



THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION WEAVING IN ITSELF THE POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL EVENTS OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Dr.URJA MANKAD

Assistant Professor [English]

VVP Engineering College

Rajkot



ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the history of science fiction which emerged not only as the new genre of English literature but also emerged as a new mean to express the views of various radical authors as if prophesising the alternative history of the world in the coming years. The fear of the world emerging as the place destroying itself through its own innovation by unjustified use of the new weapons and using them to overcome the geographical territories. The paper includes the works of science fiction with their themes rooted in some or the other political and historical event.

Key words: imaginative environments, alternative history, fantastic backgrounds, aliens, social and psychological effects.

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Science Fiction is a form of fantastic literature which portrays future times and environments that are different from our own. It shows an awareness of the concerns of the times in which it is written and provides implicit commentary on contemporary society, exploring the effects, be it material and psychological which any new technologies may have upon it. Any further changes that take place in this society, as well as any extrapolated future events or occurrences, will have their basis in measured and considered theory, scientific or otherwise. Science Fiction authors use their strange and imaginative environments as a testing ground for new ideas, considering in full the implications of any notion that they propose.

"A Science Fiction is a narrative (usually in prose) of short story, novella or novel length. As to what it is about is not easily

classifiable. Such stories are about an amazing variety of things, topics, and ideas. They include trips to other worlds, quests, the exploration of space, visits to other planets and interplanetary war fare". (Cuddon: 791)

It is generally believed that Science Fiction can be easily recognized when come across in daily lives, whether it is a novel or an episode in a television drama. Actually, when used as a marketing tool, Science Fiction is defined in broad and inclusive terms, including almost everything from space vessels and laser guns to kooky aliens and vampires. But to be precise as Mann says:

"Science Fiction is a literature concerned with the process by which a depicted environment has become different from our own, or with the means by which

humanity finds itself there. This does not rule out narrative elements of intrigue, adventure and so forth." (Mann:5).

It does not imply that Science Fiction will attempt to examine the wider picture, for example by questioning how aliens might have developed on Mars and exploring the effects that their existence could have upon the way in which human beings view themselves and the wider universe. Science Fiction emphasizes its difference from fantasy by attempting to construct a rational frame work for anything that it describes.

Brian Aldiss as quoted by Cuddon defines Science fiction thus:

"Science Fiction is the search for a definition of mankind and his status in the universe which will stand in our advanced but confused state of knowledge (science) and is characteristically cast in the Gothic or Post-Gothic mode". (quoted by Cuddon: 791)

If we categorize Science Fictions, they are concerned with utopia and utopian visions, and also with dystopia. Others are set in the future but are not utopian. Still others are set in the past. Many have contemporary settings which are somehow influenced by the arrival or invasion of alien beings or by some invention which profoundly alters normality. They are also concerned with technological change and development with scientific experiment with social, climatic, geological and ecological change. Some are concerned with supernatural forces and agencies. They are often fantastic, though they may be rooted in reality. They stretch the imagination. Science Fantasy or Space Opera will use devices derived from Science Fiction to describe new and exciting environments, but in many ways both subcategories remain more true to the pulp-fiction genres of the 1920s and 1930s. This is because they do not bother to make plausible their invented futures, being more concerned with the adventure components of their storylines and more willing to go beyond the realms of scientific plausibility to create spectacular effects. This is another factor that hinders to come to satisfactory definition of real "Science Fiction".

George Mann opines that

"Science Fiction is an open and wide-ranging genre whose definition can have as much to do with the way in which a book is written as with its content. It also incorporates the more fantastical Space Opera, which, although has its proponents who insist on claiming a "Scientific" foundation for the intergalactic conflicts and militaristic alien invasions, for the most part prefers to concentrate on the end result, spectacular-act ion rather than means, convincing exploration". (Mann : 6)

This inclusiveness makes any binding definition hazardous, but it is fairly safe to assume that most real Science Fiction is covered by the following loose description.

THE ORIGINS OF SCIENCE FICTION

The works of mythology as *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* during the second millennium B.C. laid the foundations of Science Fiction. As such, these ancient texts can be meaningfully interpreted as Science Fiction, but they can be called general form of fantastic literature that points out the way to the eventual emergence of the genre. However, it is only during the last two or three centuries that a recognizably modern scientific viewpoint has formed and begun to pervade both society and literature. Until this point, most fantastical writing had been of religious nature and as such, was intent upon perpetuating the pious myths upon which it was based, as well as myths underlying lessons and philosophies. The term "Science Fiction" was first used, in 1851 the year of the Great Exhibition, in William Wilson's *A Little Earnest Book upon a Great Old Subject*. Having cited Thomas Campbell's remark that:

"Fiction in poetry is not the reverse of truth, but her soft and enchanting resemblance", now this applies especially to Science – Fiction, in which there revealed truths of Science maybe given, interwoven with a pleasant story which itself may be poetical and true" (Cuddon: 791)

Hugo Gernsback (1894-1967) had originally coined the word "Scientification" and eventually put into

circulation in the late 1920s. "Science Fiction" gradually replaced the term "Scientific Romance", and Science Fiction is quite often categorized as "Speculative Fiction". The ancestors of modern science fiction are many and various; they reveal, among other things, mankind's remarkable need and capacity for inventing Alternative World's Myth, legend, travellers' tales, the eschatological order all have made their contributions to this newly invented genre. There are domains, realms, cities, islands, never – never lands, cloud–cuckoo lands, castles in Spain, lands of Cocaine, utopias and dystopias.

In their *Dictionary of Imaginary Places* (1981), Alberto Manguel and Gianni Guadalupi listed and described about a thousand such microcosms, some not so small. Whether, fundamentally, this propensity and capacity for alternative worlds represent an expression of dissatisfaction with the world men and women actually live in and on is a debatable issue. An early example as the predecessors of modern science fiction is the *Vera Historia or True History* (AD. 150) of Lucian of Samosata, a parody of the tall stories of adventure represented as truth by former historians. The hero of this work visits the Moon and the Sun and is involved in the inter-planetary war-fare.

The "Vision Literature" of the Middle Ages was very popular and widespread in Europe. It was about the exploration of metaphysical worlds: heaven, hell and purgatory, especially hell, because it was more interesting and, anyway, was easier to describe. Trips to the abode of the damned were, in some cases, an early form of horror story, and were forerunners of a later kind of "Scientific Romances". Gradually, the attraction of such escapist tales palled, to be replaced by utopianism.

Francis Godwin's *The man in the Moone* (1638) or, *A Discourse of a Voyage Thither* (1638) by Domingo Gonsales, John Wilkin's *Discovery of a New World in the Moone* (1638). In 1668, Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle published *The Description of a New World*, called *The Blazing World*, an extraordinary Wellsian fantasy in the course of which the Duchess advanced the then improbable idea that mankind might be ruled by a non-human or animal "intelligence". In 17thC,

curiosities among the "ancestors" are Kepler's *Somnium* (1634), also concerned with lunar exploration; and a guided tour of heaven somewhat in the form of Kircher's *Itinerarium Exstaticum* (1656). In 1516, Thomas More published, in Latin, his famous political work *Utopia*, which displays a particularly resonant awareness of its time and explores contemporary political thought to create its setting. An English translation appeared in 1551. It describes in great detail, an unknown island (clearly modeled on the recently discovered America) where a "perfect" society has been established – the first depiction of a Utopian State. The book is fundamentally satirical, as More intends it to be known that he does not believe that such a profound social equilibrium as he depicts could ever be reached. His book triggered an explosion of Utopian fictions: they continue to appear even today; but are ultimately more correctly considered as political rather than science fictional writings. 'Utopia' does, however, indicate the direction that fantastical literature was beginning to take.

There followed a succession of fantastical works over the next few centuries, as writers began to make use of devices that would later become intimately associated with the Science Fiction genre. *Gulliver's Travels* (1726: rev. 1735) by Jonathan Swift is one fine example, as is Voltaire's lesser-known *Micromegas* (1752). Both are satirical and use devices such as aliens and strange new worlds as a means of commenting on the society of their contemporaries. These are not the alien races that would come to appear much later in episodes of *STAR TREK*, but metaphorical humans with no previous experience of our culture. Their ignorance is used to satirical and often ingenious effect. Nevertheless, these stories remain, ultimately fantasies. The 18th Century was no less found in the creation of other worlds and fictional voyages of discovery. Two key works Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) were to have a profound and long lasting influence on fiction in general. *Robinson Crusoe* was the prototype of a genre of novel subsequently described as desert island fiction and was the progenitor of the Robinsonade. There were scores of imitations in Europe during the next two hundred years. Less well

-known adventure stories of the 18th Century, were Ludwig Holberg's *A journey to the World Underground* (1741). By this stage, the novel of adventure and the travel book were well established as separate genres. Voltaire's *Candide* (1759), a philosophical and satirical adventure story, was a combination of both. Brian Aldiss proposes in his excellent history of the genre, *Billion Year Spree* (1973) that Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* or *The Modern Prometheus* (1818) should be viewed as the classic Gothic Romance, as the first novel to be truly recognized as Science Fiction because *Frankenstein* is a completely original work, an innovation. It produced countless imitations and variations. It was almost immediately dramatized. *Frankenstein* shows a keen awareness of the technological and scientific knowledge of its time, and develops this to form the basis of the novel. From some perspectives, *Frankenstein* shows clearly the beginning of the development of Science Fiction as a form distinct from other fantastical literature. In a similar way to much other fiction of the time, *Frankenstein* draws on images taken from philosophy, poetry and mythology but adds the extra dimension of science. It is essentially a Gothic Romance in which Shelley, bravely, used current scientific thought to render her demon credible. The monster is no longer a devilish entity that simply exists - it is created, bit by bit, a human being and literally shocked into existence with electricity. Magic and mystical invocations are nowhere in sight and although religious analogies are drawn, they remain purely metaphysical. Science, not religion, has become the key to unlocking life. Shelley's novel represents a bold step forward into a new way of thinking, and shines a light ahead of itself, making further exploration possible. In *Frankenstein*, Shelley opened up a Pandora's box of notions and ideas that had been bubbling away under the surface of society for years. She gave them voice and form, and proved herself to be years ahead of her time. It is fair to say that *Frankenstein* represents the first true Science Fiction novel to appear. The novel had an even more significant bearing on the Gothic Romance until the middle of the 20th Century. *Frankenstein* did not have a big influence on the development of Science Fiction genre. It stands

alone as a testament to the foresight of one young woman and it was not until many years later, when the genre was already established, that it would be recognized as the classic piece of Science Fiction that it is.

During the 19th Century, a number of other writers showed a predilection for the scientific romance, akin to what might now be loosely described as science fiction. Mary Shelley wrote a much less well-known book, *The Last Man* (1826), there were yet more utopian novels, the influence of the Gothic novel became pervasive, and Edgar Allan Poe published a number of stories in which one can see him feeling his way towards a science fiction mode. While it remains undeniable that Poe has had a more direct and profound influence on the modern horror story, exemplified in the work of such writers as Stephen King and Clive Barker, it is nonetheless notable that a number of his stories make use of ideas that would later become associated with Science Fiction. In the works of Poe, there are alien races existing out in the ether of space, balloon-flights to the moon, and the travel journals of a twenty-ninth century woman. The power of these stories is undeniable and they represent the seeds that would eventually flow into the modern genre, yet they remain, like the fantastical tales that had preceded them, i.e. allegorical fantasies. The "fantastic journey" and the utopian / anti-utopian story developed into a more recognizably modern form of Science Fiction with the publication of the first Scientific Romance, the French Author Jules Verne's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1863). By the mid 19th Century, science fiction was on the move; things were happening. In an entry in their Journal (for 16 July, 1856) the Goncourt brothers (Edmond and Jules) displayed remarkably astute prescience in commenting on a

"new literary world pointing to the literature of the twentieth century. Scientific miracles, fables on the pattern A + B; a clear sighted, sickly literature, no more poetry, but analytic fantasy things playing a more important part than people.... etc.". (Cuddon:794).

The ever popular Jules Verne (1828 – 1905), who was considerably influenced by Poe, made a major contribution to a new kind of fiction which combined adventure and exploration and the popularization of science. Immensely prolific, he is now best remembered for:

1. *Voyage all centre de la terre* (1864)
2. *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* (1869)
3. *Le Tour du monde en quatre – Vingt Jours* (1873).

A major part of Verne's success was his ability to make scientific expertise plausible.

In the 1890s, H.G. Wells, one of the great originators of science fiction ideas – many of which have been refashioned by other writers since then made his impact on the world with such works as:

1. *The Time Machine* (1895)
2. *The Wonderful Visit* (1895)
3. *The War of the Worlds* (1898)
4. *First Men in the Moon* (1901)

Wells was prophetic and showed the way to many possibilities in Science Fiction. With him, Scientific Romance got a new identity that represents the first real step on the road towards the consolidation of the central ideas and themes of Science Fiction into one dominant form, the first version of science fiction in a recognizably "modern" manifestation. The term did not actually come into use until about thirty years after Verne's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1863), with the publication of H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895).

Journey to the Centre of the Earth (1863) achieves much. Its precision of detail is certainly inspired by the works of Poe, but it shows a clearer and ready grasp of science and the scientific method. It describes the descent of Professor Von Hardwigg and his spirited nephew Harry into the mouth of an Icelandic Volcano, from which they go on to discover a subterranean world inhabited by prehistoric monsters. The author approaches the scenario itself with judicious logic, explaining how these dinosaurs could have survived for so long in isolation, but it is the manner in which the character of Von Hardwigg, a chemist and mineralogist, approaches his discovery that is most enlightening. The novel is full of scientific speculation of the day. It casts a scientist in the lead role, and shows very

clearly how he uses the scientific method to aid him in his quest to discover how this subterranean world has come about. It was widely read and therefore had an important and far-reaching influence on the other writers of the day.

If *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1863) marks the beginning of Science Fiction as a definite genre, Verne's later works, *From the Earth to the Moon* (1865), *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* (1870) and *The Mysterious Land* (1874) represent its continued growth, as he plays with new ideas and continues to develop imaginative scenarios that can nonetheless be explained logically in terms of cause and effect. These 'extraordinary voyages', as they were then known, had an exceptional influence on the works of many writers, including that of Edwin A Abbott and Robert Louis Stevenson, but their most profound effect was on the British writer H.G. Wells, whose *The Time Machine* (1895) represents the definitive moment at which science fiction came of age. Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895) is the epitome of science fiction novel, marking the important leap from Verne's adventurous 'extra ordinary voyages' to fully fledged Science Fiction. It achieves this in a number of ways.

- 1) Firstly, it postulates a device, based on a scientific theory that will see its characters transported forward through time to various stages in the existence of man. It explores from current "Evolutionary" theory to justify its portrayal of future humanity as two distinct species. Perhaps most importantly, it also uses scientific speculation to comment critically on the Victorian society of Wells's own time. Wells wanted to stir up the complacent Victorians and provide them with what he thought could be an accurate vision of their future. He saw the gentle yet docile race as symbolic of the effete upper classes, whilst the Morlocks represented the descendants of the uneducated but more evolutionarily successful workers underclass. His fictional future was a satire on Victorian society, but it was also scientifically plausible according to the speculation about evolution that was current at that time.

- 2) *The Time Machine* pioneered the use of many Science Fiction concepts that have now become genre clichés, so often have they been recycled by other writers over the years. Indeed, the story culminates in what has become one of the most enduring images of the genre, the terminal beach, as the Time Traveller Watches the final, dying moments of the Earth before the Sun expands to swallow the planet. Wells was not optimistic about the future, and in *The Time Machine* (1895), he attempted to show his Victorian readers one possible means by which they might eventually bring about their own downfall. This revolutionary book put scientific thought at the forefront of modern literature science and opened the door to the future.
- 3) Wells did not stop there, and in the heady years that followed he produced some of the finest writings that the genre has ever seen who can forget the end of *The War of the Worlds* (1898), in which malignant Martian invaders are destroyed not by human resistance but by a simple strain of common cold. Wells set out a template for the development of the genre that would eventually come to be known not by its original name of "Scientific Romance" but as "Science Fiction". The First World War affected everyone in Britain to a greater or lesser degree, not least, the creators of futuristic scientific romance. There was a steadily burgeoning idea, and even a conviction, that another world war would spell the end of civilization and that mankind was approaching irreversible disaster leading to another epoch of barbarianism. This would be the ultimate horror story. More or less concurrent with this idea was another – that the "terminus post quem" catastrophe, holocaust, Armageddon, etc. might somehow lead to the establishment of a new race of human beings; or, that, because mankind was on the brink of comprehensive disaster, a 'new race' could be desirable. A further

instance of alternative worlds, these were dominant ideas between the wars. After the second world war the advent of the nuclear /hydrogen bomb age and the whole world might be written off by a lunatic megalomaniac or even by mere carelessness or inefficiency inspired spates of post –nuclear disaster fantasies, and for years tens of thousands of schoolboys read the stuff avidly and indulged their speculative powers on such themes in their weekly compositions. The spectre of the 100 – megaton 'bomb' cast an enormous shadow for some twenty years. By the 1980s, the fact that a single submarine in the Irish Sea had enough nuclear fire power in its missiles to wipe out all the major cities of Europe was taken entirely for granted and hardly raised an eyebrow. In the inter-war period not a few British authors wrote books concerned with the effects of a new war. Notable examples are:

1. Edward Shank's *People of the Rains* (1920).
2. Cicely Hamilton's *Theodore Savage* (1922).
3. H.G. Wells's *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933).

The idea of a new race, a new species of humanity, was developed by a number of writers, and principally by Olaf Stapledon (1886–1950). He introduced an ethical and philosophical element – almost a mystical element to his extra ordinary scientific romances, which display a cosmic vision at once grand, spectacular and despairing. By the 1920s, utopian visions were unfashionable. Dystopian visions began to replace them, for example, Zamiatin's *'We'* (1920-21), and Muriel Jaeger's *The Question Mark* (1923). Later in 1932, came Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932): a brilliantly witty and deeply depressing picture of a possible future society in a book whose popularity has remained undiminished after more than sixty years. From the late 1940s onwards, there was to appear a succession of anti-utopian or dystopian fictions which examined various kinds of repressive regimes.

George Orwell's *1984* (1949) remains the most famous. Other notable instances are:

- * H.F. Heard's: *Doppelgangers* (1947)

- * B.F. Skinner's: *Walden Two* (1948)
- * George R. Stewart's: *Earth Abides* (1949)
- * David Karp's: *One* (1953)
- * Ray Bradbury: *Fahrenheit 451* (1953)
- * Harry Harrison's: *Make Room! Make Room!* (1966)
- * Philip K. Dick's: *Flow my Tears, the Policeman Said*. (1974)

Science Fiction became even more popular in America with the arrival of paperbacks. Many short stories were still written, but the novel rather than the series of novels attracted writers more and more. The American modes of science fiction became dominant in Britain and elsewhere during the 1950s.

While the themes and concerns of Scientific Romance continued to attract a large readership and to be explored by many authors in Britain in the year after the First World War, a rather different development was under way in the United States. Concurrently, in the 1920s, scientific romance in America received a big boost through magazines and through the popularity of, for example, Edgar Rice Burroughs's space fiction stories, or space operas. Hugo Gernsback popularized a number of writers through magazines. The American authors were not much concerned with global catastrophes or the advantages of a "new" homo-sapiens, partly, no doubt, because the American continent had not been affected by the First World War. They were more interested in new technologies and interplanetary travel. Much of it was pulp-literature in the full pejorative sense. "Pulp" magazines and "Dime" novels began to feature Science Fiction stories and found that their sales soared. This helped to popularize the emerging genre, generating a dedicated fan base that would later develop into both a readership, and ultimately, a good source of new authors.

However, the founding of *Amazing Stories* magazine in 1926 by the editor Hugo Gernsback represented the first real attempt to put Science Fiction before the reading public as a distinct genre in its own right. Alongside scientific articles in these early magazines, Gernsback had regularly published examples of what he called "Scientification" – fiction with grounding in scientific fact. Most of it was stylistically stiff and rather too conventional, lacking

the narrative drive and sense of adventure of the Scientific Romance of the day, in many cases simply acting as a text showcase for new technological ideas or gadgets. With the founding of *Amazing Stories*, things changed. Gernsback obtained the rights to republish and serialize the works of Poe, Wells and Verne, and encouraged readers to submit stories with a distinct technological edge. This in turn gave US writers an outlet for their work, and fostered a trend for technophilia in their fiction. The advent of science-fiction as a mass-appeal genre was just around the corner. *Amazing Stories* was an immediate success, and although many of its early stories had the same faults that had plagued the tales that had appeared previously in *Modern Electrics and Science and Invention*, the magazine did see the first publication of writers such as E.E. "Doc" Smith and Jack Williamson. Much of this newer work was an early form of space opera, but it drew on existing genre ideas and adhered to the rules of Gernsback's "Scientification". When *Amazing Stories* had experienced financial problems during the 1930s, a new magazine named *Astounding Stories* had thrived. *Astounding Stories* had started publishing just four years after *Amazing Stories* and through offering better rates of pay, had attracted many of the other magazine's best writers. Initially, *Astounding Stories* had a more adventurous slant than those appeared in *Amazing Stories*, and many writers were keen to join in with the sense of pulp fun that was prevalent in the magazine at the time. Scientific speculation was a constant feature but only when it helped the writers tell the story; essentially, *Astounding Stories* was a melodramatic pulp. But things were soon to change. During the 1930s and 1940s, American Science Fiction continued to be confined to the magazines, but gradually it became more intellectual and sophisticated. This was largely due to the impact of John W. Campbell who took over the magazine *Astounding Stories* in 1937 and edited it for thirty four years. It was he who recruited such writers as Isaac Asimov, Robert A. Heinlein, Clifford D. Simak, Theodore Sturgeon, A.E. Van Vogt and Fritz Leiber.

The original Golden Age of Science Fiction is believed by many to have occurred during the war

years of 1939-43, which was arguably the most important period in Science Fiction history, and saw the emergence of many of the classic writers, as well as the establishment of a more sober and serious tone for the genre. There is little doubt that this maturing of the genre was partly due to the Second World War and the effect that it was having on the mood of the time, but much of it can also be put down to the constant and attentive work of editor John W. Campbell. He changed the name of the magazine to *Astounding Science Fiction* with this change in the title, came an important and revolutionary change in the content.

Campbell nurtured those promising authors, insisting that they worked through fully and logically any ideas they proposed and asking them to consider the sociological and psychological effects of their notions and to translate them into stories of greater maturity and depth. The authors responded enthusiastically and it turned *Astounding Science Fiction* into the true mouthpiece of the genre. The Golden Age period saw the development of many of the key concepts of Science Fiction that would later come to define the field. The authors took ideas from the pages of the early pulps, and then subverted them, turning them into something new and even more exciting. Science became an integral part of many of the stories, as authors developed aspects of current scientific theories or ideas. Indeed, some of these writers were scientists in their own right.

During the years from 1939 to 1943, *Astounding Science Fiction* featured some of the most wonderful short-stories and serialization ever to be written. Heinlein developed his *Future History* in its pages, Asimov his *Robot* and *Foundation* sequences, Van Vogt published *Slan* and Smith his entire *Lensman* saga. Campbell devoted himself to the ideal of raising the standards of Science Fiction and providing the readers with steadfast adventure stories that were nevertheless fully thought out and expertly realized. It is hard to quantify the overall effect that Campbell had on genre fiction; many authors credit him for having provided not just the impetus to write intelligent and coherent science fiction, but the actual ideas on which they were to base their stories and novels. The Golden Age period

is a testament to his editorial skills. After the war years, there was an inevitable change in the way in which Science Fiction was both published and perceived. Magazines continued to thrive, and if *Astounding Science Fiction* was seen to be growing a little stale, a little too emphatic about the 'hard' sciences such as physics, chemistry and biology, then newer magazines such as *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* and *Galaxy* were just beginning. These magazines saw a shift towards the 'softer' sciences such as psychology and sociology, and demanded a higher level of literary ability from their writers. Authors such as Philip K. Dick and Alfred Bester were writing their own particular brands of SCIENCE FICTION, more experimental stories that would never have found a market in Campbell's *Astounding Science Fiction*. Science Fiction became even more popular in America with the arrival of paperbacks. Many short stories were still written, but the novel attracted writers more and more. The American modes of science fiction became dominant in Britain and elsewhere in the 1950s.

The writers and the people in the first half of the 20th C were not much hopeful about future and civilization of the world after the first and Second World War. Their distressed and confused minds were mirrored in the sub-genre of Science Fiction as dystopian or anti-utopian novels. Thus, the science fiction as a genre was developed not only as a genre in literature but also took with itself the social, psychological, political and economic undercurrent of the society then.

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Science fiction is largely based on writing rationally about alternative possible worlds or futures.[11] It is related to, but different from fantasy in that, within the context of the story, its imaginary elements are largely possible within scientifically established or scientifically postulated physical laws (though some elements in a story might still be pure imaginative speculation). The settings of science fiction are often contrary to those of consensus reality, but most science fiction relies on a considerable degree of suspension of disbelief, which is facilitated in the reader's...¹¹ A product of the budding Age of Reason and the development of modern science itself, Johannes Kepler's *Somnium* (1620–1630). As the 20th century dawned, many of science fiction's most common themes—space travel, time travel, utopias and dystopias, and encounters with alien beings—bore British postmarks. The technophilic tenor of the times, as well as 19th-century laissez-faire capitalism, also inspired a reaction from those who longed for a return to a preindustrial life. William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890) envisioned a 21st-century pastoral utopia that combined the author's socialist theories with the lucid and placid values of the 14th century. While some critics dismissed Morris's work as a communist tract,