo-historical and mythical context of the storyline (or, rather, reacquainted with matters with which they were supposed to be

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	familiar; with such themes still being central to British elementary-level schooling from the 1960s through to the 21st century).
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Argonauts Golden Fleece Heracles Hercules Jason Labyrinth Minoan Civilization Minotaur Orpheus Persephone Talos (Automaton) Theseus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Humour Intertextuality Learning Storytelling Travel
Further Reading	BBC Online, *Doctor Who – The Classic Series*: 'The Mind Robber' [Archived website], at bbc.co.uk (accessed: August 17, 2018) [comprises analysis and details from: Paul Cornell, Martin Day & Keith Topping, *The Discontinuity Guide*, 1995; David J. Howe & Stephen James Walker, *Doctor Who: The Television Companion*, 2003]. BBC Online, *Doctor Who – The Classic Series*: 'Underworld' [Archived website], at bbc.co.uk (accessed: August 17, 2018) [comprises analysis and details from: Paul Cornell, Martin Day & Keith Topping, *The Discontinuity Guide*, 1995; David J. Howe & Stephen James Walker, *Doctor Who: The Television Companion*, 2003]. BBC Online, *Doctor Who – The Classic Series:* 'The Horns of Nimon' [Archived website], at bbc.co.uk (accessed: August 17, 2018) [comprises analysis and details from: Paul Cornell, Martin Day & Keith Topping, *The Discontinuity Guide*, 1995; David J. Howe & Stephen James Walker, *Doctor Who: The Television Companion*, 2003]. Driscoll, Paul, *The Black Archive # 9 – The God Complex*, Edinburgh: Obverse Books, 2017. Harmes, Marcus K., *Doctor Who and the Art of Adaptation; Fifty Years*

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of Storytelling, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014, esp. pp. 68 ff.

Howe, David J., Mark Stammers and Stephen James Walker, *Doctor Who: The Handbook: The Fourth Doctor*, London: Virgin Publishing, 1992.

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Howe, David J., Mark Stammers and Stephen James Walker, *Doctor Who: The Sixties*, London: Virgin Publishing, 1992.

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Keen, Anthony G., "It's about Tempus: Greece and Rome in “Classic” Doctor Who", in *Space and Time: Essays on Visions of History in Science Fiction and Fantasy Television*, edited by David C. Wright, Jr., and Allan W. Austin, Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010, 100–115.

Keen, Anthony G., "Sideways Pompeii! The Use of Historical Period to Question the Doctor's Role in History", in Ross P. Garner, Melissa Beattie, and Una McCormack, eds., *Impossible Worlds, Impossible Things: Cultural Perspectives on* Doctor Who, Torchwood, *and* The Sarah Jane Adventures, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2010, 94–117.

Addenda

Recorded viewers :

‘The Mind Robber’ – 6.6 million (Part One); 6.5 million (Part Two); 7.2 million (Part Three); 7.3 million (Part Four); 6.7 million (Part Five).

‘Underworld’ – 8.9 million (Part One); 9.1 million (Part Two); 8.9 million (Part Three); 11.7 million (Part Four).

‘The Horns of Nimon’ – 6.0 million (Part One); 8.8 million (Part Two);

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9.8 million (Part Three);

10.4 million (Part Four).

‘The God Complex’ – 6.77 million.

DVD release (‘Underworld’ and ‘The Horns of Nimon’ – in Myths and Legends boxed set): March 29, 2010 [Region 2]; June 3, 2010 [Region 1].

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