

*Announcing the Future*





*Announcing*

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*Future*

A Formal Presentation of the  
Science Fiction Research Collection  
Texas A&M University Libraries  
October 28, 1974

## INTRODUCTION

The story of how the Science Fiction Research Collection outlined briefly in this booklet came into being at Texas A&M University illustrates well the benefits accrued through the close cooperation of librarians and other faculty. Comparable efforts in recent months and years have led to immeasurably stronger collections in such diverse areas as engineering, forest science, the German language and literature, and oceanography. Details differ, as do the sources and levels of funding, but in each case the close cooperation of varied persons has brought rich benefits. Promising is the fact that comparable efforts continue in these and other areas spanning varied interests. Benefits will be realized by TAMU students, faculty, and staff for years and decades to come.

The development of the Science Fiction Research Collection spans four years of time. Certain TAMU librarians with personal interests in science fiction became aware in 1970 of the incipient upsurge of scholarly interest in science fiction. These librarians urged John B. Smith, then Director of Libraries, to consider relatively low-key efforts to develop such a collection. Consultations with the appropriate English faculty brought strong encouragement. All saw the opportunity to develop relatively cheaply a library resource to strengthen teaching and research capabilities. The decision was implemented quietly and efficiently.

Librarians were alert to offerings of small but significant collections needed to merge into a major science fiction collection. This was, fortunately, before the sharp rise of interest in science fiction -- for example, an estimated 300 colleges and universities now teach courses devoted to science fiction -- led to sharp increases in prices for materials. The strengths and weaknesses of the present collection are noted capably in the following pages.

This collection forms an integral part of the resources available through the Special Collections housed on the third floor of the University Library. It appears especially fitting as TAMU nears its centennial that Special Collections includes both outstanding resources concerning the range life industry of an earlier day and this outstanding collection of science fiction in which writers ponder imaginatively and in varied ways the future before humanity.

Henry L. Alsmeyer, Jr.  
Associate Director of Libraries  
and Acting Director

## THE MAGAZINES

*Hal W. Hall*

The Texas A&M University Libraries' Science Fiction Research Collection began in 1970, with the purchase of 2,000 early science fiction magazines from a collector in Florida. Since that time, the magazine collection has grown by purchase and gift until it now contains over 5,000 issues of the American and British science fiction magazines from 1923 to the present. The collection contains over ninety percent of all the American and British magazines.

Although the A&M magazine collection begins with 1923, science fiction appeared with surprising regularity in the fiction magazines and newspapers before that date. Much of the science fiction which appeared before 1923 remains to be located and indexed, but Sam Moskowitz, science fiction's leading historian, has tracked a substantial portion down, and reported his findings in two books. Science Fiction by Gaslight (Cleveland: World, 1968) covers science fiction in the popular magazines from 1891-1911, and is followed by Under the Moons of Mars, subtitled "a history and anthology of the 'Scientific Romance' in the Munsey magazines 1912-1920," (New York: Holt, 1970). These books give some insight to the field as it existed prior to 1923.

The collection contains one title which predates the birth of science fiction as a literary genre. Weird Tales began publication in March 1923, and catered to the weird, horrible and macabre. While much of the material is anything but science fiction, Weird Tales is an important part of the collection. Many of the writers who became well known in science fiction either began their careers in Weird Tales, or were frequent contributors. Such familiar names as Ray Bradbury, Robert E. Howard, Jack Williamson, C. L. Moore, and Henry Kuttner appeared in its pages. The collection contains an incomplete set of Weird Tales, lacking less than 20 issues, but including the extremely rare volume 1, number 1 issue. Access to the material in this magazine is provided by T. G. L. Cockcroft's two-part index, Index to the Weird Fiction Magazines: Index by Author (Lower Hutt, New Zealand: The Author, 1967); Index to the Weird Fiction Magazines: Index by Title (Lower Hutt, New Zealand: The Author, 1962); and his Index to the Verse in Weird Tales (Lower Hutt, New Zealand: The Author, 1960).

Appropriately, the science fiction magazine collection proper begins with volume 1, number 1 of Amazing Stories dated April 1926, the first magazine devoted exclusively to science fiction, or "scientification" as it was then called. Both the term "scientification" and the magazine were the brain-children of Hugo Gernsback, who is often called the "Father of science fiction," and who at least deserves full credit for having established science fiction as a specialized literary (or pulp) genre.

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Amazing Stories began its life as a reprint magazine carrying fiction by Poe, Wells, Verne, and other writers. The first new fiction did not appear until June 1926, and even thereafter there was a heavy emphasis on reprinting for a number of years. Emphasis gradually shifted to new fiction, and Amazing remained an important title until the mid-1960's. At that time, a change in publisher occurred, and emphasis on reprints was re-instituted. Fortunately, this emphasis was short-lived, and Amazing continues to publish new fiction. The collection contains a virtually complete set of this important title, which is completely indexed in the science fiction magazine indexes.

Although Amazing Stories was the first science fiction magazine, and is the longest-lived, it is neither the most important title for research nor the most popular among readers. Those honors go to Astounding Stories, which was retitled Analog in 1960.

Astounding Stories of Super Science first appeared in January 1930 as an imitator and competitor of Gernsback's Amazing. Astounding rapidly developed as the leading competitor to Amazing, but was almost a victim of the depression. It was suspended in March 1933, but resumed under a new publisher in October 1933. Since then, it has not missed a single monthly issue.

Although Astounding was a viable competitor to Amazing in its early years, the real success and importance of the magazine dates from October 1937 when John W. Campbell was named editor. Alvah Rogers, in his book Requiem for Astounding (Chicago: Advent, 1964), notes that Campbell

diverted Astounding from the course it had been pursuing and guided it into relatively new and unexplored channels, discovered and developed new and exciting writers, and encouraged the better older writers to update their viewpoints. . . . Campbell extended the horizons of science fiction, gave it a status as literature it had never enjoyed before, and raised it to a new level of maturity. (p. 85)

Campbell "discovered" and developed many important science fiction writers during his editorship, including Robert Heinlein, Theodore Sturgeon, L. Sprague de Camp, Lester del Rey, and A. E. Von Vogt. Without a doubt, Campbell was the most influential editor in the field of science fiction.

Astounding changed title to Analog in 1960, and continues to be the most popular of the science fiction magazines, easily selling twice as many copies as any other magazine.

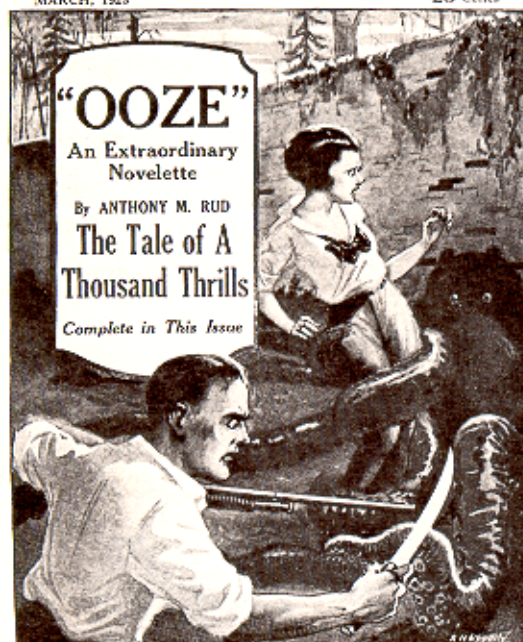
The collection boasts a complete, bound set of this important title, a partial unbound set donated to the collection by Dr. Leslie Bagnall of the Texas A&M University faculty, and a copy of Rogers' Requiem for Astounding, tracing the magazine's history from 1930 through 1960. Astounding/Analog is completely indexed in the science fiction magazine indexes also, providing full access to this important body of work.



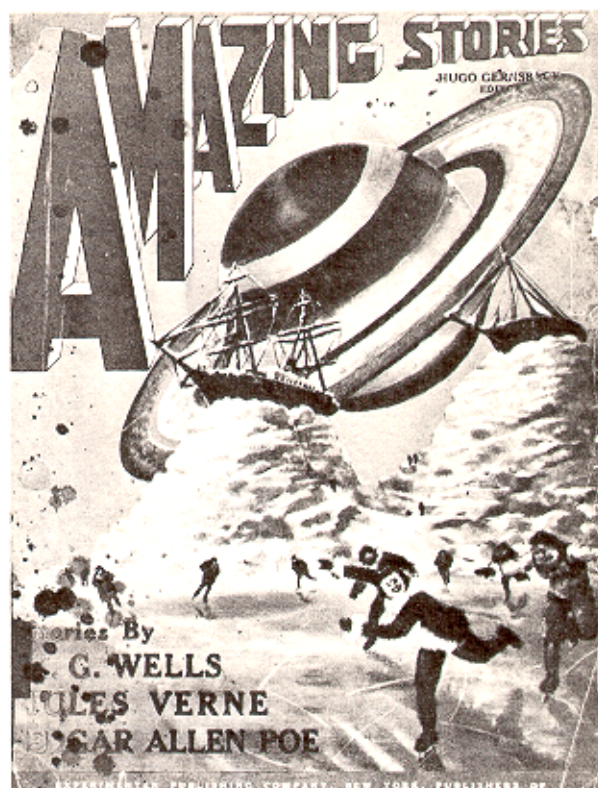
# WEIRD TALES

THE UNIQUE MAGAZINE  
MARCH, 1923

25 Cents



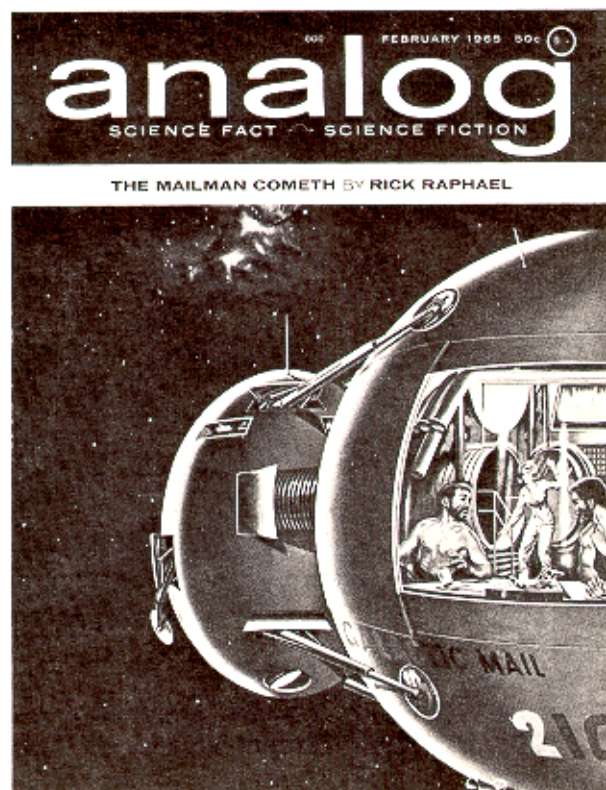
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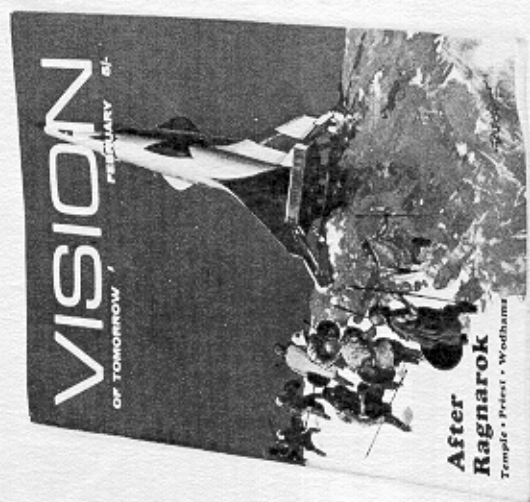


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*Representative British Science Fiction Magazines*

The final title to be profiled here is The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, or F & SF, which first appeared in October 1949. F & SF presented serious and humorous science fiction and fantasy, aimed at a mature, adult audience. F & SF was an immediate rival to Astounding, but reached a more varied readership. Under the editorship of Anthony Boucher and J. Francis McComas, F & SF quickly gained a reputation as the most literate of the science fiction magazines, and maintains that standard today. Its importance as a research source journal in the field is second only to Astounding/Analog.

The collection contains a complete, bound set of F & SF, and an almost complete unbound set. F & SF is completely indexed in the science fiction magazine indexes.

While the titles profiled above are important, they are by no means the only important titles to be found in the collection. Complete files of Galaxy, Fantastic Stories, Worlds of If, Imagination, Planet Stories, Thrilling Wonder Stories, and Unknown add depth to the collection. Many science fiction magazines were started, and lasted only one or two issues. The collection has many of the scarce titles, such as Star Science Fiction, Miracle Science and Fantasy Stories, and Outlands.

Coverage of the British science fiction scene is quite good, though far from complete. The collection contains a near-complete set of the rare Scoops, lacking only one issue, and a near-complete set of New Worlds, the premier British science fiction magazine. Complete sets of Science Fantasy, SF Impulse, Vision of Tomorrow, and Nebula, and numerous other incomplete titles, make coverage of British science fiction quite good.

Although historically science fiction has been based heavily in the magazines, there are now only a few titles in publication. The collection is kept up to date with subscriptions to Analog, Amazing, Fantastic, Galaxy, F & SF, Vertex, and Science Fiction Monthly.

Access to the magazine collection is provided by the various science fiction magazine indexes. These indexes provide coverage of science fiction magazines from 1926 through 1973. Access is by author or title. The magazine indexes are Donald B. Day's Index to the Science Fiction Magazines 1926-1950 (Portland: Perri Press, 1952), Erwin S. Strauss' Index to the S-F Magazines 1951-1965 (Cambridge, Mass.: The Author, 1966), the Index to the Science Fiction Magazines 1966-1970 (Cambridge, Mass.: New England Science Fiction Association, 1971), and the N.E.S.F.A. Index: Science Fiction Magazines and Original Anthologies 1971/1972- (Cambridge, Mass.: New England Science Fiction Association, 1973). Book reviews may be located through Hal W. Hall's SFBRI: Science Fiction Book Review Index 1970- (Bryan, Texas: The Author, 1971- ).

A representative collection of fanzines forms the third part of the science fiction collection. Fanzines are amateur publications, which are done as a hobby and are often available only for trade rather than for sale. The TAMU fanzine collection contains all types of fanzines, ranging from



barely legible titles produced by spirit duplication to magazines indistinguishable from slick-paper newsstand magazines. Fanzine titles are often interesting and unique. The collection has samples of Algol and Amra, Detention and Discard, Hoam and Horizons, Winnie and Witzend, and Yandro and Zine. Some titles defy description, such as AAA AARGH, 2-Acetylbenzoic Acid, Beabohema, Debb'nshire Crame 'n' Scrumpy, and Purple Obscenity. The fanzines are an interesting and potentially valuable research source, since many of the science fiction writers contribute regular columns or letters to a surprising number of the fanzines, giving details of their lives and their ideas which are otherwise unavailable. Access to the fanzines is a problem since no indexes to them exist, but serendipity often yields some highly interesting tidbits.

The fanzine collection of over 2,000 issues was donated to the science fiction collection by Ms. Joanne Burger of Lake Jackson, Texas, a former student of Texas A&M University.

## THE BOOKS: THEMES AND VARIATIONS

*Vicki Anders*

In the four years since the Science Fiction Book Collection was consolidated in the Special Collections area of the Library, it has grown from an initial purchase of five boxes of paperbacks to a collection of around 7,000 volumes of paperbacks, hardbacks, and everything in between, including manuscripts, portfolios of artwork, and mimeographed stories put out by the fan presses. Naturally, all the major authors of science fiction are represented, some in complete collections of their works. For example, Robert A. Heinlein is known as the "Dean of Modern Science Fiction" today, and the Library owns copies of all his books and stories -- except one, a story which appeared in Boy's Life magazine and nowhere else, and as soon as we locate a copy of that issue of Boy's Life we will buy it to complete our collection. Some other authors represented in fairly complete collections are Arthur C. Clarke, Isaac Asimov, Andre Norton, and Chad Oliver. In some cases we have several editions of the same work, such as the paperback edition, first edition in hardback, British editions; even different editions in paperback are collected because the cover art varies from one edition to another. Foreign language editions are now being collected, but our stock of these is very limited so far. We have science fiction in several languages: the usual French and German, and some Russian and Czechoslovakian as well.

We place a special emphasis on anthologies in science fiction. A majority of the writing in science fiction is of short story or novelette length; therefore a well-balanced collection must contain the anthologies. Many of the stories in the anthologies made their first appearance in the science fiction magazines and were later collected (and re-collected) in the hardback and paperback anthologies; however, a new publishing trend in the science fiction field is the 'original anthology' containing short stories written expressly for the hardback anthology market. Some of these original anthologies have a unifying theme, such as cities in the future (Roger Elwood, ed. Future City, 1973) or science fiction and religion (Elwood, ed. Signs and Wonders, 1972). An index of short stories in anthologies is being compiled to make the stories easily accessible.

The main emphasis of the books in the science fiction collection covers the period from the late 1940's to the present although the earlier works of Verne, Wells, Poe, Haggard and others are collected systematically as examples of early science fiction or as forerunners of science fiction. Science fiction as it is commonly understood began in the 1920's, and these early works are represented in the magazine collection. Book publishing in the science fiction field did not become common until the 1940's when emphasis was placed on the so-called 'juveniles' written by well-known authors such as Heinlein, Clarke and Asimov.

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The reader unfamiliar with science fiction might think the collection contains books about space monsters and spaceships only. The BEM (Bug-Eyed Monster) and the spaceship are well represented in the collection, but these alone are not the sole concern of science fiction. The science fiction genre includes many types of stories, making the field extremely hard to define or limit. In our science fiction collection are books which some people might be surprised to find there, but they are legitimately part of the science fiction and fantasy field.

For example, the collection includes utopias, and the opposite of utopia or utopia gone awry, the dystopias. An important utopian novel contained in our collection is Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward (1888). Bellamy was an American author and social reformer; his early works of fiction were light romances until his powerful Looking Backward was published, and later translated into several languages. The science fiction device in Looking Backward is a trip into the future. A man who suffers insomnia is put to sleep by a mesmerist in the year 1887, and he wakes up in the year 2000. Bellamy's view of the future includes a communist society and his book had a tremendous impact on his contemporaries, causing a flurry of imitations to be written and published for the next several years.

The dystopian novel most widely read today is George Orwell's 1984 (1949). The future depicted in 1984 is, on the surface, not unlike the future of Looking Backward; the inhabitants of 1984 live in a communist, paternalist society supposedly free from want and fear, but the atmosphere is entirely sinister. Big Brother who watches over everyone is feared rather than loved. This book has remained popular since its publication, largely because the world it depicts is a plausible one, a world which could happen perhaps in 1984, perhaps later.

Utopias which depict a better world have been written for hundreds of years. A new twist to the utopian theme came around the turn of the century with the rising popularity of the "lost race" novel. Accounts of exploration in previously unexplored regions of the world led the more imaginative authors of the time to people Africa, South America, the Arctic and Antarctica with the lost races, some living idyllic lives of pastoral simplicity, others living far in advance of known civilization technologically (especially if the lost race was made up of refugees from Atlantis). In Pellucidar (1915) Edgar Rice Burroughs found his lost race in the hollow center of the earth. Dystopia finds its way into the lost race novel, as in Edgar Allan Poe's The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym (1838).

Dystopian themes appear again in the "future war" type of science fiction story. These too were popular around the turn of the century, and they can be fascinating for their predictions of means and methods of warfare, and who fights whom. A good example of the future war genre is H. G. Wells' The War in the Air (1908) in which New York is destroyed by a German air fleet. World War I put an end to the future war novel until it reappeared in the 1930's, when the realities of another war stopped speculations again. Today's future war novel is usually hardcore science fiction with spaceships and unfriendly aliens. (A bibliography of future war stories is I. F. Clarke's Voices Prophesying War, 1736-1984.)

Closely related to the future war story is the "post-catastrophe" story: what happens after the war. The advent of the atomic age brought the post-catastrophe theme to maturity; the authors sought to resolve the problem of human survival after civilization (or even the world) is destroyed. George Stewart's Earth Abides, published in 1949 (winner of the International Fantasy Award in 1951) touches this theme. Some post-catastrophe stories contend with natural disasters rather than man-made ones. John Wyndham's Out of the Deeps (1953; British title: The Kraken Wakes) depicts the icecaps melting and flooding the coastal cities; D. F. Jones' Implosion (1967) depicts a world in which all but a handful of women become sterile. Yet another post-catastrophe novel is Clifford Simak's City (1952; winner of the 1953 International Fantasy Award) in which the dogs have inherited the earth.

Fantasy is a part of science fiction too. The line between fantasy and science fiction is so fine as to be indistinguishable (for that matter, all fiction is fantasy) but it is generally agreed that science fiction includes works based on extrapolations from present technology and fantasy is everything else. In that case, where does one classify L. S. de Camp's The Incomplete Enchanter (1941) wherein a science fiction gimmick -- time travel -- whisks the protagonist to a purely fantasy world in which magic works and modern science does not?

Fantasy often mimics history. Apparently, the fantasy writers' favorite period of time is the middle ages; kings, knights, fair maidens, evil alchemists and an occasional dragon or two are parts of the fantasy formula. William Morris is an early representative of the fantasy writers; his The Well at the World's End (1896) has all the elements of a proper fantasy: a quest, archaic language, medieval setting, brave hero and beautiful heroine.

When the subject of fantasy arises, no one who has not read J. R. R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings trilogy (1954-55) can speak with authority. This work has the elements of formula fantasy (a vaguely medieval setting, dragons and elves, goblins -- otherwise known as orcs, a quest, magic, even archaic language) and yet it is by no means formula fiction. It has been described as a modern classic, it is the standard all new fantasies try to meet, and it has been widely imitated.

A part of fantasy but recognizable as a subgenre are the "sword and sorcery" stories. An ancient or at least medieval setting is essential here, as are archaic language, references to Germanic or Celtic mythology (with an oriental flavoring thrown in for good measure). The protagonist is no mere man, he is a strong-thewed warrior who, with the aid of his magical (or simply massive) sword hacks at dragons (which inevitably ooze ichor) or hacks at evil warlocks who fight back by means of the black arts: sorcery. The master of this genre is Robert E. Howard whose series of Conan stories has been imitated on a grand scale. For those readers who prefer to take their sword and sorcery with a grain of salt, Fritz Leiber's Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser stories are delightful. One of these, "Ill Met in Lankhmar," won the Nebula Award for best novella in 1970.

What about the interplanetary adventure story -- the hardcore science fiction? Of course, these stories make up the bulk of the science fiction



collection, and they are of several different types. Science fiction has been called formula fiction; part of the formula is to take a science fiction gimmick and build a human story around it. Thus we have 'robot stories,' or 'first contact stories,' or 'space opera.'

Under the influence of Hugo Gernsback, a good many of the early science fiction stories (ca. 1920) were 'machine stories.' Gernsback's own novel, Ralph 124C41+ ("one to fore-see for one") published in 1911-12, was of this type. The plot is standard space opera, but the casual references to things not yet invented at that time make the story remarkable, things like television, synthetic fabrics, radar (complete with a diagram!), not to mention space travel. G. O. Smith's Venus Equilateral (1947) is a later story of this type wherein the fascination of machinery is all and the plot is minimal.

The exploration of space always has been a favorite theme of science fiction authors and readers. A. E. van Vogt's Voyage of the Space Beagle (1950) is a classic; E. E. "Doc" Smith's Skylark series was one of the first to explore space beyond the confines of this solar system. The colonizing of new planets is a popular theme. Heinlein's Farmer in the Sky (1950) is so detailed it could be used as a textbook when mankind is ready to colonize Ganymede. Mars has been colonized in Lester Del Rey's Marooned on Mars (1956) and Arthur C. Clarke's Sands of Mars (1952). Venus has been visited in Robert Moore William's Walk Up the Sky (1962) and Chad Oliver's "Field Expedient" (1959). Unfortunately, real space exploration has antiquated these stories by proving their assumptions concerning Mars and Venus to be wrong. Some science fiction stories never leave the ground, that is, earth. The protagonist in James Gunn's novel This Fortress World (1955) is one of those who tries, and fails, to go out into space in a ship.

The history of the distant future is a concern of science fiction. Isaac Asimov's Foundation trilogy is a group of stories depicting the far distant future of mankind. Andre Norton has extrapolated human history to the year 8054 (Star Rangers, 1953). The paradox of time travel is a popular science fiction theme; many authors like to picture the possible disaster inherent in time travel as in Fritz Leiber's The Big Time, published in Galaxy in 1958 (winner of the 1958 Hugo Award for best novel) which tells of a war fought in the past, the present and the future.

Contact with alien civilizations (E. E. Smith: Triplanetary, 1954), disasters resulting from space exploration (Michael Crichton: Andromeda Strain, 1969), overpopulation (Harry Harrison: Make Room! Make Room!, 1966), ecological disasters (John Christopher: No Blade of Grass, 1956), and many other themes have been treated in science fiction. The titles of books mentioned above are only representative of the many volumes in the Science Fiction Collection. The themes and variations mentioned are likewise only representative. In fact, there is nothing which is outside the realm of science fiction, and that makes science fiction a rather important body of literature.

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### ANNOUNCING THE FUTURE

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### C R E D I T S

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