



**GOLDEN AGE OF
SCIENCE FICTION
1940s – 1950s**

GOLDEN AGE OF SCIENCE FICTION

OFTEN IDENTIFIED IN THE U. S. AS 1938-1946

NAMED SUCH BECAUSE MULTIPLE FOUNDATIONAL WORKS OF SF
APPEARED DURING THIS TIME IN AMERICAN GENRE MAGAZINES

e. g. *FOUNDATION* SERIES OF ISAAC ASIMOV,
FUTURE HISTORY SERIES OF ROBERT HEINLEIN

TRANSITION PERIOD BETWEEN GOLDEN AGE AND NEW WAVE:
1950s

BEGINNING OF 'MODERN' SCIENCE FICTION

REACHED BEYOND NICHE AUDIENCE FOR FIRST TIME

MAIN THEMES: TECHNOLOGY & OPTIMISM

'HARD SF': LINEAR NARRATIVES, HEROES COUNTERING THREATS &
SOLVING PROBLEMS, SPACE OPERA, TECHNOLOGICAL ADVENTURE

MOST PROMINENT EDITOR OF SF MAGAZINE *ASTOUNDING SCIENCE
FICTION*: JOHN W. CAMPBELL

CHARACTERISTIC TROPES

SPACE OPERA: WORKS OF E. E. SMITH

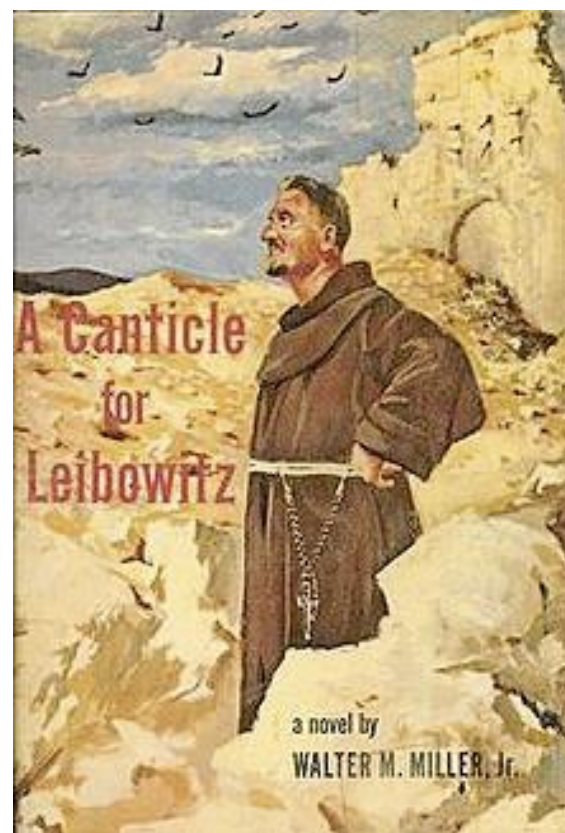
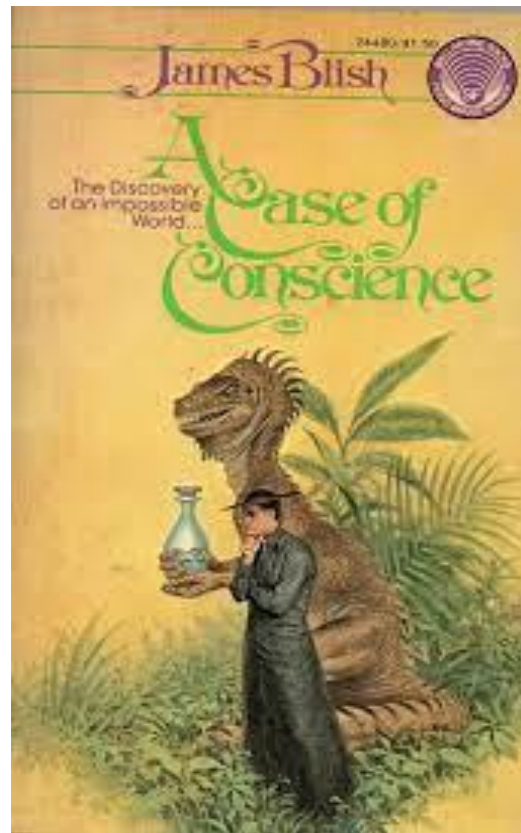
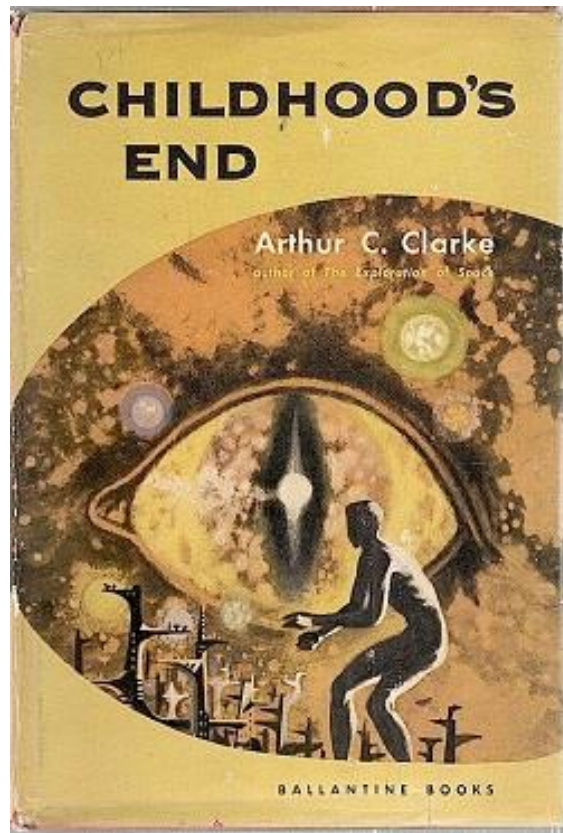
THREE LAWS OF ROBOTICS: ISAAC ASIMOV'S 'RUNAROUND' (1941)

CELEBRATION OF SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENT & SENSE OF WONDER:
e. g. ASIMOV'S 'NIGHTFALL'

LIBERTARIAN IDEOLOGY: ROBERT HEINLEIN'S NOVELS

RE-EMERGENCE OF RELIGIOUS/ SPIRITUAL THEMES:
RAY BRADBURY, *THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES*, ARTHUR C. CLARKE,
CHILDHOOD'S END, JAMES BLISH, *A CASE OF CONSCIENCE*, WALTER MILLER,
A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ

BOOK COVERS





**‘THE DROPPING OF THE ATOM BOMB IN 1945
MADE SCIENCE FICTION RESPECTABLE TO THE
GENERAL PUBLIC.’**

ISAAC ASIMOV

(1969, *NIGHTFALL AND OTHER STORIES*,
DOUBLEDAY, p. 93)

CONTINUATION OF GOLDEN AGE OF SF

LARGE, MAINSTREAM PUBLISHERS ENTERED SCIENCE FICTION BOOK
MARKET AROUND 1950

(SIMILAR TO HOW THEY BEGAN PUBLISHING CRIME FICTION DURING
WORLD WAR II)

CONSEQUENTLY, SF AUTHORS DID NOT HAVE TO PUBLISH THROUGH
ONLY MAGAZINES ANYMORE

HOWEVER, PRESSURE CAME UPON SF AUTHORS TO STAY CLOSE TO
SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL EVENTS THAT ALREADY HAPPENED

END OF GOLDEN AGE OF SF

1953-1958: NINE MAJOR SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINES CLOSED DOWN

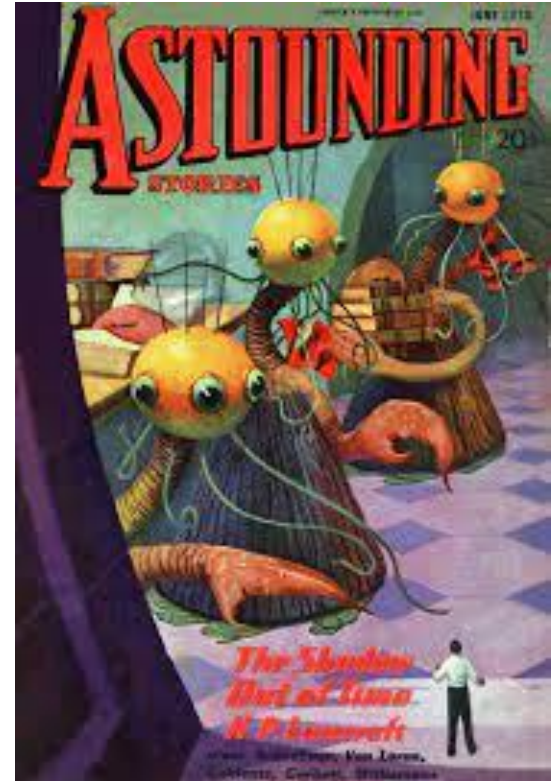
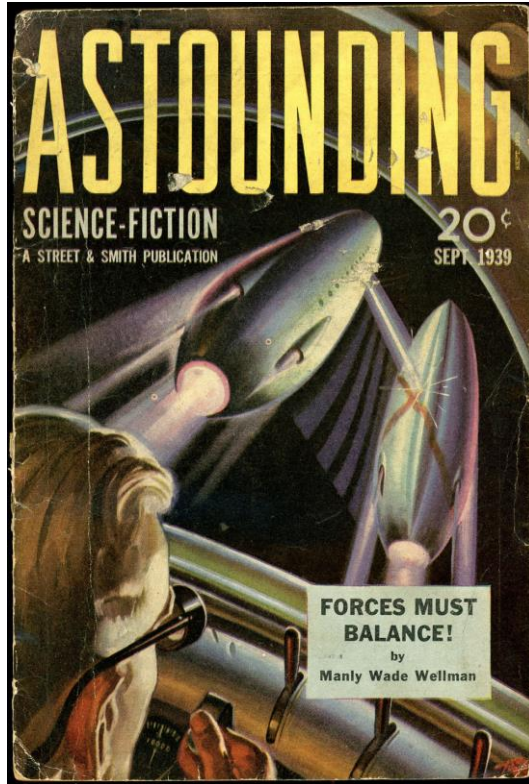
OCTOBER 1957: *SPUTNIK 1* LAUNCHED, SUCCESSFULLY NARROWING
GAP BETWEEN REAL WORLD AND SCIENCE FICTION

ASIMOV SHIFTED TO WRITING NON-FICTION

1960: *ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION* MAGAZINE CHANGED ITS NAME
TO *ANALOG SCIENCE FICTION AND FACT*

1965: FRANK HERBERT'S *DUNE* WAS PUBLISHED

BOOK COVERS





**‘MANY SCIENTISTS DEEPLY INVOLVED IN THE
EXPLORATION OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM (MYSELF
AMONG THEM) WERE FIRST TURNED IN THAT
DIRECTION BY SCIENCE FICTION. AND THE FACT THAT
SOME OF THAT SCIENCE FICTION WAS NOT OF THE
HIGHEST QUALITY IS IRRELEVANT. TEN-YEAR-OLDS DO
NOT READ THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE.’**

CARL SAGAN

(1978, ‘GROWING UP WITH SCIENCE FICTION’, *THE NEW YORK
TIMES*, p. SM7)

PROMINENT AUTHORS

ISAAC ASIMOV (1920-1992)

ALFRED BESTER (1913-1987)

JAMES BLISH (1921-1975)

RAY BRADBURY (1920-2012)

L. SPRAGUE DE CAMP (1907-2000)

ROBERT A. HEINLEIN (1907-1988)

MURRAY LEINSTER (1896-1975)

C. L. MOORE (1911-1987)

FREDERIK POHL (1919-2013)

MARGARET ST. CLAIR (1911-1995)

E. E. 'DOC' SMITH (1890-1965)

THEODORE STURGEON (1918-1985)

A. E. VAN VOGT (1912-2000)

JOHN WYNDHAM (1903-1969)

POUL ANDERSON (1926-2001)

ARTHUR C. CLARKE (1917-2008)

PHILIP K. DICK (1928-1982)

HARRY HARRISON (1925-2012)

KATHERINE MACLEAN (1925-2019)

ROBERT SILVERBERG (1935-)

CULTURAL IMPACT

RAPID SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS, COUPLED WITH
SOCIETAL SHIFTS, BECAME BACKDROP FOR GROUNDBREAKING IDEAS
PORTRAYED ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY, SPACE VOYAGES, TIME TRAVEL,
PARALLEL WORLDS, AND ALIEN LIFE

EXAMINED TECHNOLOGY'S ROLE IN SOCIETY, INTRICACIES OF
CONSCIOUSNESS, AND PURPOSE OF LIFE

RESHAPED AUDIENCE'S UNDERSTANDING OF REALITY AND FUTURE
LAID GROUNDWORK FOR FUTURE SCI-FI LITERATURE

SF

**ABOUT
SOME
MAJOR
AUTHORS**

PHILIP K. DICK

NARRATIVES OFTEN QUESTIONED
REALITY, CONSCIOUSNESS, AND
TECHNOLOGY'S SOCIETAL EFFECTS

INTRICATE THEMES, UNCONVENTIONAL
STORYTELLING, AND DISTINCTIVE TAKE
ON REALITY

NOTABLE WORKS: *THE MAN IN THE
HIGH CASTLE*, *DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF
ELECTRIC SHEEP?*, AND *UBIK*

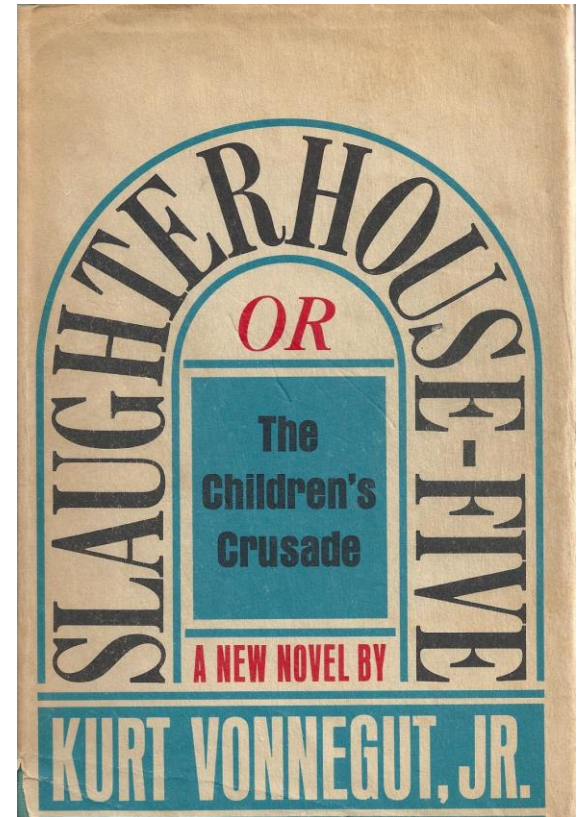
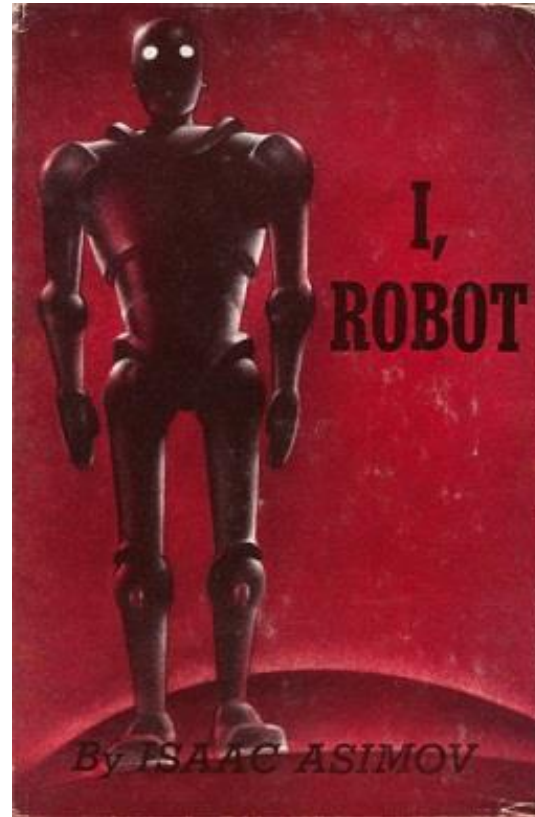
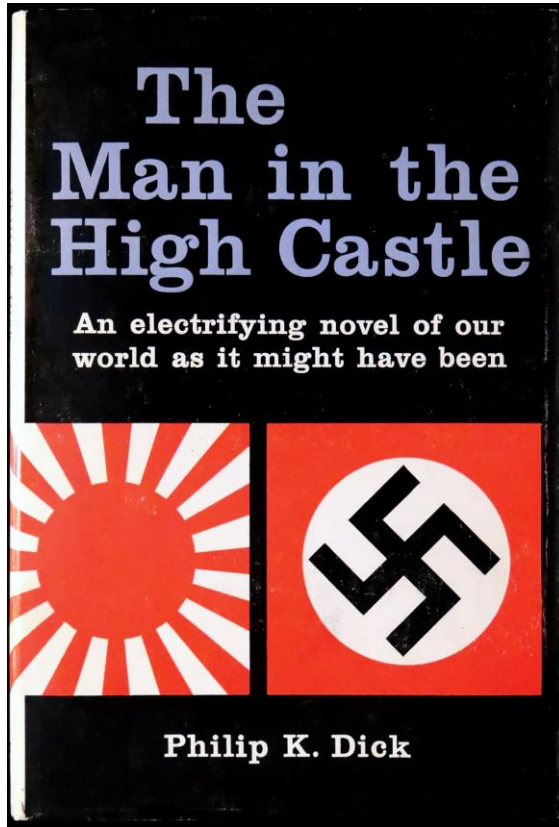
ISAAC ASIMOV

AMERICAN BIOCHEMISTRY
PROFESSOR TURNED WRITER
RENOWNED FOR HIS ABILITY TO
SIMPLIFY COMPLEX SCIENTIFIC
IDEAS

LAWS OF ROBOTICS THAT SHAPED
AN ACTUAL INDUSTRY

NOTABLE WORKS: *FOUNDATION*
SERIES AND *I, ROBOT*

BOOK COVERS



KURT VONNEGUT

SATIRICAL NOVELS INFUSED WITH
SCI FI ELEMENTS

NOTABLE WORKS:

SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE, A
COMMENTARY OF WAR AND TIME
TRAVEL

ROBERT HEINLEIN

EXPLORED CONTROVERSIAL
SOCIETAL AND POLITICAL THEMES
NOTABLE WORKS: 'STRANGER IN A
STRANGE LAND'

ARTHUR C. CLARKE

BRITISH WRITER AND INVENTOR
REALISTIC PORTRAYAL OF SCIENCE
TECHNOLOGICAL PREDICTIONS
NOTABLE WORKS: *2001: A SPACE
ODYSSEY*

URSULA LE GUIN

FEMINIST AND SOCIETAL CRITIQUES
NOTABLE WORKS: *THE LEFT HAND
OF DARKNESS*, *A WIZARD OF
EARTHSEA*

FRANK HERBERT

DELVES INTO POLITICS, RELIGION
AND ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

NOTABLE WORKS: *DUNE*

STANISLAW LEM

PROFOUND EXPLORATION OF
HUMAN-ALIEN INTERACTION

NOTABLE WORKS: *SOLARIS*

J. G. BALLARD

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF
TECHNOLOGY

EFFECTS OF URBAN ENVIRONMENT

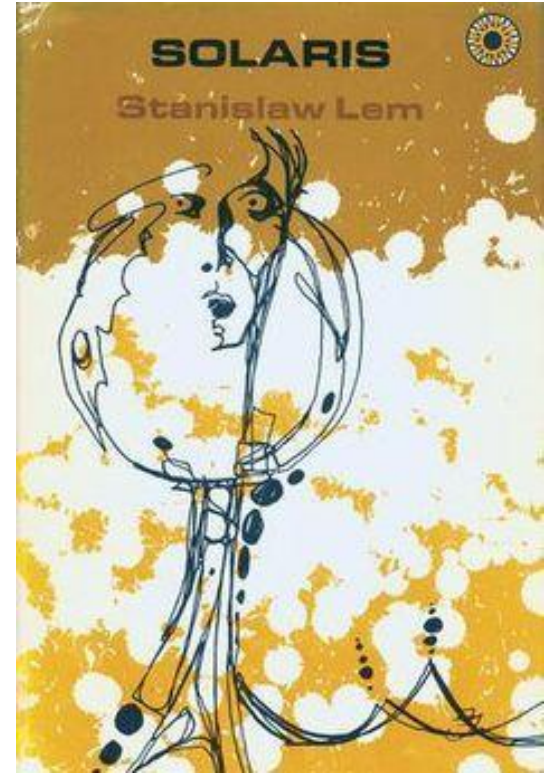
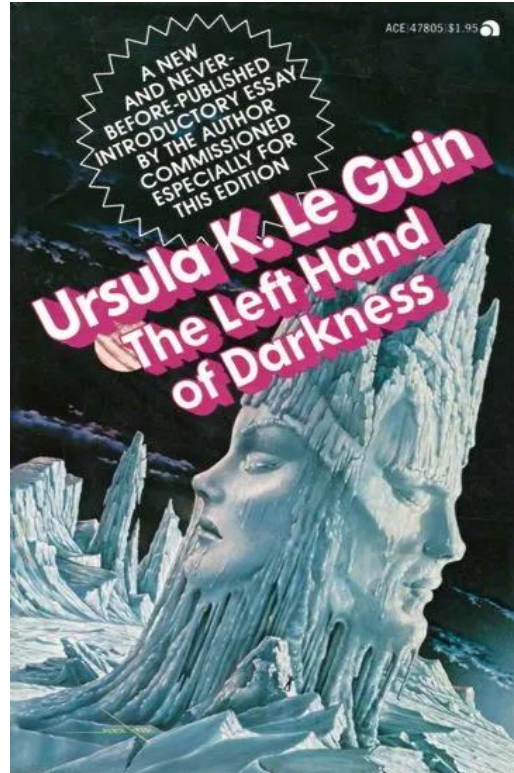
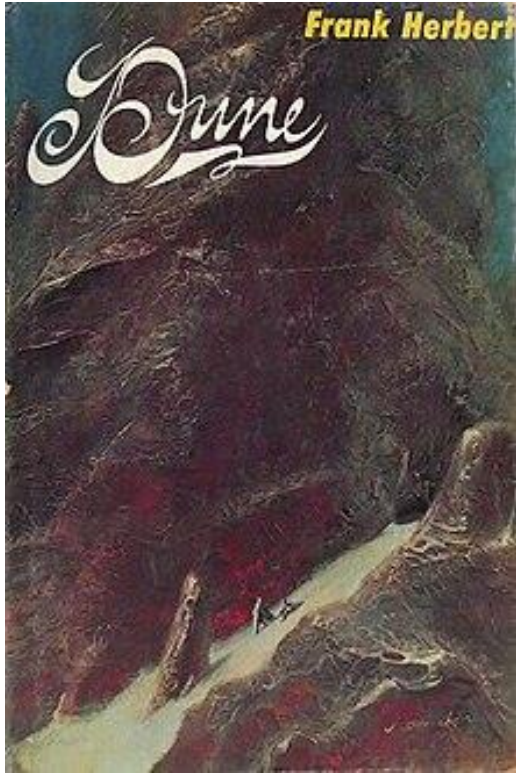
NOTABLE WORKS: *THE DROWNED
WORLD*

HARLAN ELLISON

THOUGHT-PROVOKING THEMES
AND DARK UNDERTONES

NOTABLE WORKS: 'I HAVE NO
MOUTH, AND I MUST SCREAM'

BOOK COVERS



LEGACY

NUMEROUS NOVELS FROM THIS ERA HAVE BEEN ADAPTED INTO MOVIES, TV SERIES, AND OTHER MULTIMEDIA FORMATS

INTRODUCING THEM TO NEWER GENERATIONS

ASIMOV'S *I, ROBOT* WAS TRANSFORMED INTO A 2004 FILM

ASIMOV'S *FOUNDATION* SERIES IS A LIVE-ACTION SHOW ON APPLE

HERBERT'S *DUNE* HAS BEEN ADAPTED MULTIPLE TIMES

PKD'S 'MINORITY REPORT' BECAME A SPIELBERG-DIRECTED MOVIE IN 2002

THESE ADAPTATIONS HAVE REJUVENATED INTEREST IN ORIGINALS, WITH THEIR THEMES REMAINING PERTINENT AND EXPLORED IN VARIOUS MEDIA FORMS

HELLO!

EVOLUTION

SCI FI SHIFTED TOWARDS MORE FACTUAL AND 'HARD-SCIENCE' APPROACH
THIS APPROACH, ROOTED IN SCIENTIFIC REALITIES, EMPHASIZED
CONSEQUENCES OF GENUINE SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS

THIS REALISM CONTINUES TO INFLUENCE CONTEMPORARY SCI-FI WRITING

SCI FI ALSO MOVED TOWARDS MORE INCLUSIVE REPRESENTATION E. G.
URSULA LE GUIN PIONEERED DISCUSSIONS ON GENDER AND SEXUALITY

BEYOND MIRRORING 1960S' SOCIOPOLITICAL CLIMATE, SUCH WORKS
UNDERScore SCIENCE FICTION'S POTENTIAL AS MEDIUM FOR SOCIETAL
COMMENTARY AND REFLECTION

EVOLUTION

AUTHORS UTILIZED NARRATIVES TO DISSECT AND COMMENT ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES E. G.:

ROBERT A. HEINLEIN'S *STARSHIP TROOPERS* IS A REFLECTION ON COLD WAR ERA POLITICS, TOUCHING ON THEMES OF MILITARISM AND FASCISM

URSULA LE GUIN'S *THE DISPOSSESSED* OFFERS INSIGHTS INTO POLITICAL SENTIMENTS OF 1970S

J.G. BALLARD'S *THE ATROCITY EXHIBITION* CRITIQUES INFLUENCE OF TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA ON SOCIETY



THANK YOU!