



center *for*
future consciousness

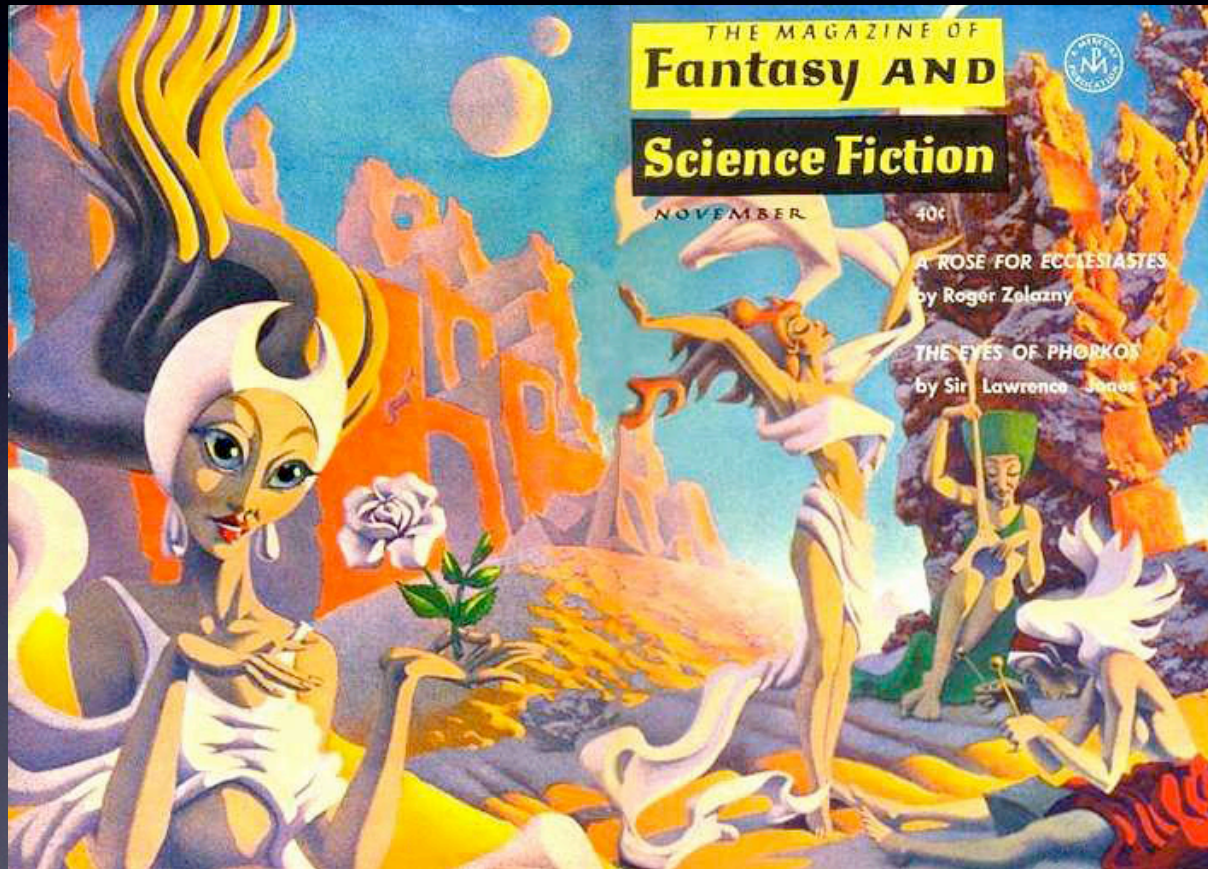
Science Fiction as the Mythology of the Future



Tom Lombardo, Ph.D.

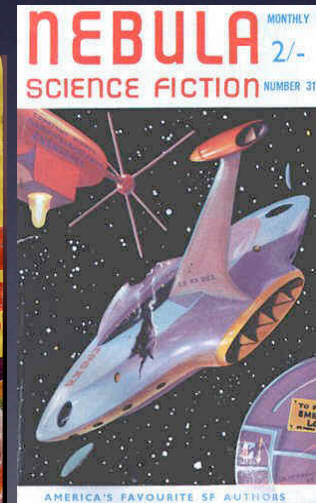
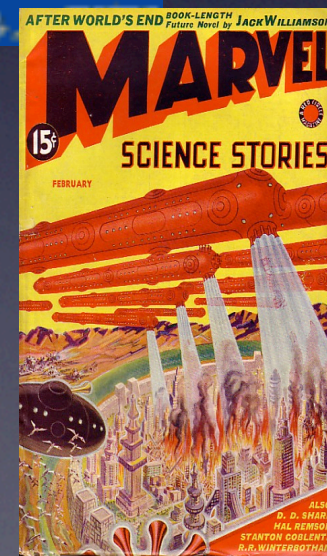
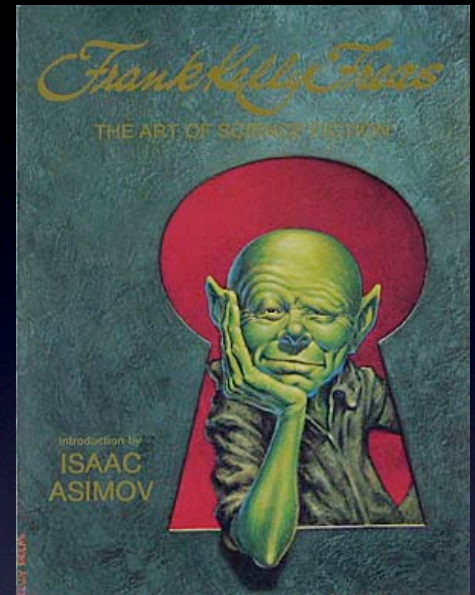
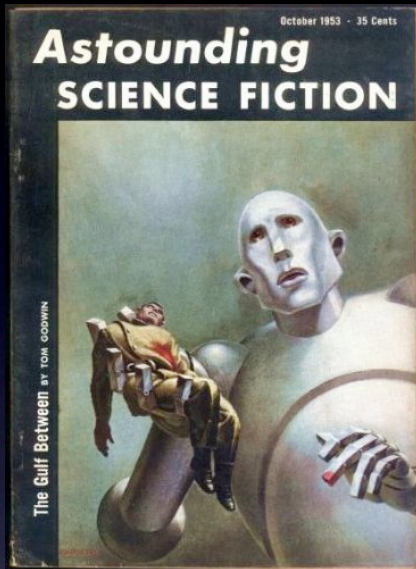
“A Rose for Ecclesiastes” by Roger Zelazny

**Science fiction is clearly the most visible and influential contemporary form of futurist thinking in the modern world.
Why is science fiction so popular?**

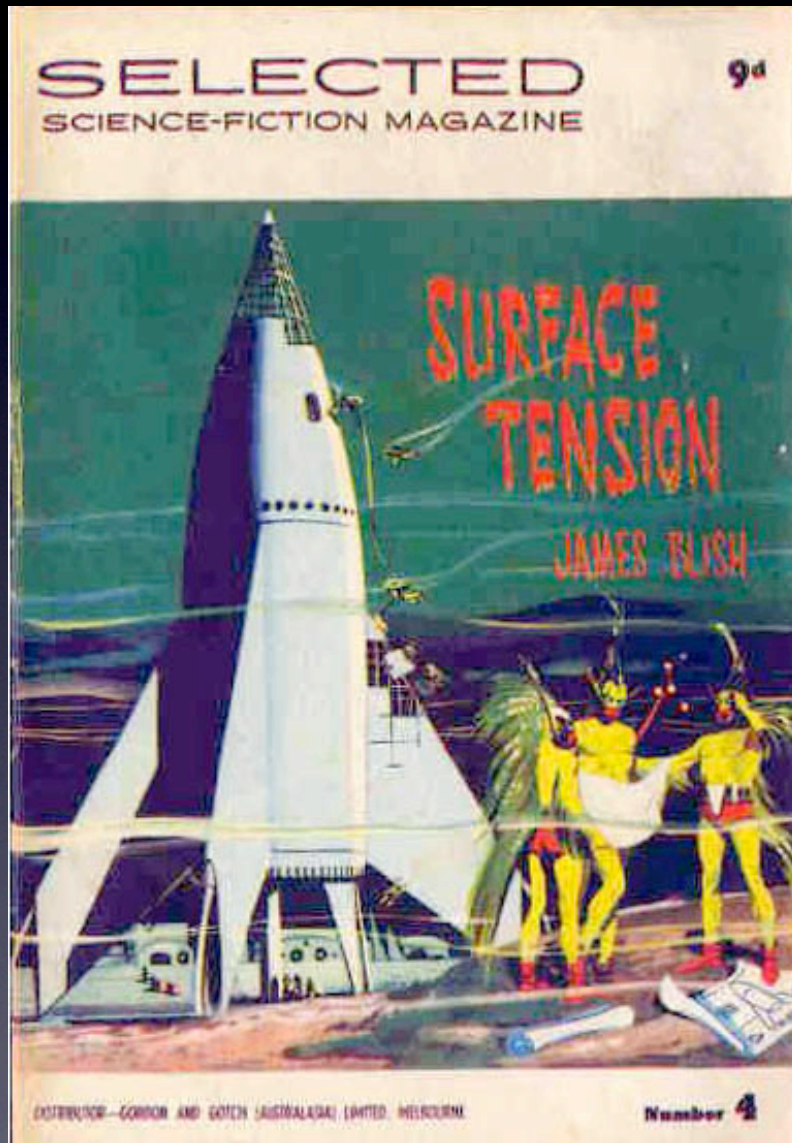


Science fiction speaks to the whole person and stimulates holistic future consciousness.

What is Science Fiction?



The Allegory of “Surface Tension”



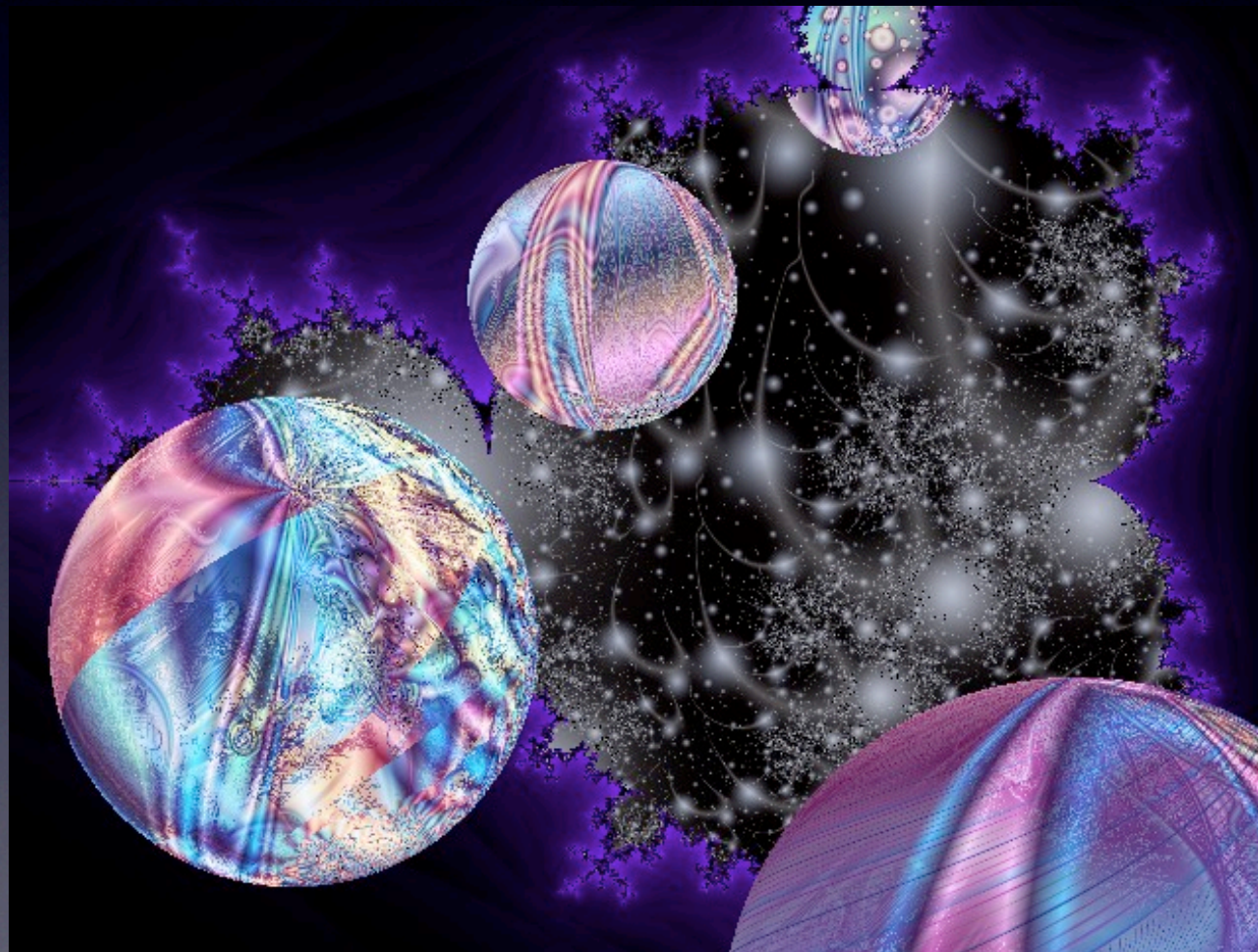
Outline

- ✦ **Take an historical perspective on science fiction**
- ✦ **Describe various narrative themes and archetypes embodied in science fiction**
- ✦ **Identify the comprehensive array of futurist topics covered in science fiction**
- ✦ **Describe specific strengths of science fiction as a mode of future consciousness**

Some of the Main Theses

- ✦ **Science fiction engages all the fundamental capacities of the human mind and future consciousness; it generates holistic future consciousness.**
- ✦ **Science fiction weaves together theoretical speculation with personalized and realistic narrative.**
- ✦ **Science fiction addresses all the main dimensions of the future and synthesizes all these dimensions into integrative visions.**
- ✦ **Science fiction integrates science and myth into a mythology of the future.**

Myth, Science, & Science Fiction



The Power of Myth

*“The universe is made of stories, not of atoms.”
Muriel Rukeyser*

- ◆ **Narration & Drama**
- ◆ **Personification**
- ◆ **Archetypal Themes**
- ◆ **Ethics – Values**
- ◆ **Inspiration & Emotion**
- ◆ **Micro-Macro Connection/Cosmic Context**
- ◆ **Connection of Past & Future**
- ◆ **Fantastical Realities - Informed by Classical Ontology**

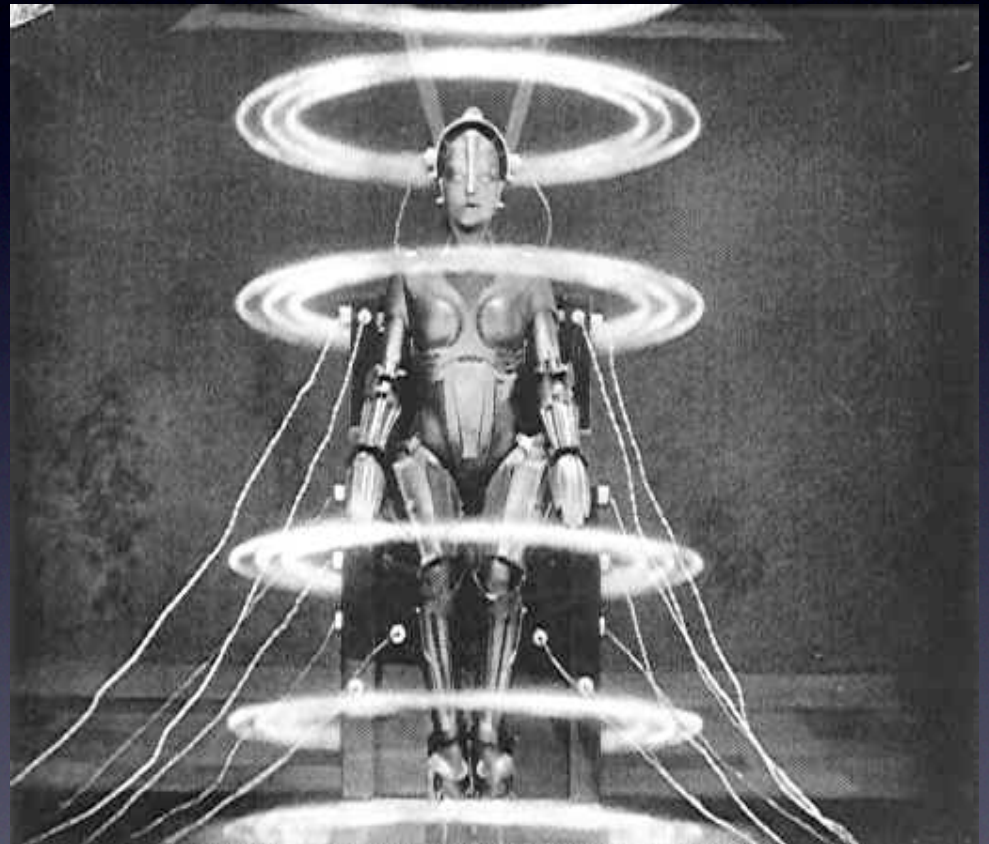


Myth & Science Fiction

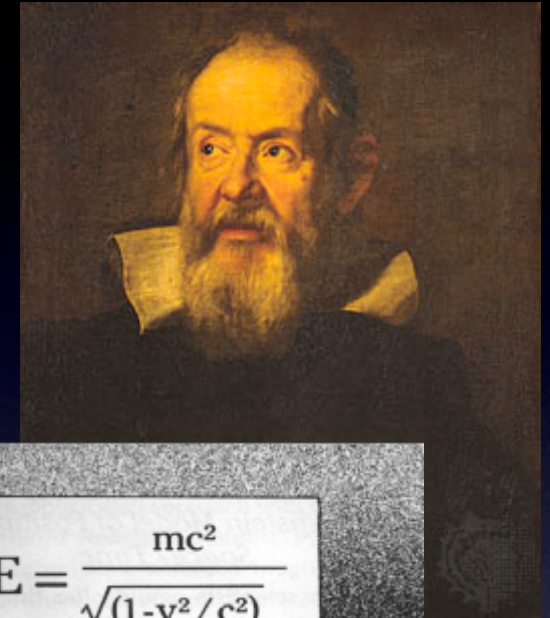
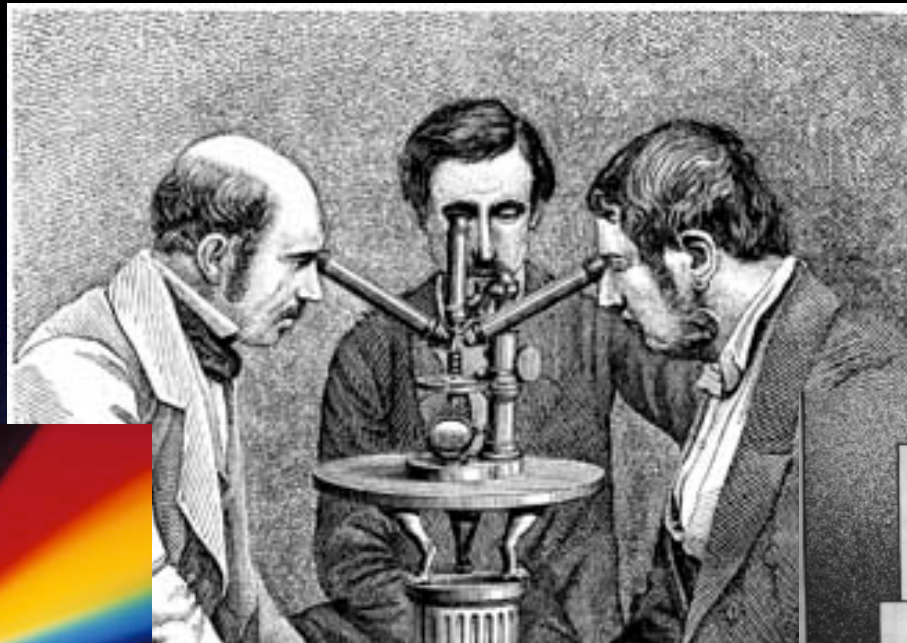
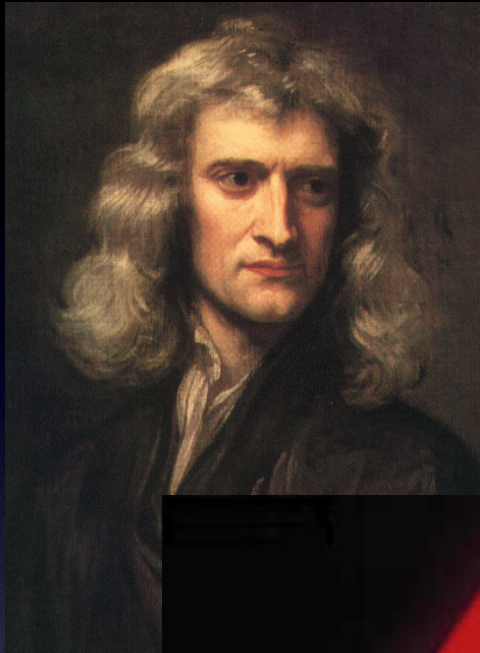
- ✦ **Narration & Drama**
- ✦ **Personification**
- ✦ **Archetypal Themes**
- ✦ **Ethics - Values**
- ✦ **Emotion & Inspiration**
- ✦ **Micro-Macro Connection/Cosmic Context**
- ✦ **Future Focus**
- ✦ **Fantastical Realities - Informed by Contemporary Ontology/Science**



Fantasy vs Science Fiction



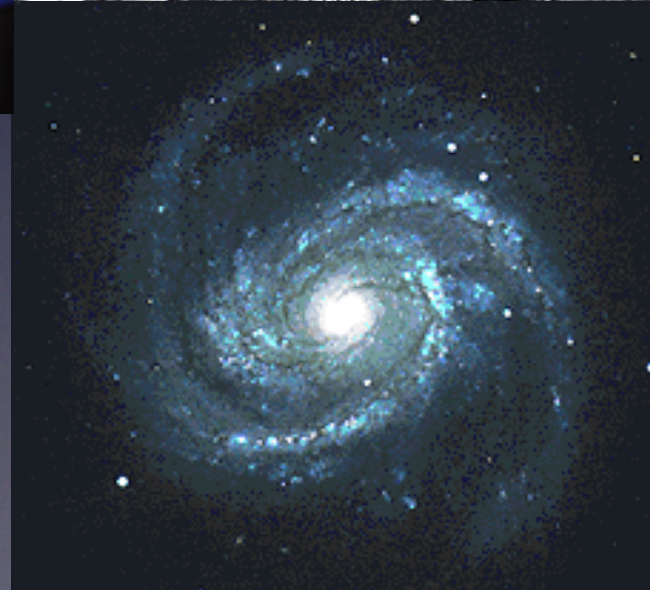
The Power of Reason & Science



$$E = \frac{mc^2}{\sqrt{1-v^2/c^2}}$$

AS $v \rightarrow c$, THEN $E \rightarrow \infty$

E=ENERGY c=SPEED OF LIGHT
m=MASS v=VELOCITY



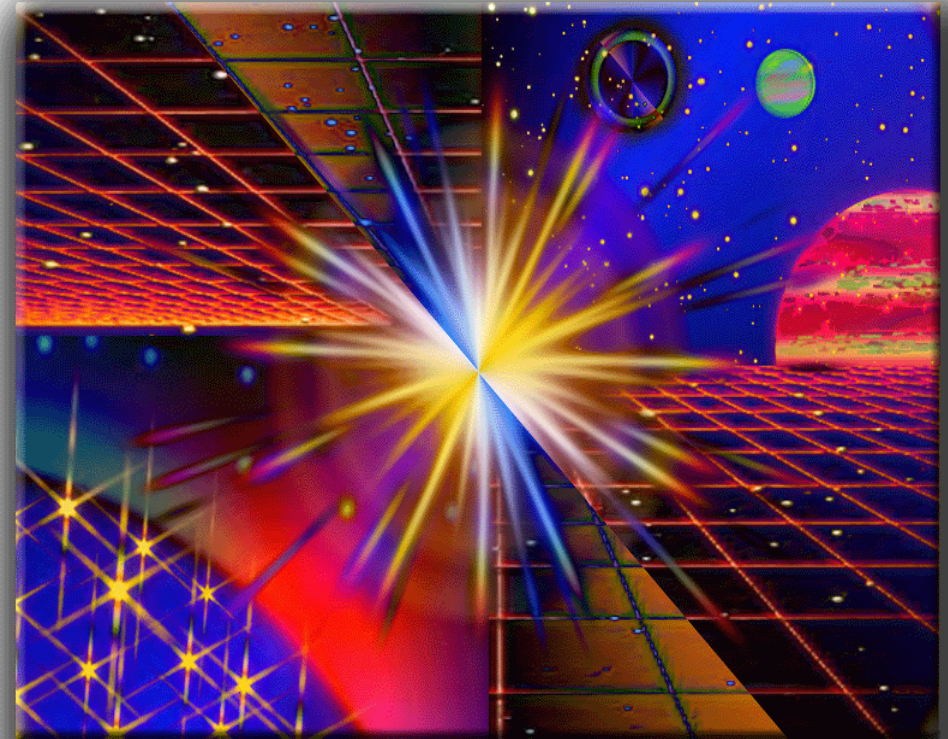
Science & Science Fiction versus Fantasy & Religious Myth

- ◆ **Standards of Knowledge & Reality Change**
- ◆ **Divine Providence versus Secular Progress and the Promise of Science**

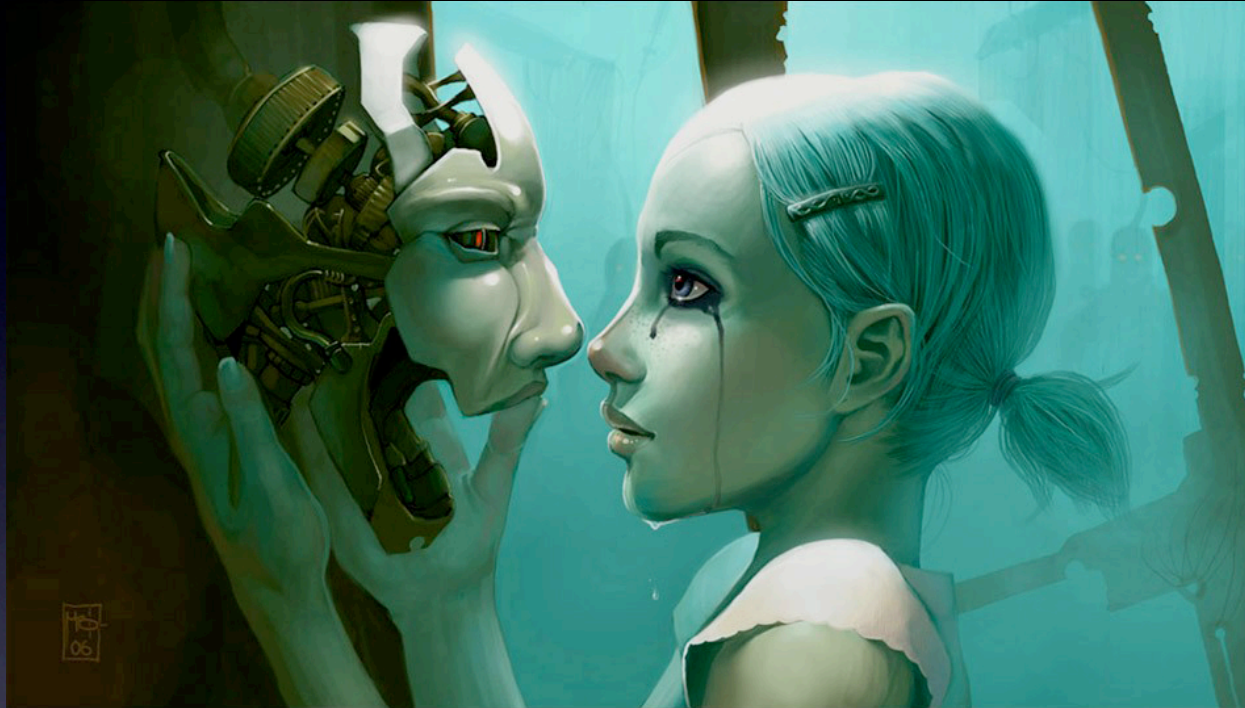


Science Fiction: The Synthesis of Science & Myth

- ◆ **Archetypal –
Personification –
Narrative –
Inspirational –
Cosmic – Meaning,
Purpose, and Value**
- ◆ **Informed by Science
and Contemporary
Thought - Future
Oriented**



Science Fiction as the Mythology of the Future



“...our aim is not merely to create aesthetically admirable fiction. We must achieve neither mere history, nor mere fiction, but myth. A true myth is one which, within the universe of a certain culture... expresses richly, and often perhaps tragically, the highest aspirations possible within a culture.”

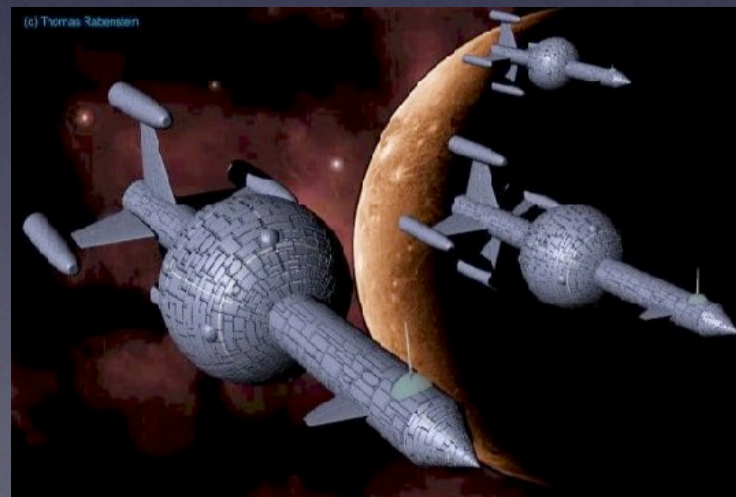
Olaf Stapledon

The Origins & Double-Edged Sword of Science Fiction: Hope and Fear

*“Since man is above all future-making,
he is, above all, a swarm of hopes and fears.”*
Ortega y Gasset



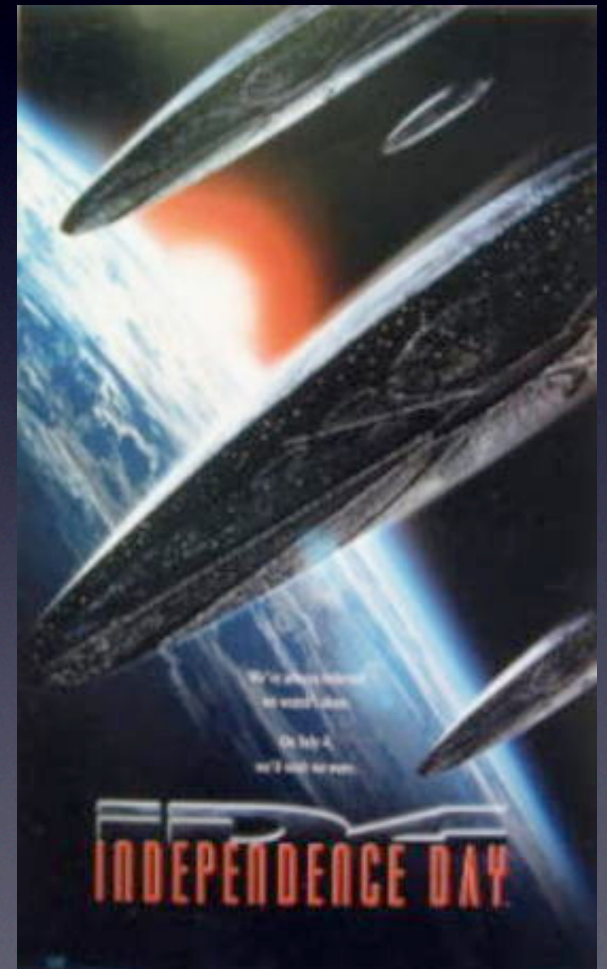
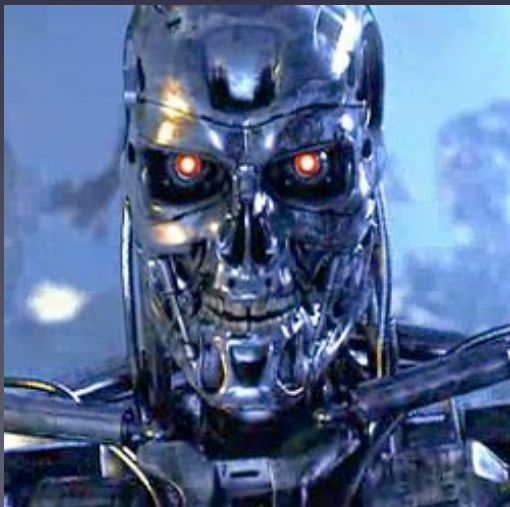
The Hopeful Dreams of Science Fiction: Cosmic Awe & Wonder



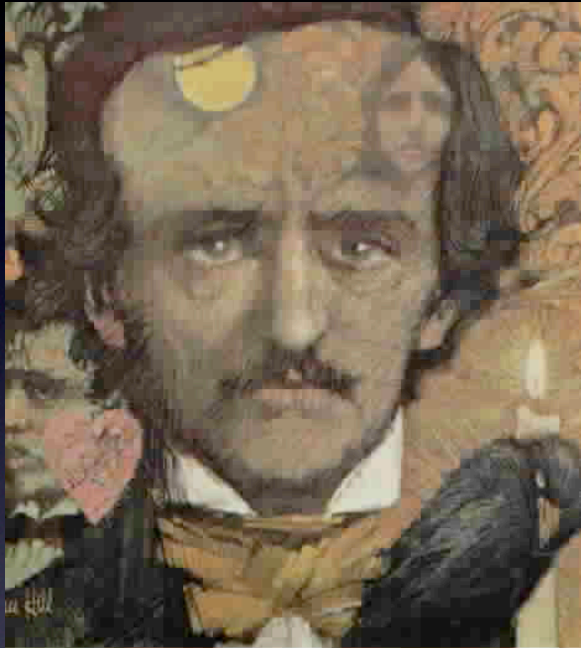
The Fears of Science Fiction

“...nightmares are dreams whose usefulness is to keep us on our toes.”

J. T. Fraser



Science Fiction & Romanticism: Passion & Distrust



haunts us still...

When we were still a very young nation, no Edgar Allan Poe to convince Old World scoff-bunch of sayings. Recognized as one of the lyrical poets in the world, Poe actually influ

Poe's wild tales explored the farthest reaches. His mystical mind illuminated horrifying de. His words screamed, sighed, and sobbed. We that went thump-thump-thump, our own hea

Poe was a restless, unhappy man. And when the years were to come later—a century late school children were writing "Quoth the Raven," "The music of Poe's words and the power of i

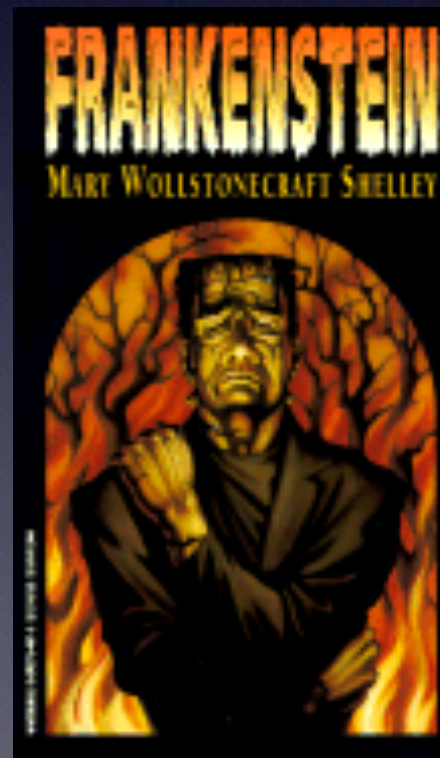
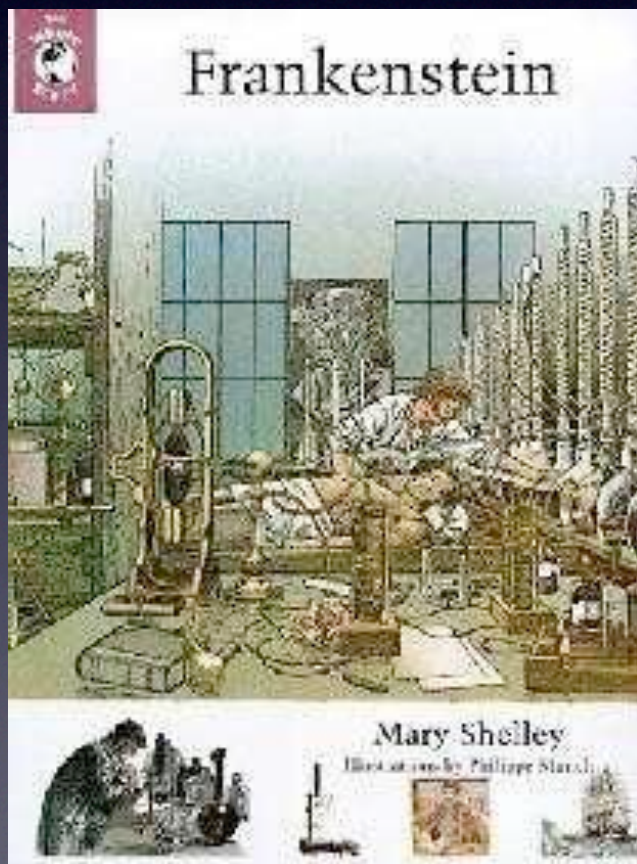


Mary Shelly

Frankenstein: or, the Modern Prometheus

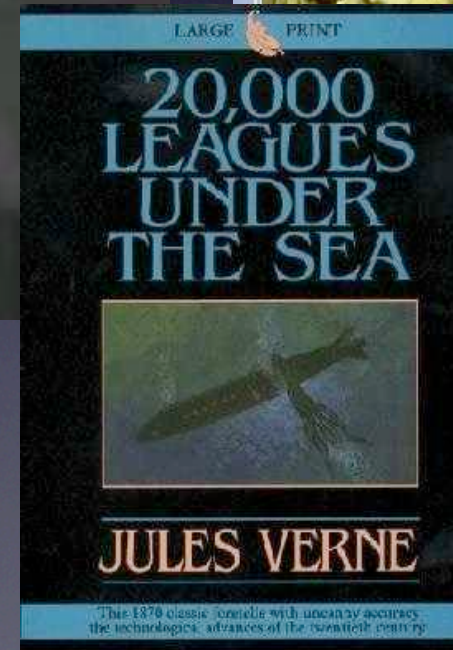
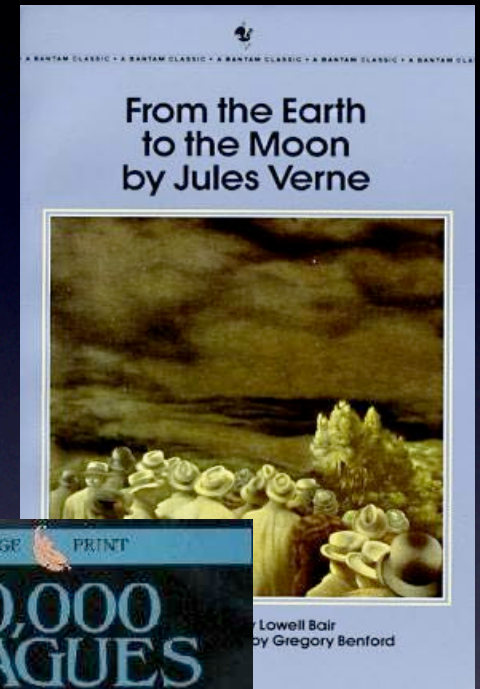
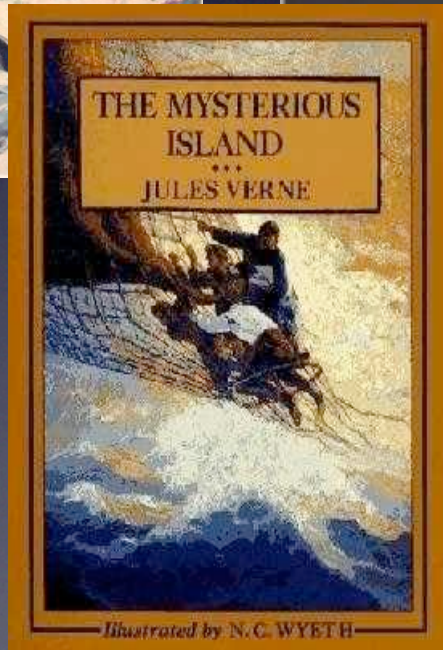
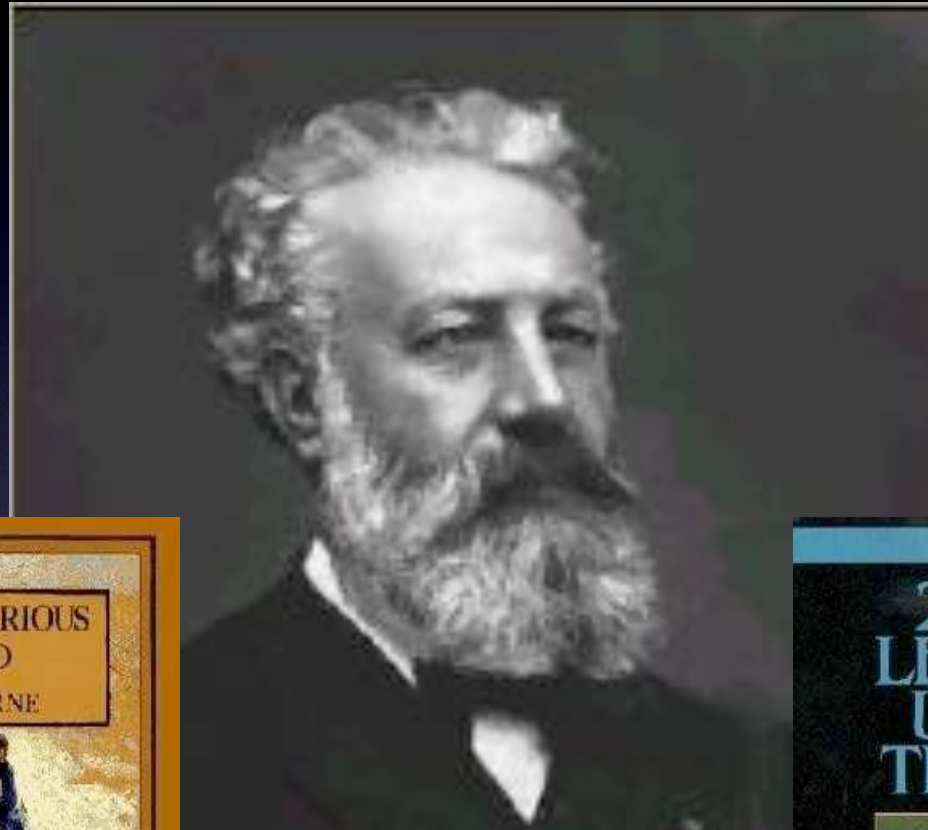
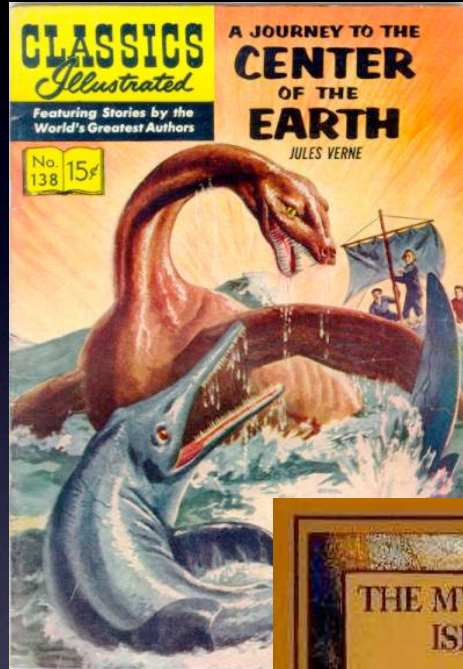
"... Frankenstein is the modern theme, touching not only science but man's dual nature, whose inherited ape curiosity has brought him both success and misery."

Brian Aldiss

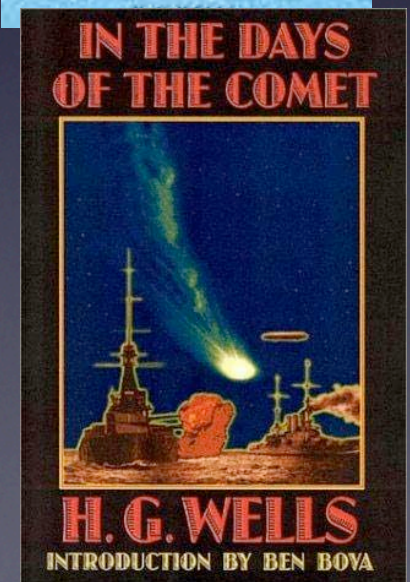
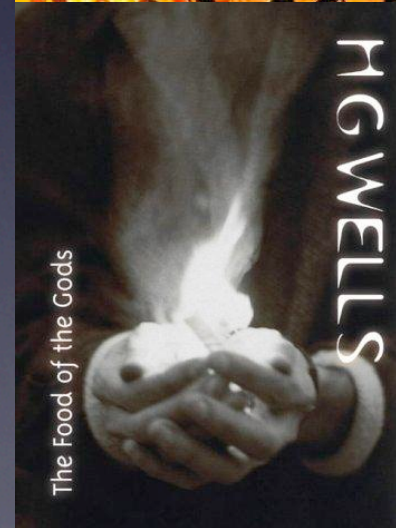
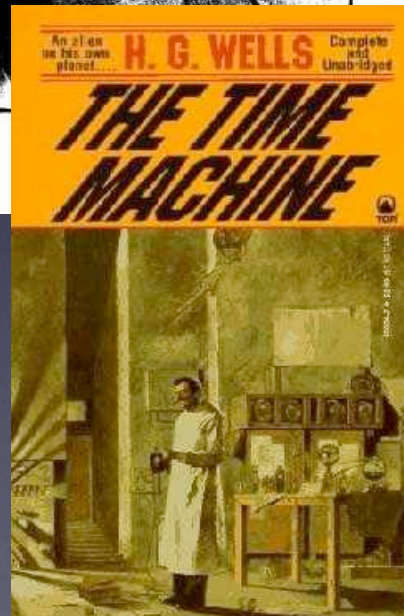
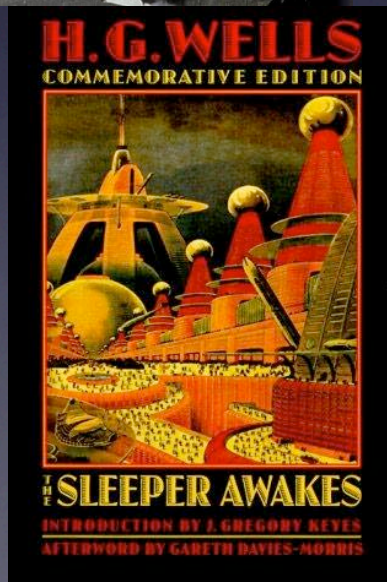
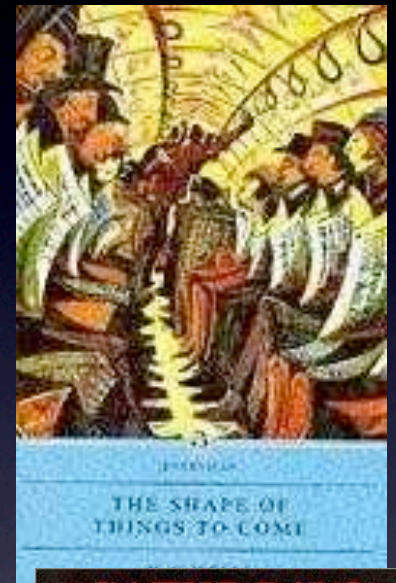
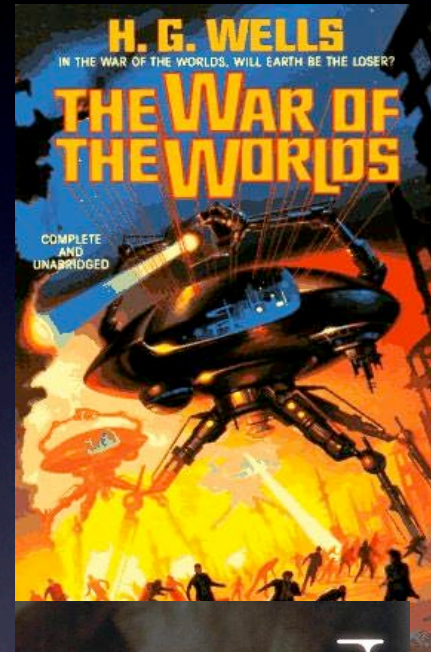
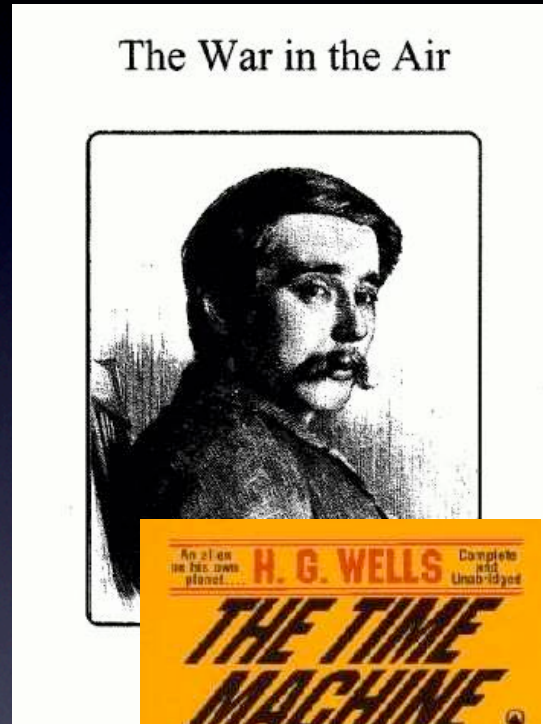
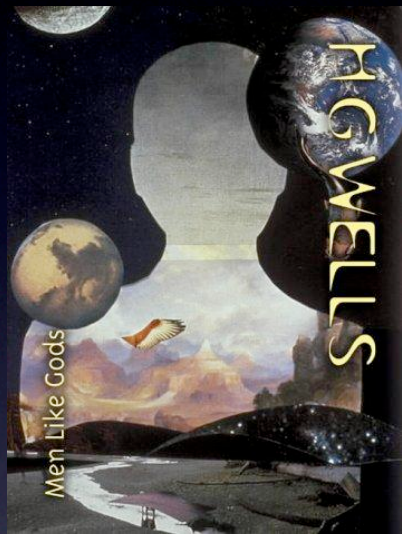


Jules Verne

The Scientific Romance



H. G. Wells: A Multiplicity of Visions & Predictions of the Future



Evolution, Future Histories, & Global Ethical Utopianism



**“It is possible to believe that all the past is but the beginning of a beginning, and that all that is and has been is but the twilight of the dawn.
It is possible to believe that all that the human mind has ever accomplished is but the dream before the awakening.”
H.G. Wells**

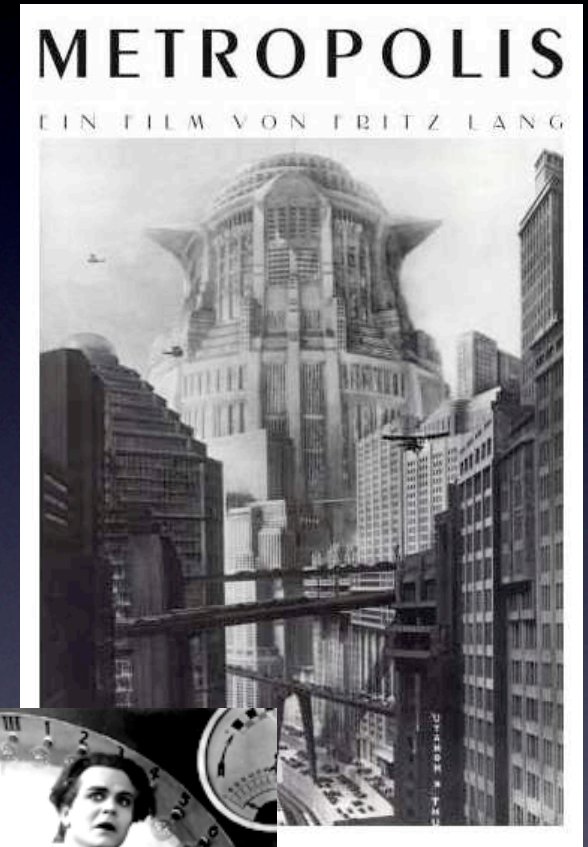
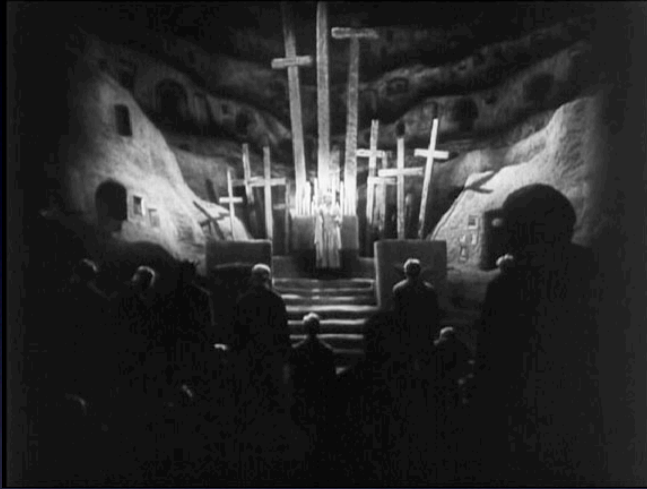


Mind at the End of its Tether



“The stars in their courses have turned against him and he has to give place to some other animal better adapted to face the fate that closes in more and more swiftly upon mankind... The writer is convinced that there is no way out or round or through the impasse. It is the end.”

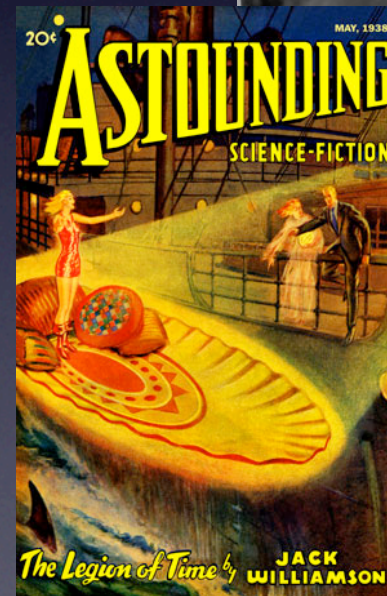
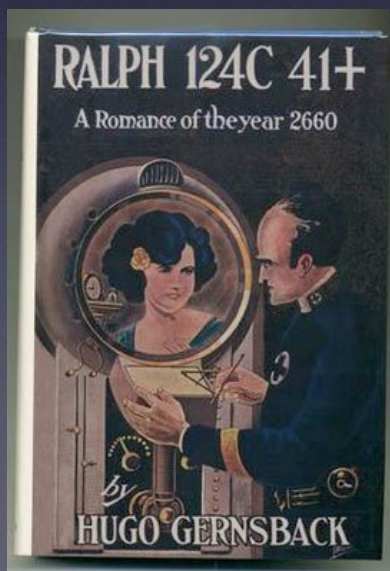
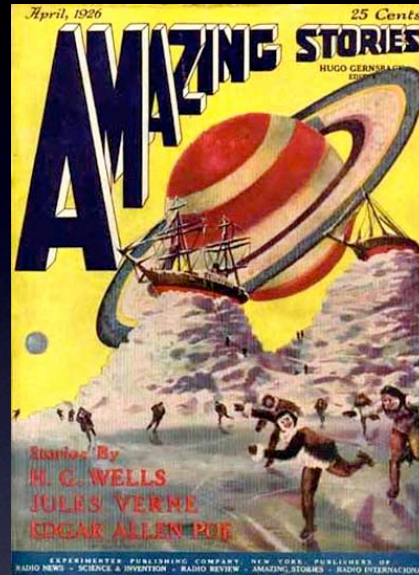
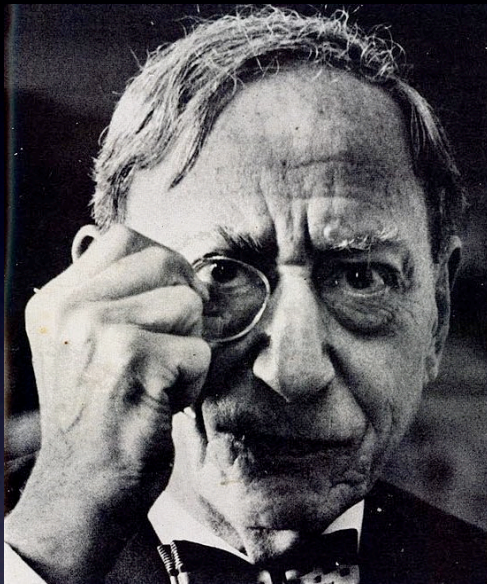
Metropolis & the Robot as an Archetype



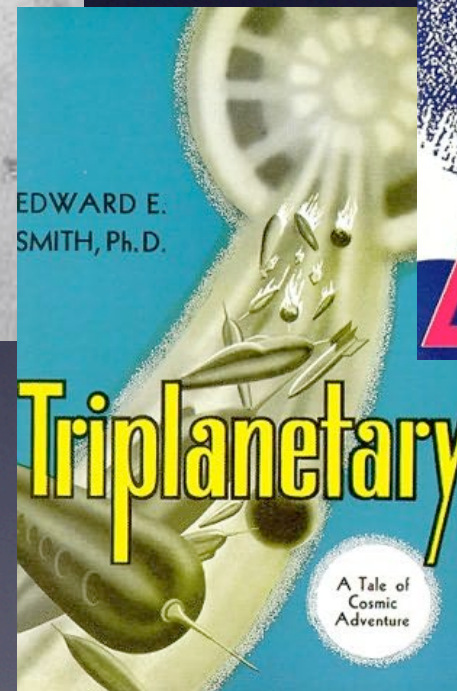
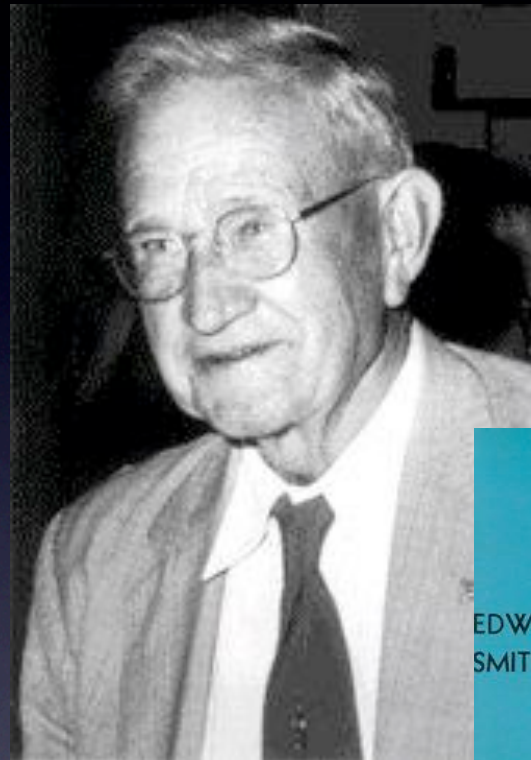
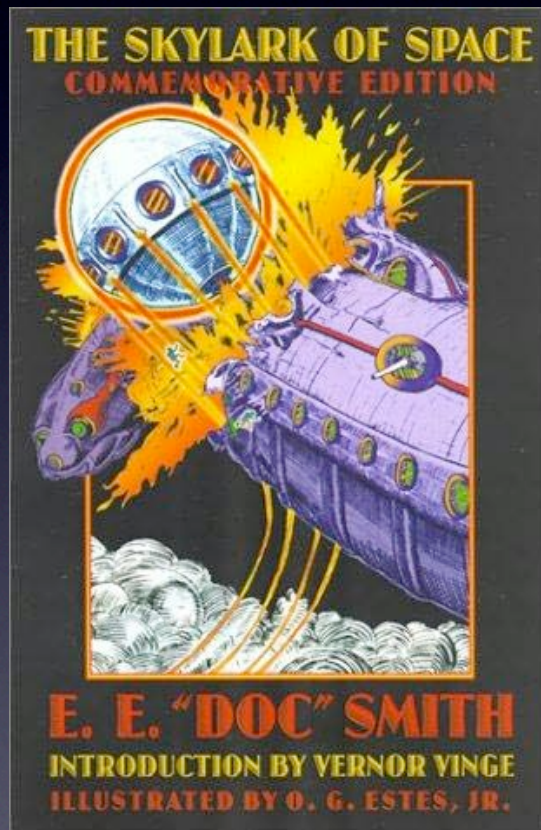
Cosmology, Society, & Future History: The Golden Age



Amazing & Astounding: Gernsback & Campbell



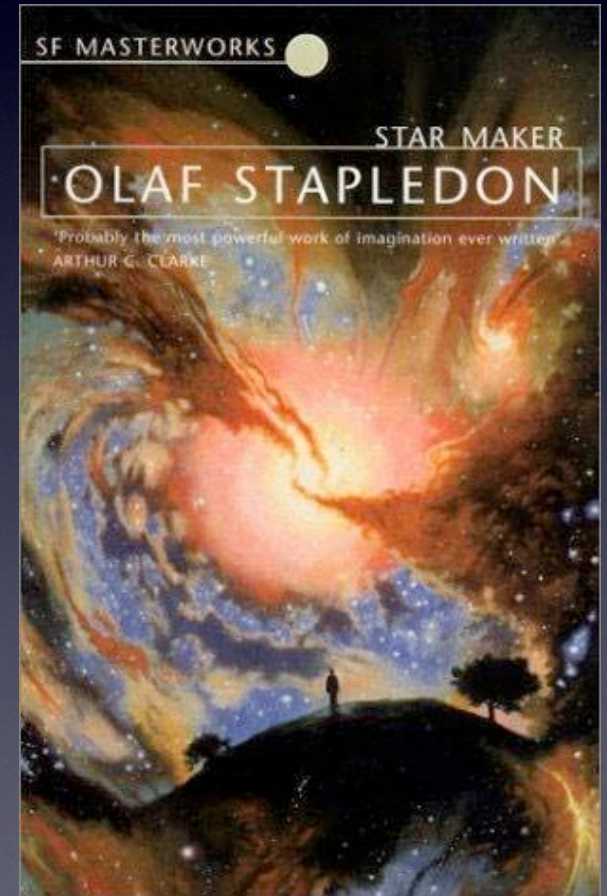
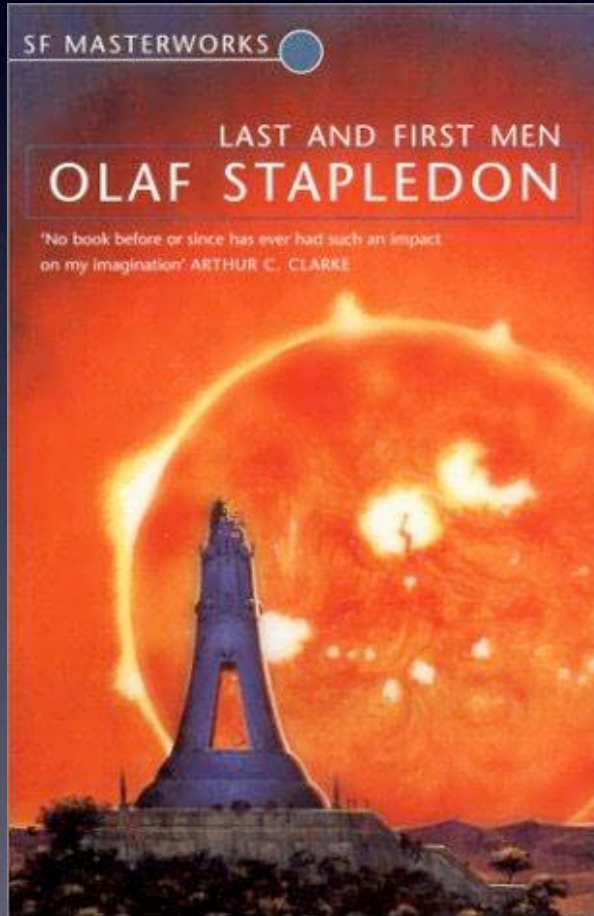
The Space Opera – “Doc” Smith



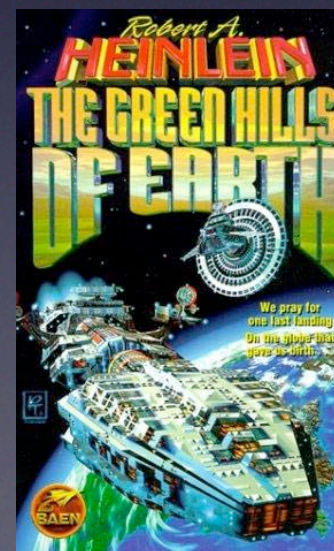
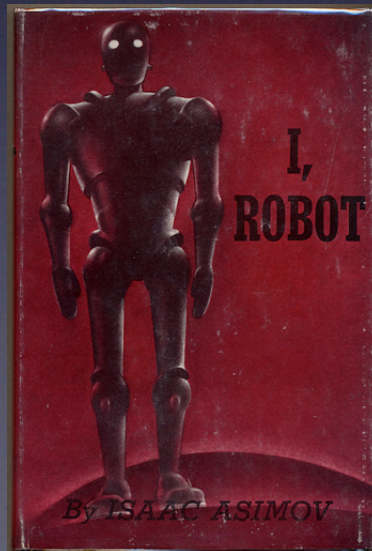
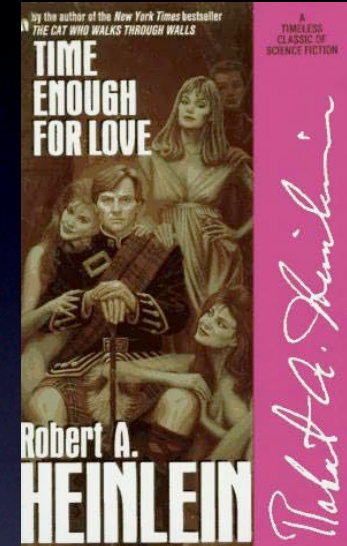
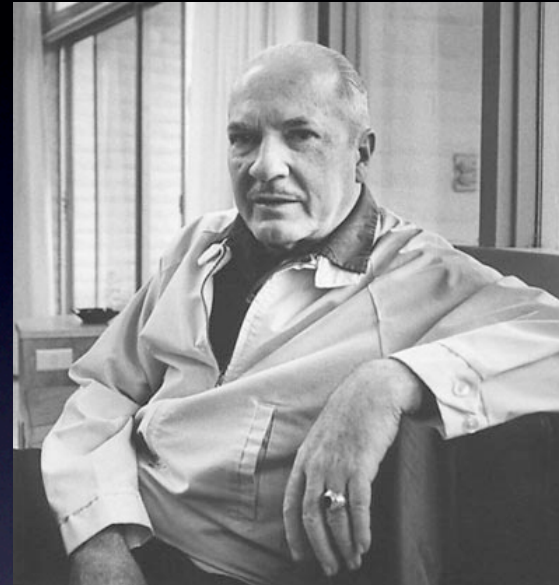
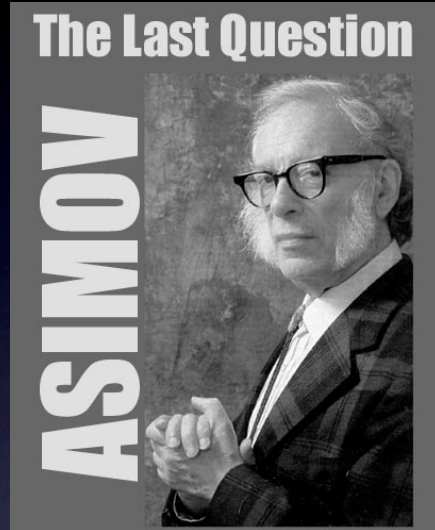
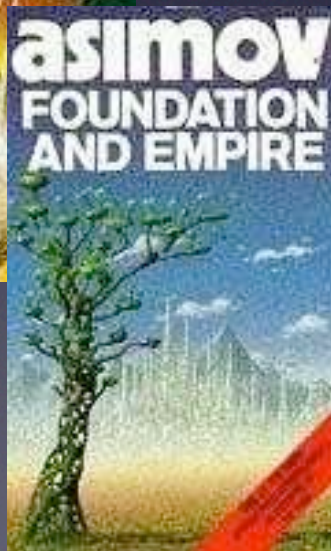
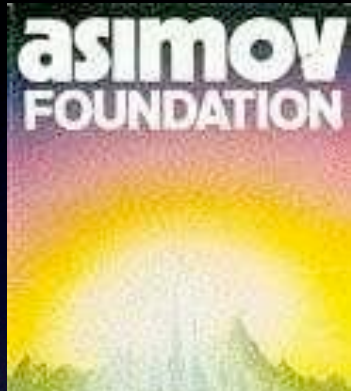
Olaf Stapledon's *Star Maker*: Cosmic Evolution and Future History

"Probably the most powerful work of imagination ever written."

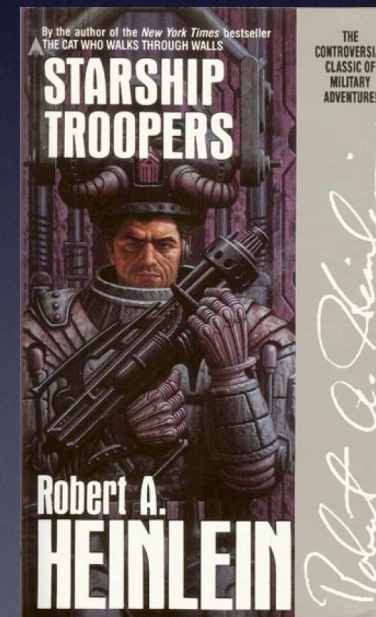
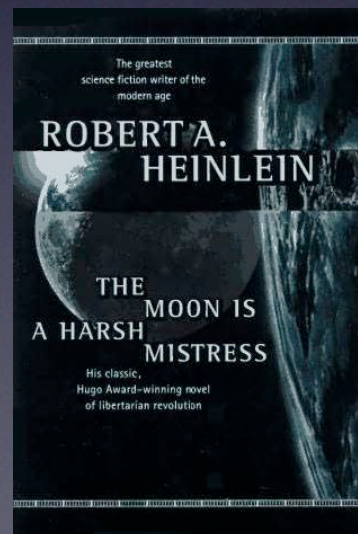
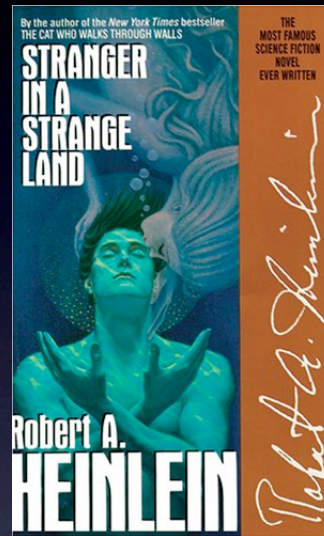
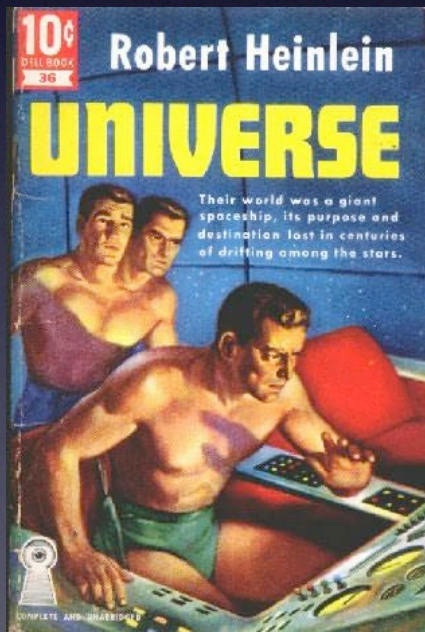
Arthur C. Clarke



Future Histories: Asimov & Heinlein



Robert Heinlein: The Most Popular Science Fiction Writer of the 1940s & 1950s



“What Orwell feared were those who would ban books. What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one. Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information. Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism.

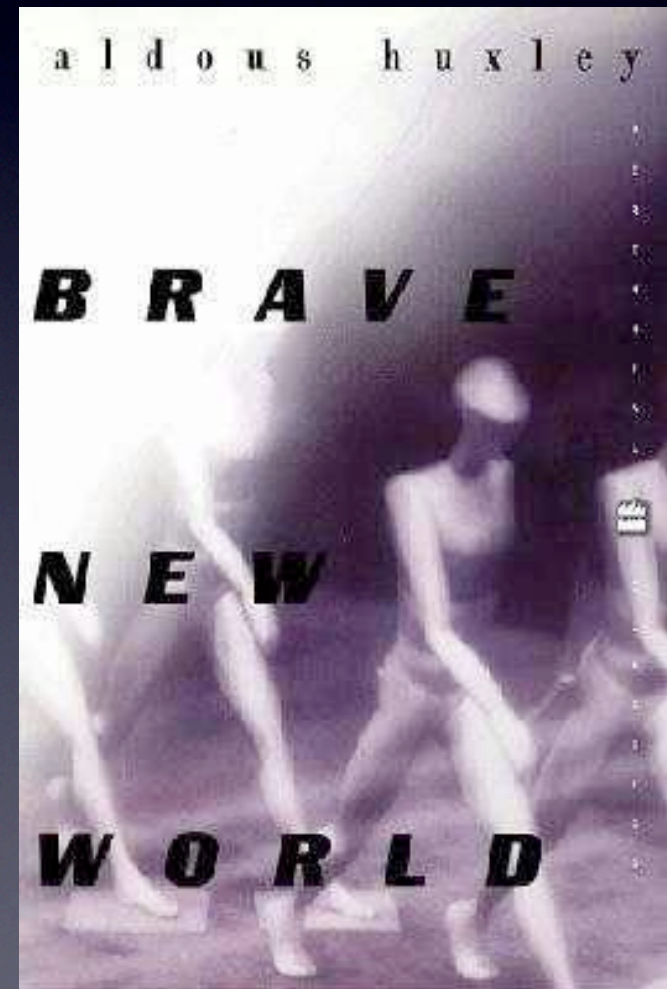
Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture, preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies, the orgy porgy, and the centrifugal bumblepuppy.”

**Neil Postman
Amusing Ourselves to Death**

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*

A Techno-Dystopia

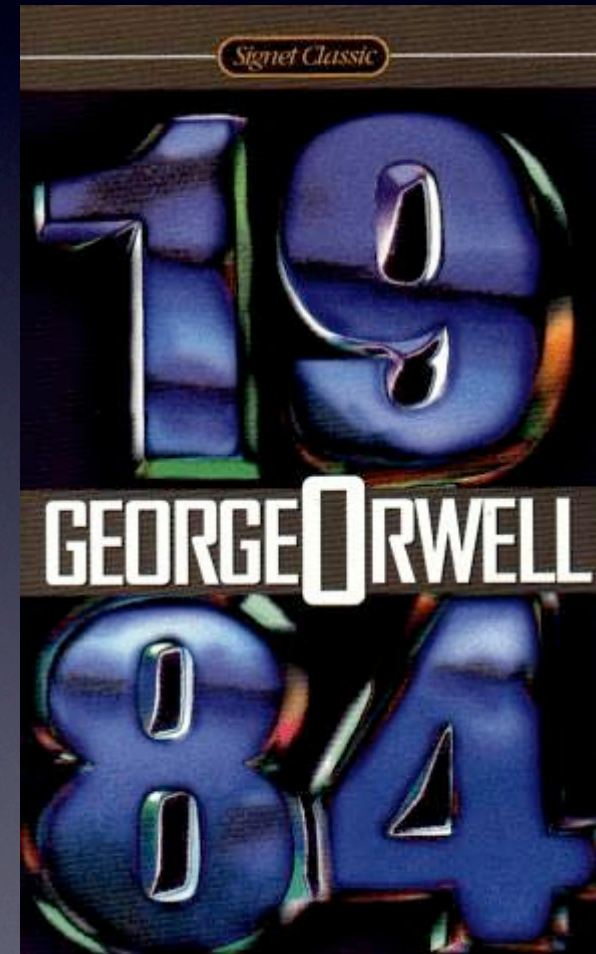
A World of No Pain



George Orwell's 1984

A Dystopia of Fear and Repression

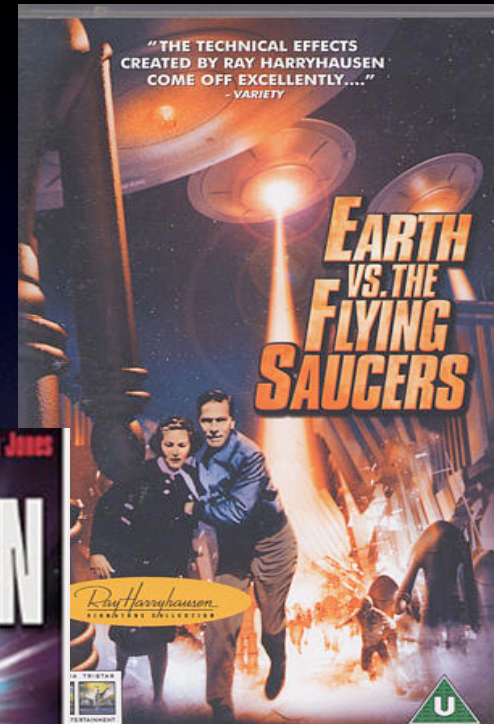
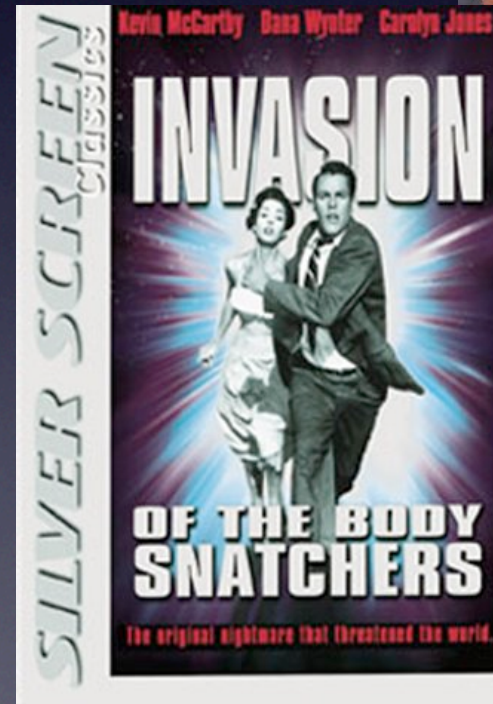
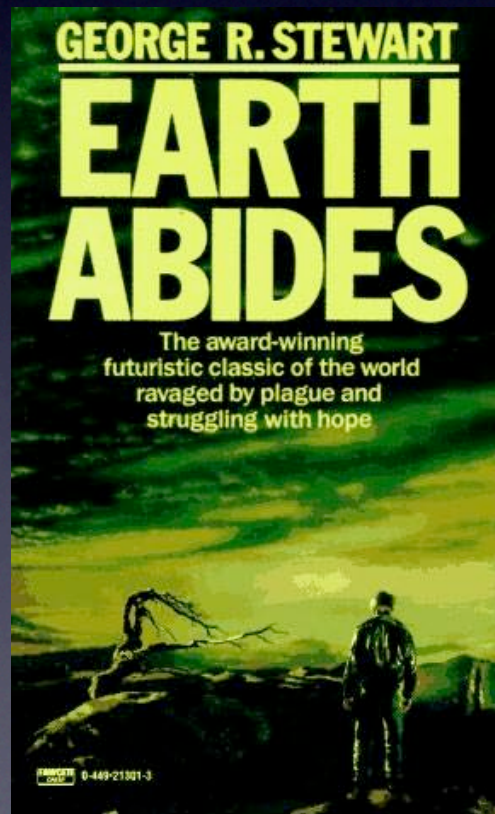
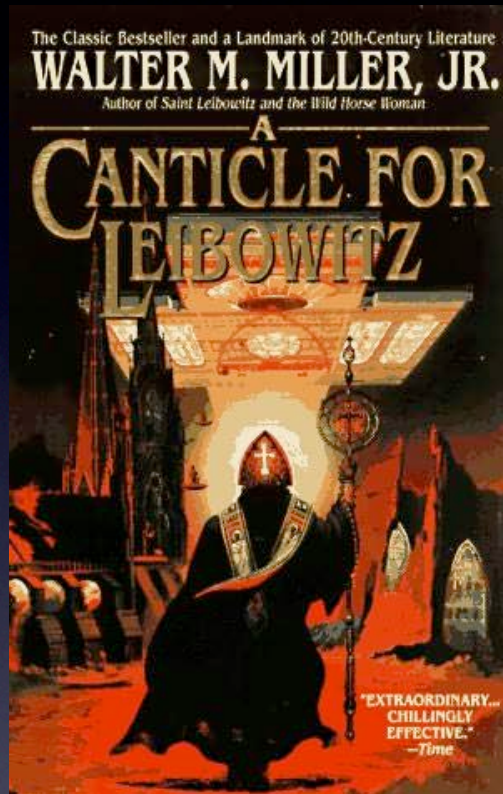
A World of No Pleasure



Classic Archetypes and Narrative Themes

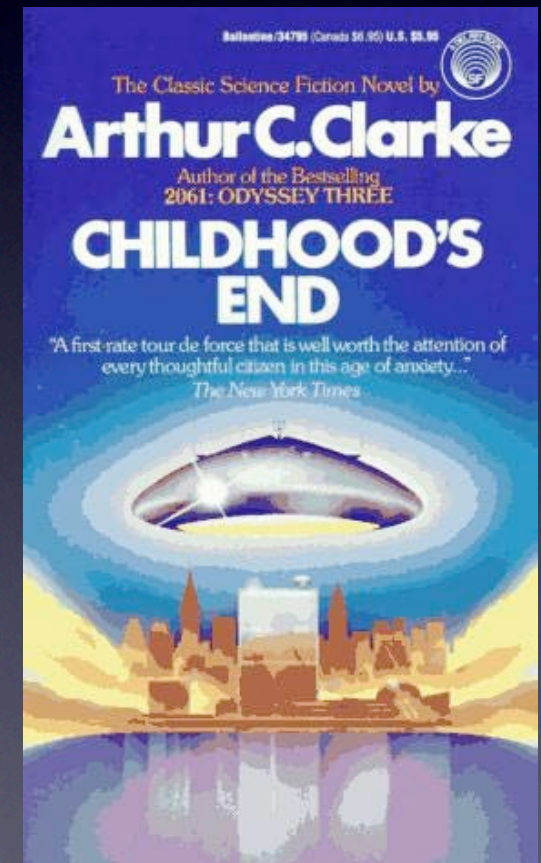
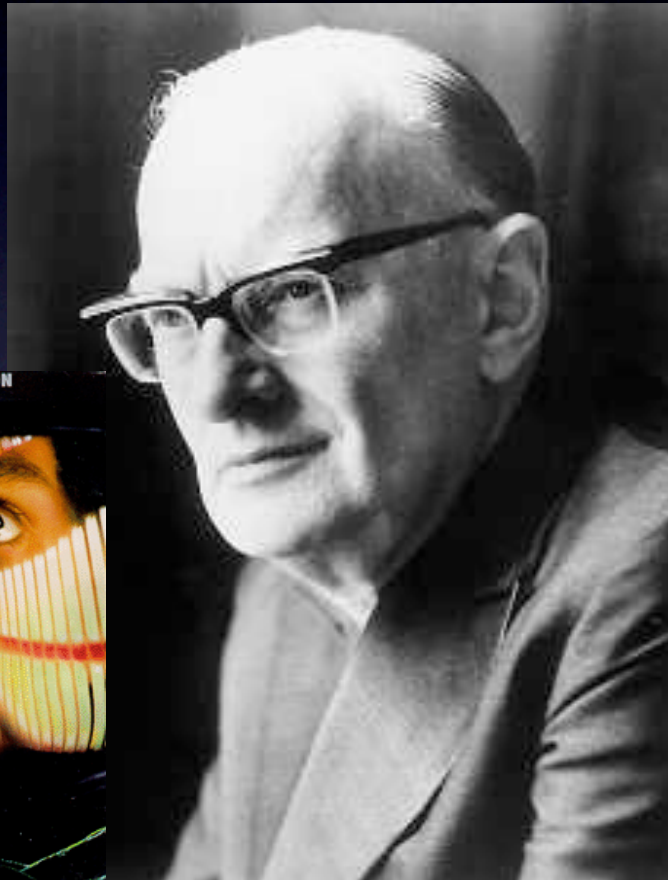
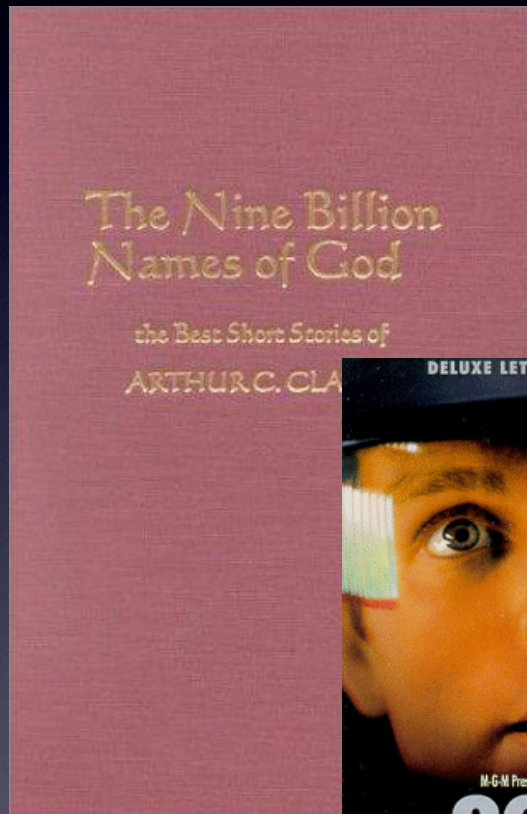


Movies and Catastrophes

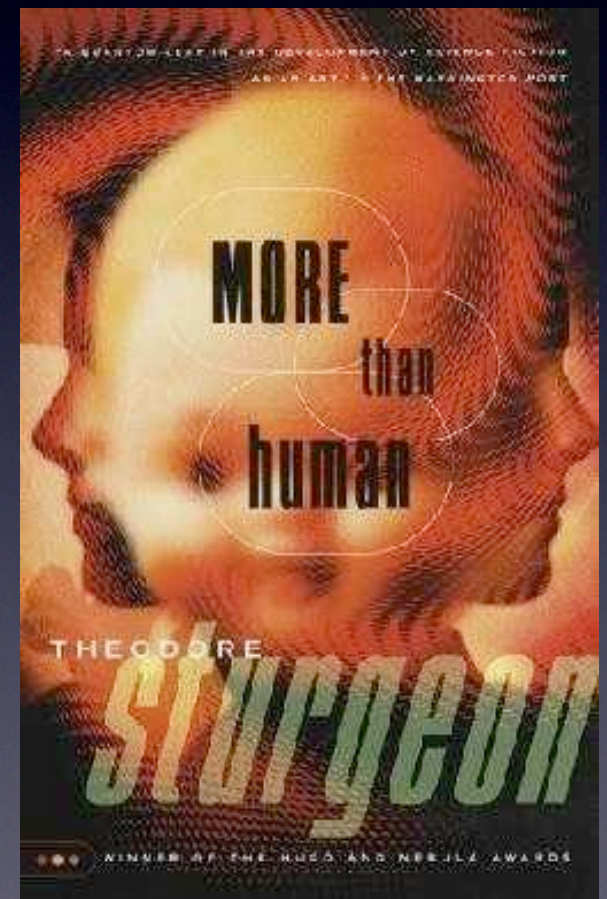
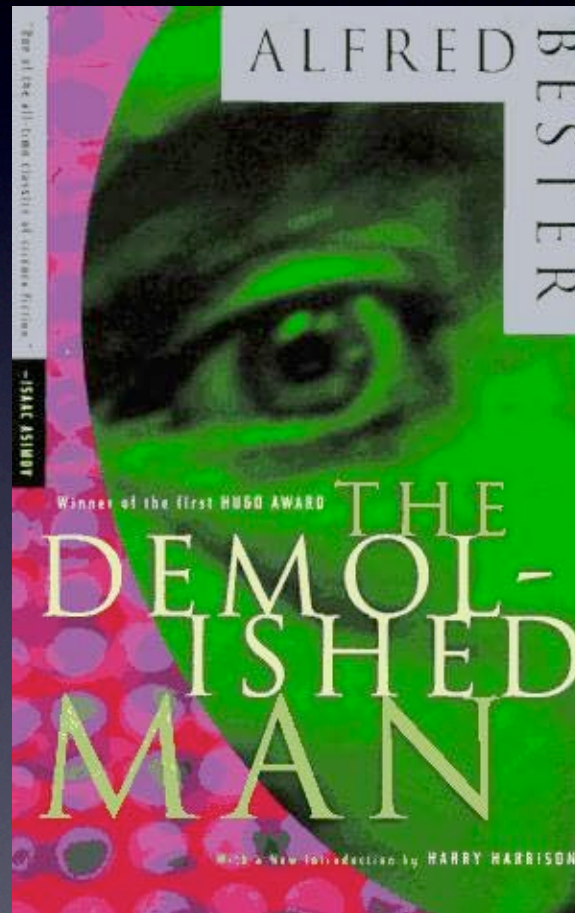
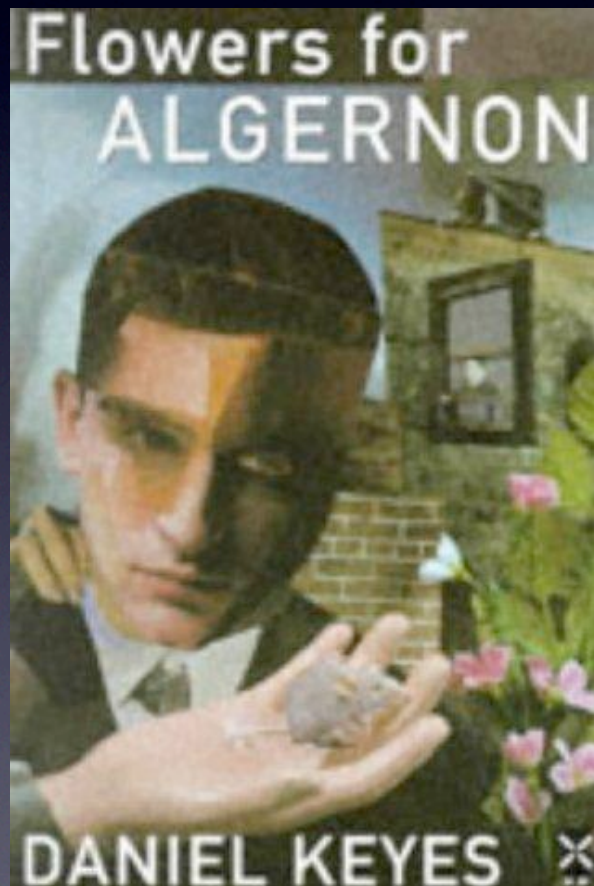


Arthur C. Clarke

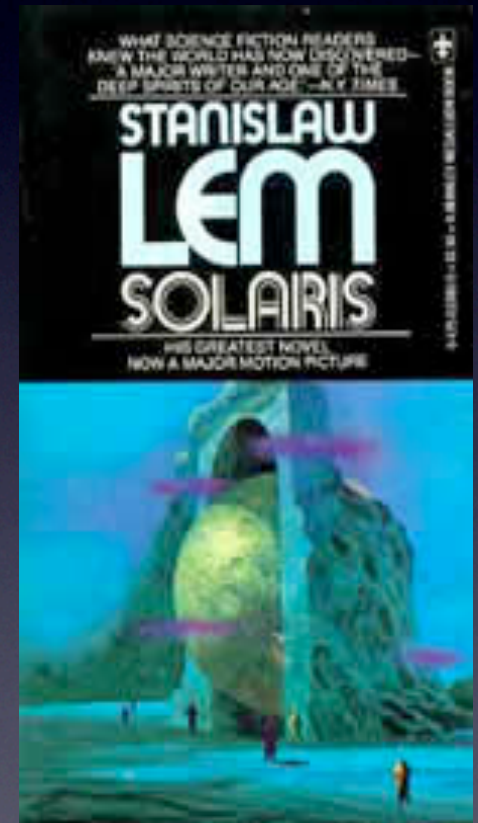
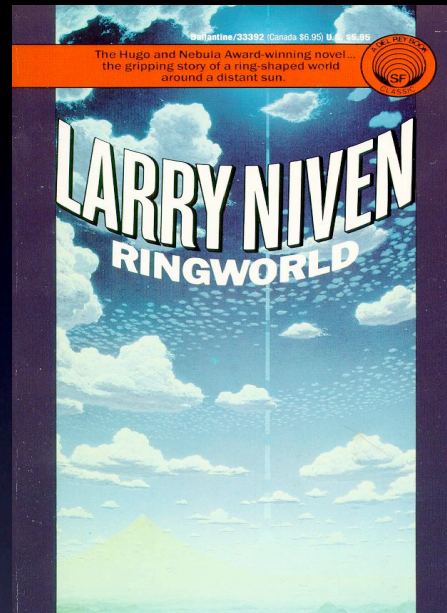
Science, Myth, & Evolution



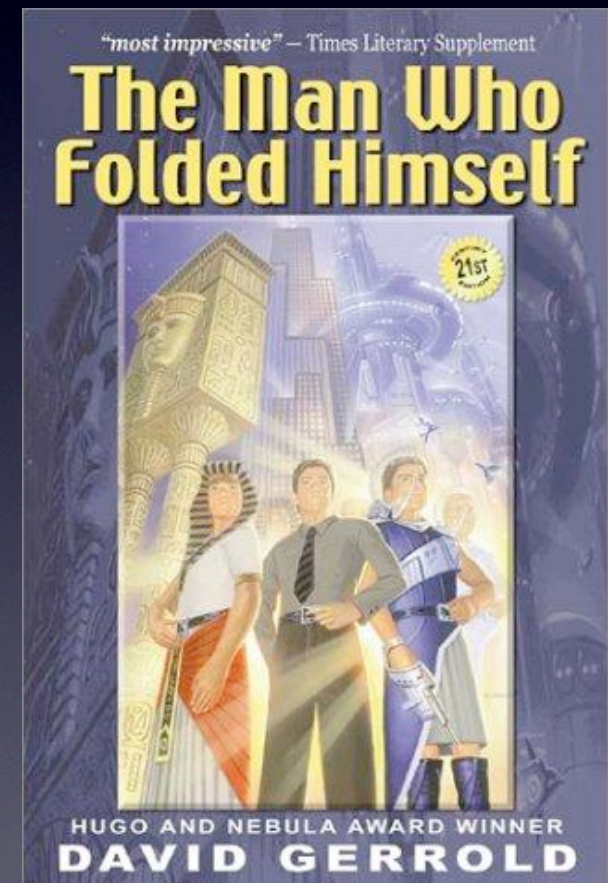
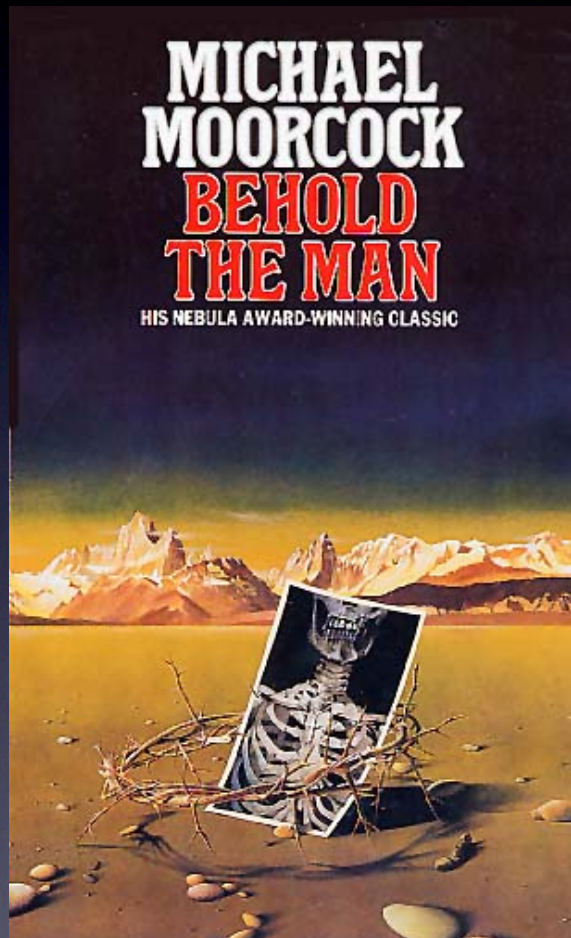
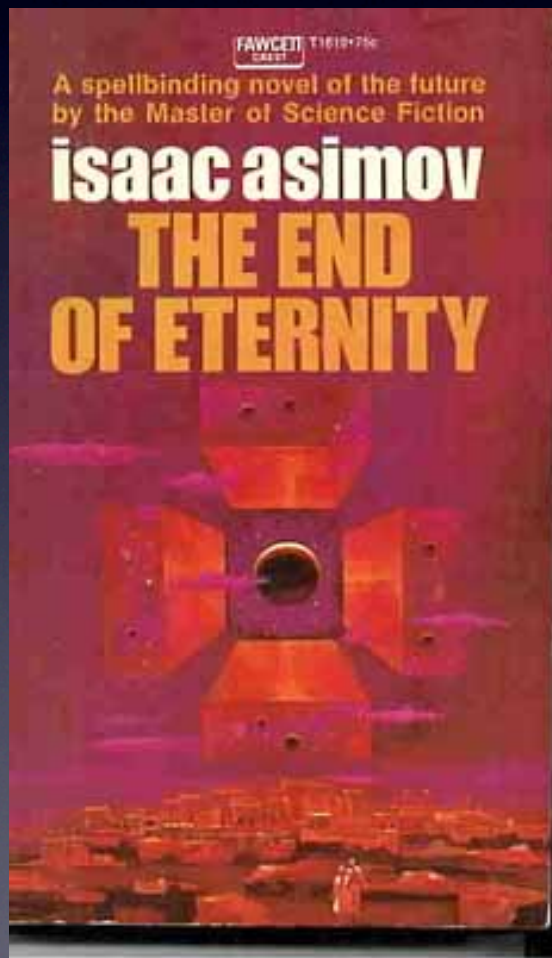
Human Evolution & Transformation



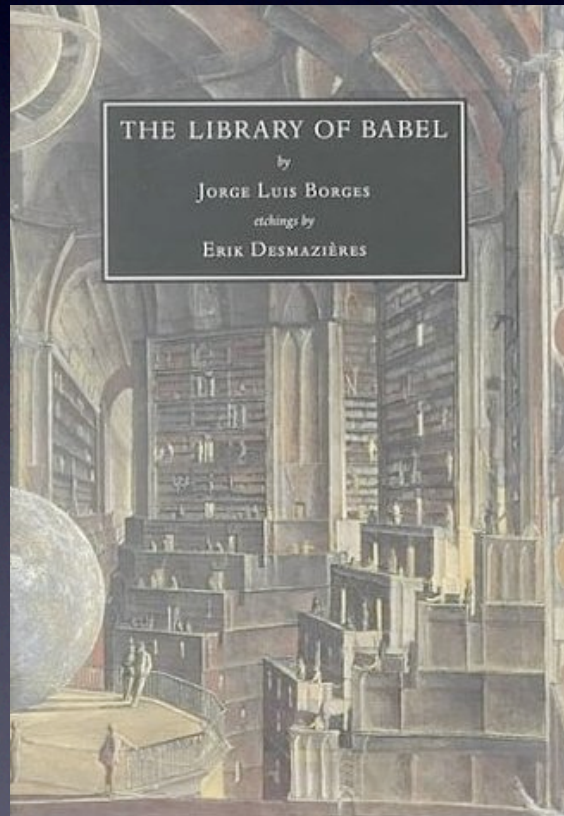
Space Exploration & Alien Contact



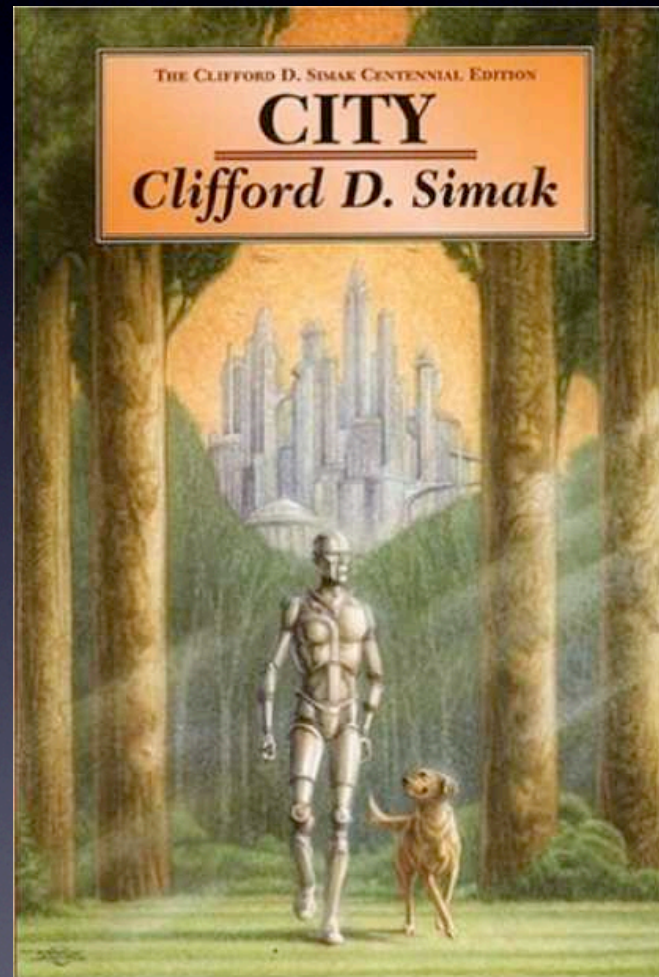
Time Travel & the Metaphysical



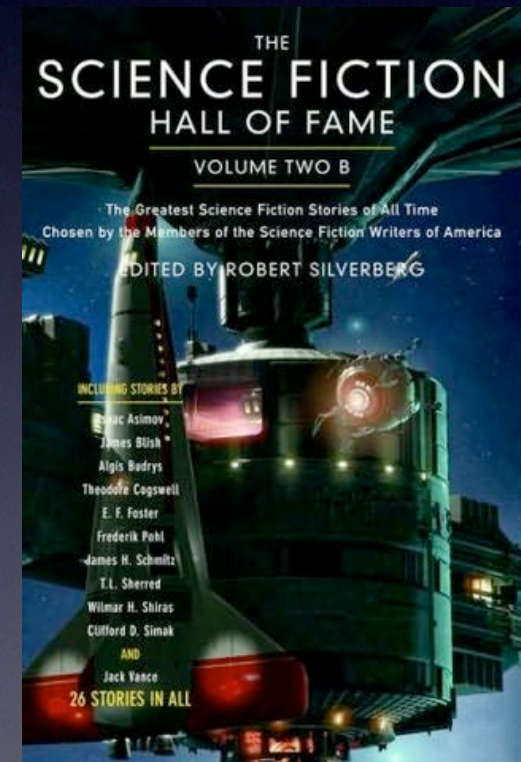
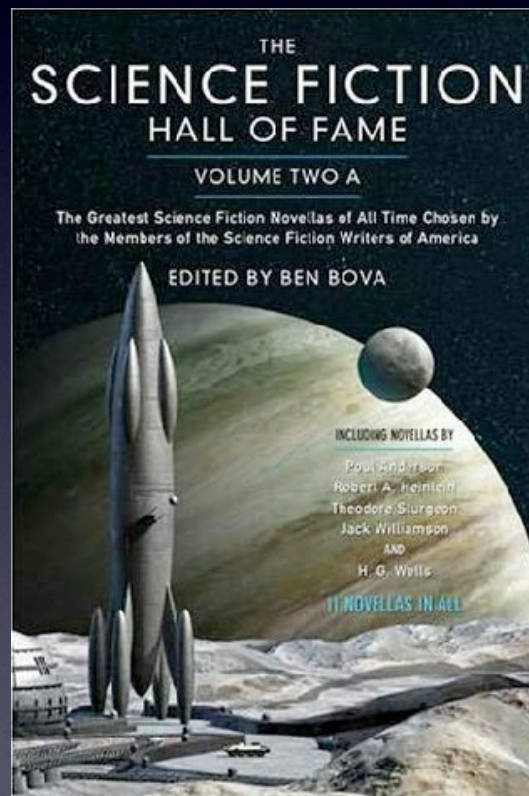
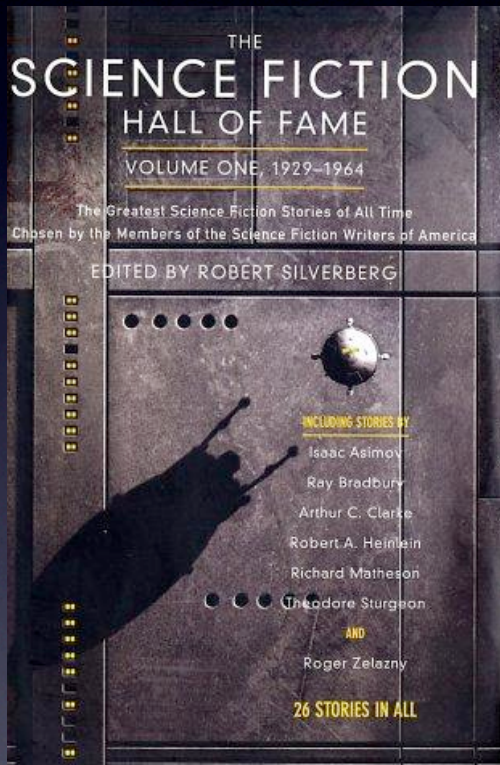
Time Travel & the Metaphysical



City



Classics of Science Fiction & the Golden Age



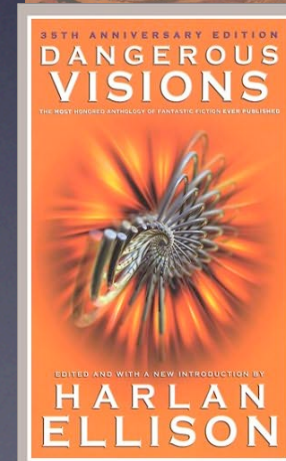
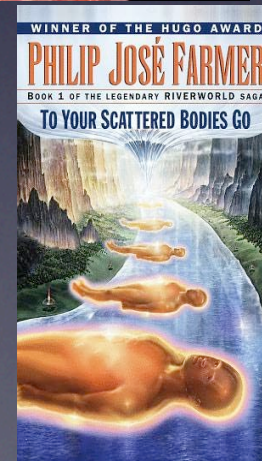
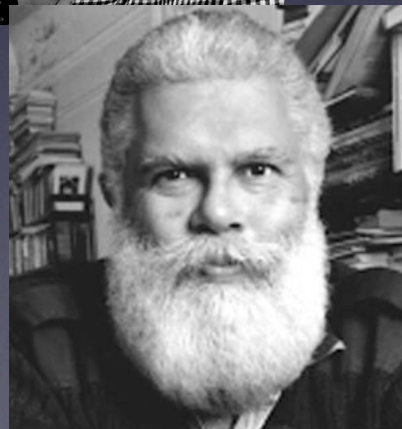
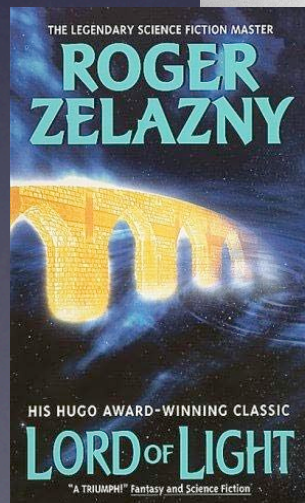
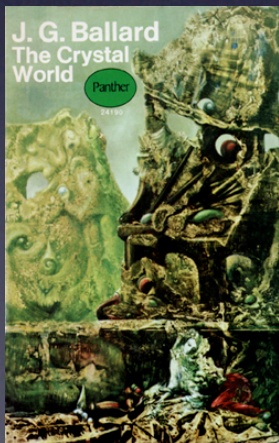
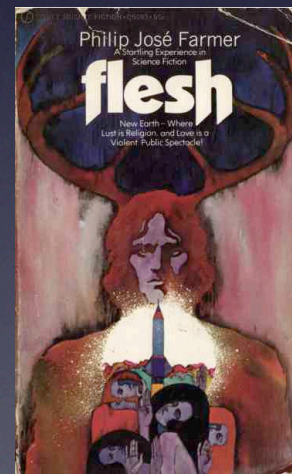
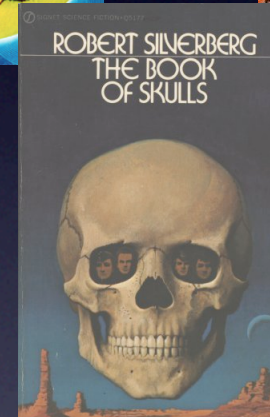
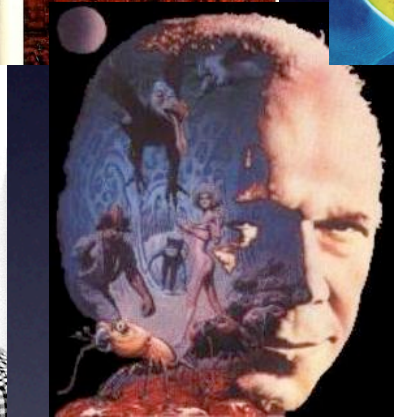
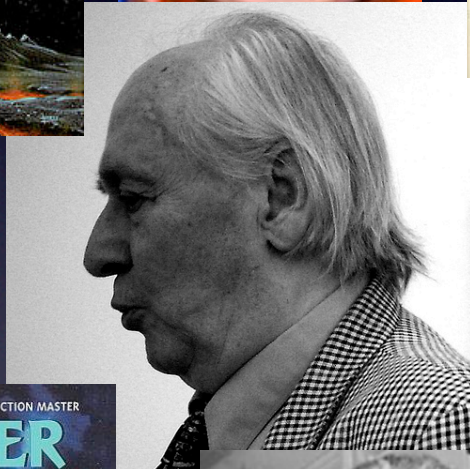
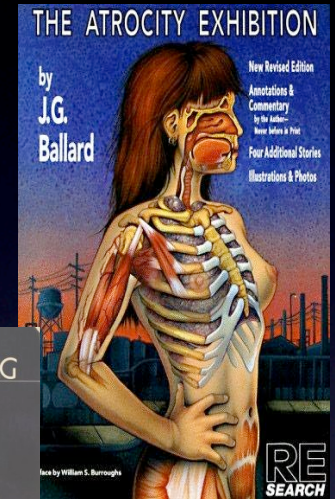
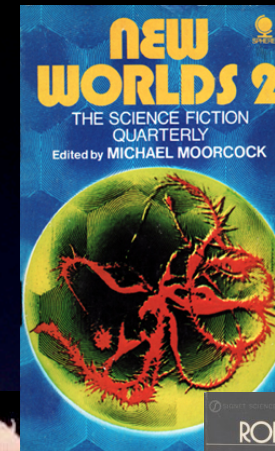
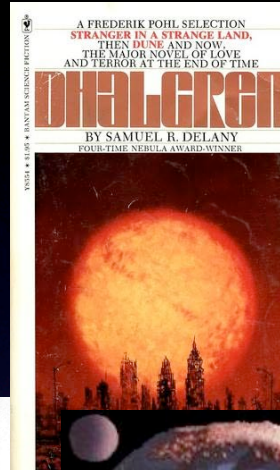
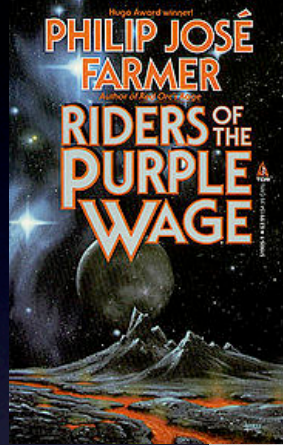
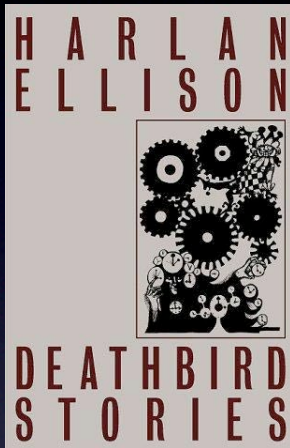
Classics of Science Fiction & the Golden Age



The Evolution of Science Fiction



The New Culture & New Wave: Psyche, Culture, Ethics, Gender, Sex, & Religion

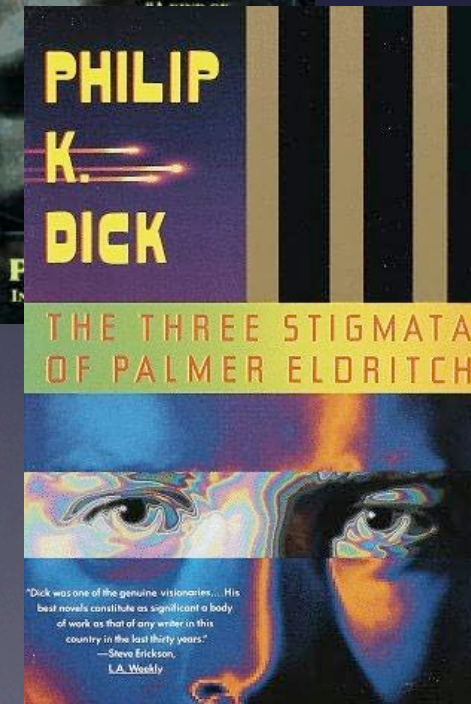
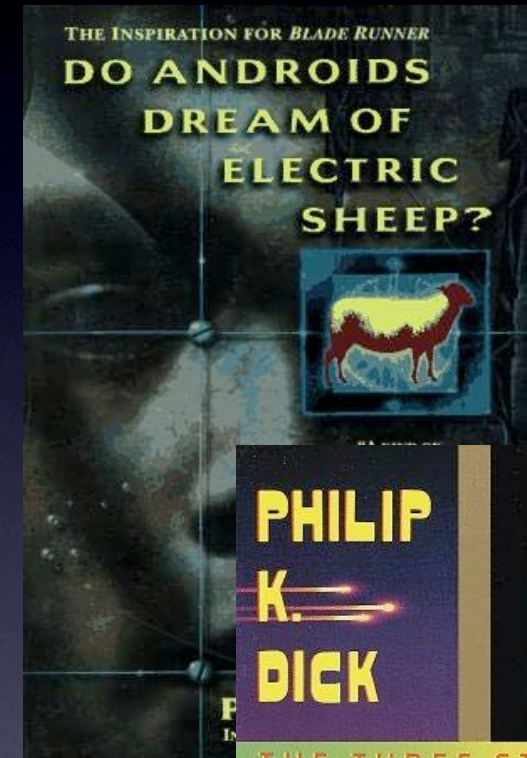
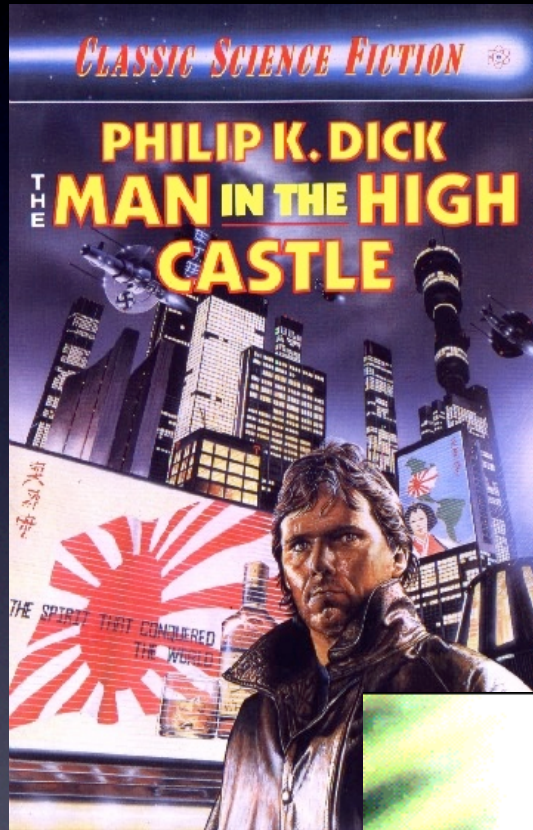


Clockwork Orange



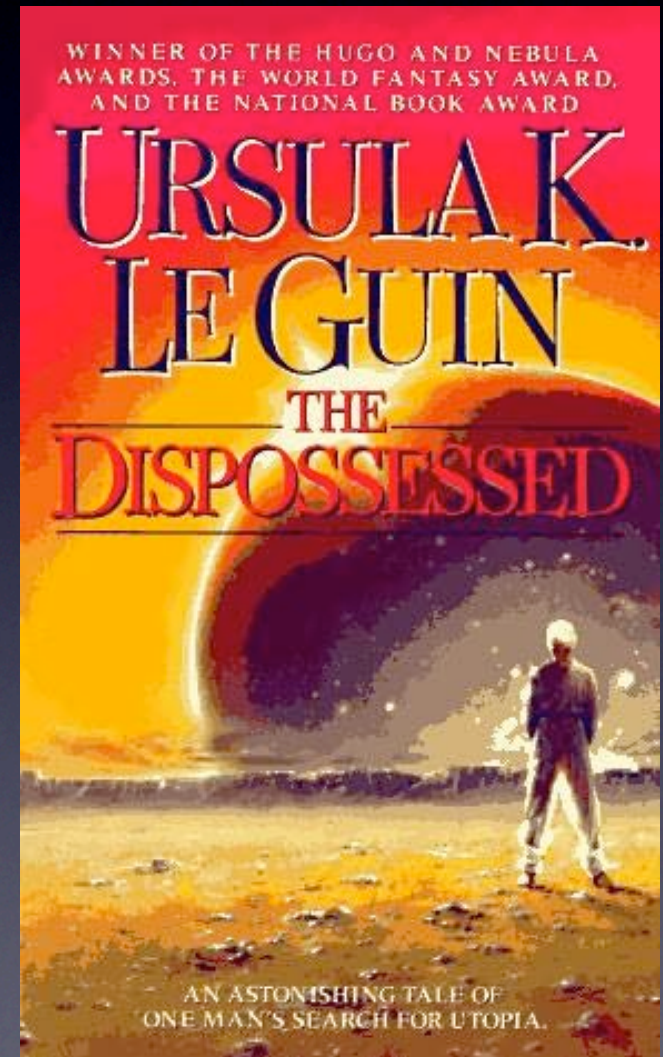
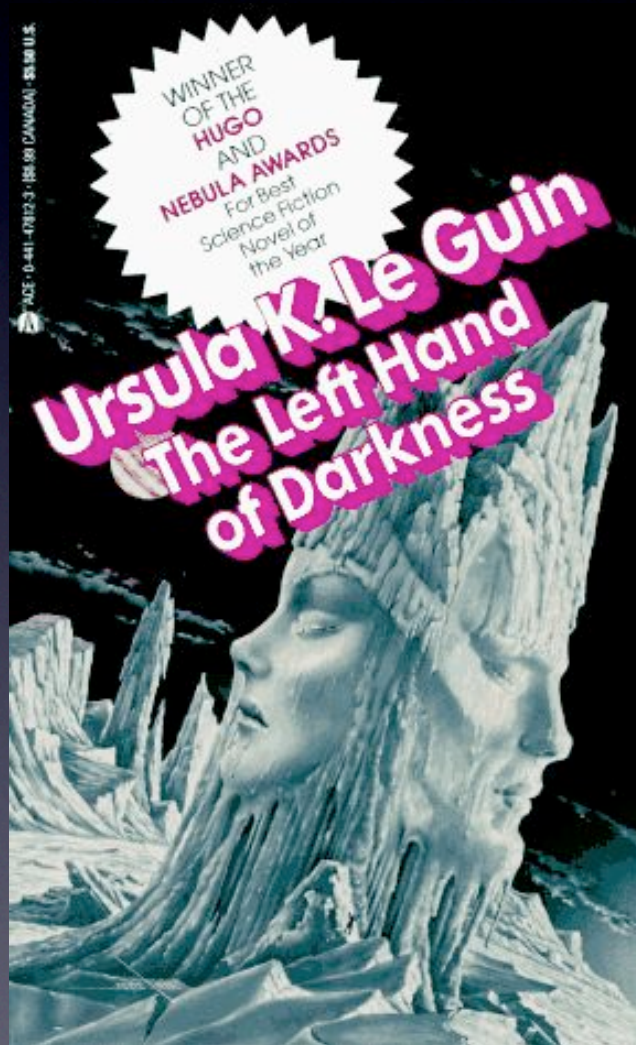
Philip K. Dick

Questions of Reality, Madness, & Mind



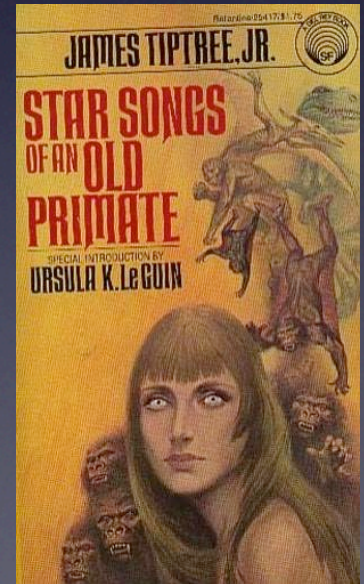
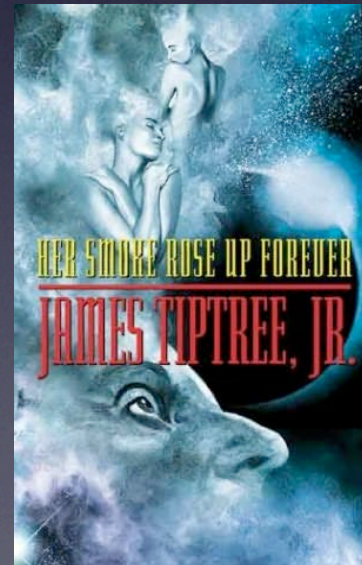
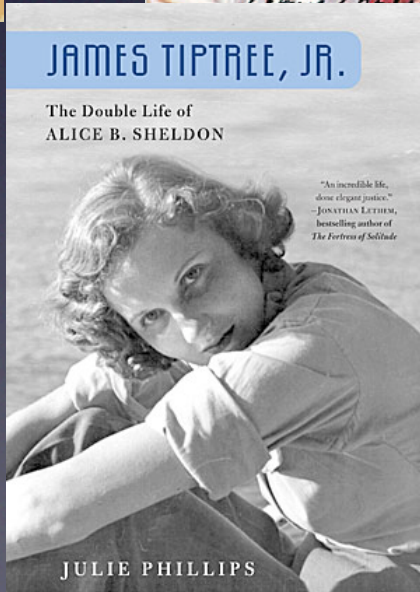
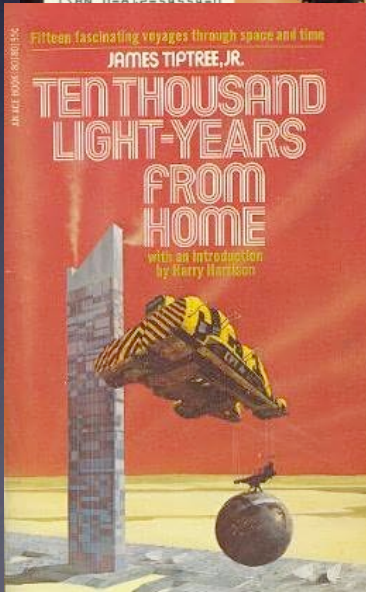
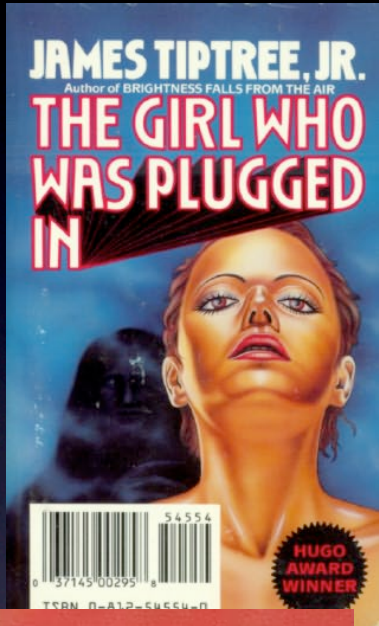
Women of Science Fiction

Ursula Le Guin

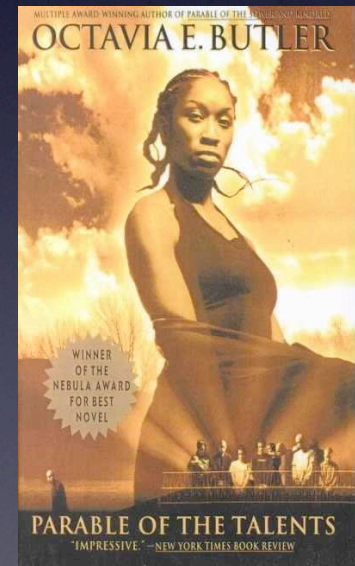
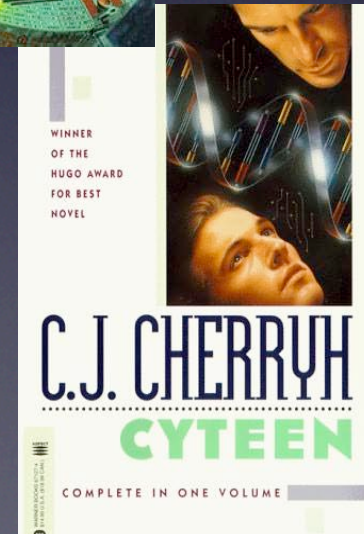
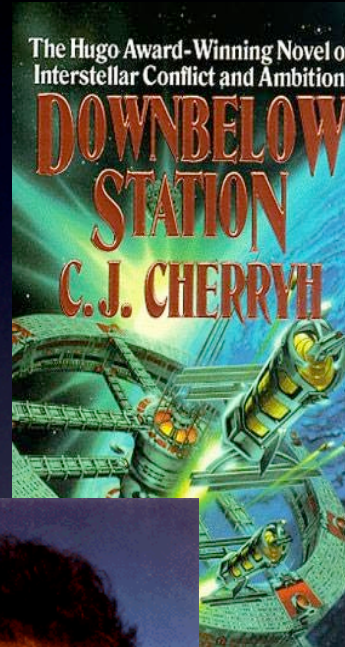
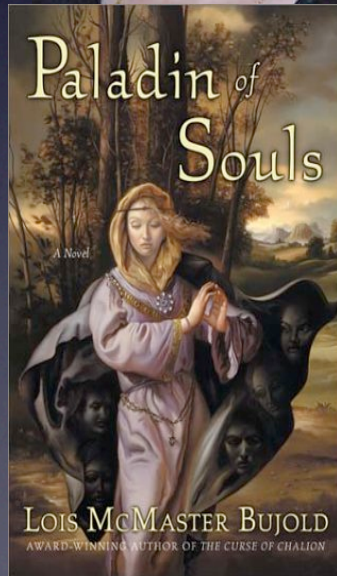
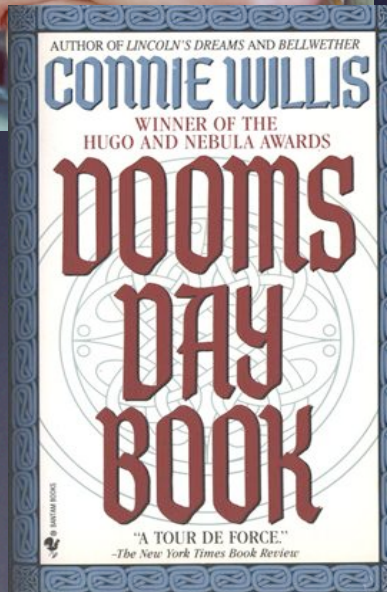


Women of Science Fiction

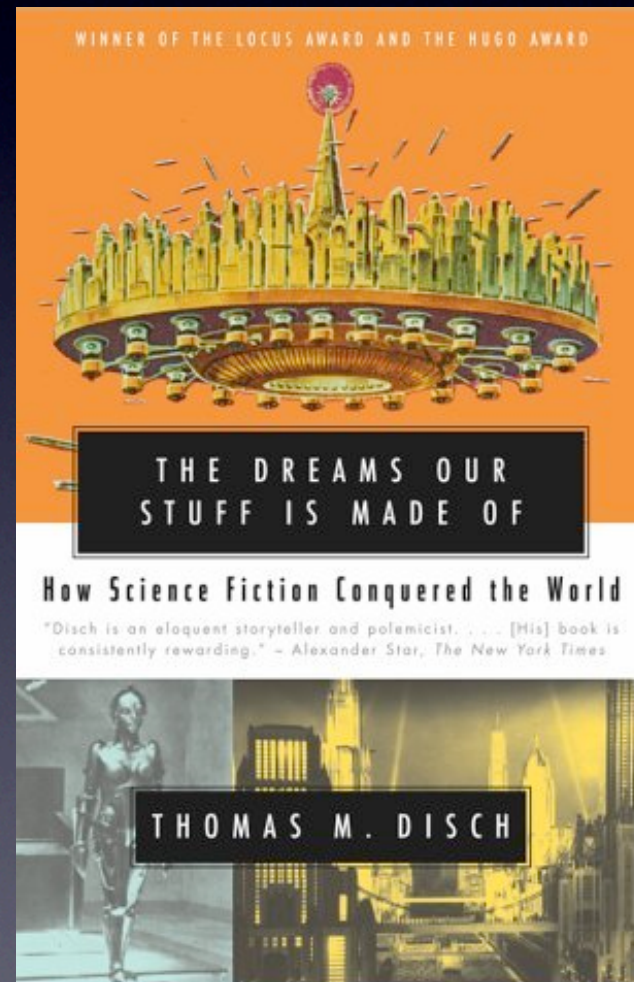
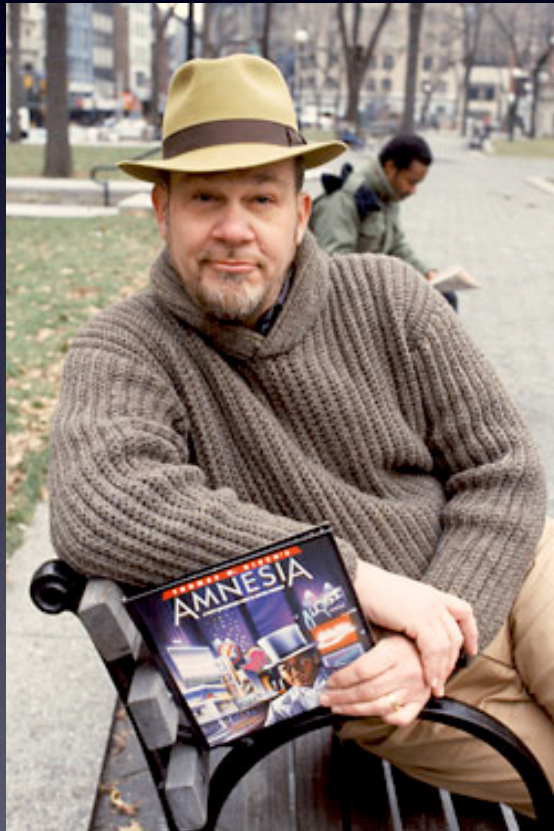
James Tiptree Jr.



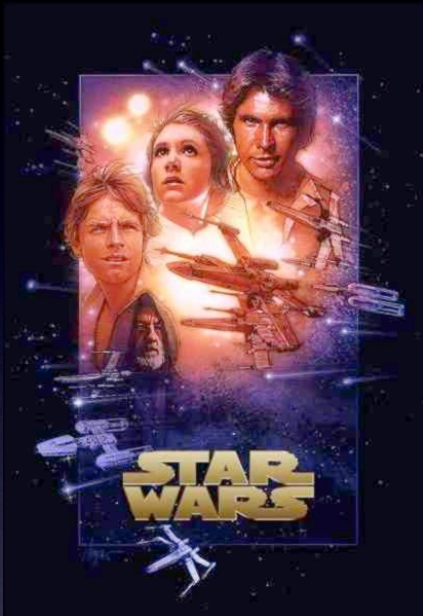
Women of Science Fiction: Willis, Bujold, Cherryh, & Butler



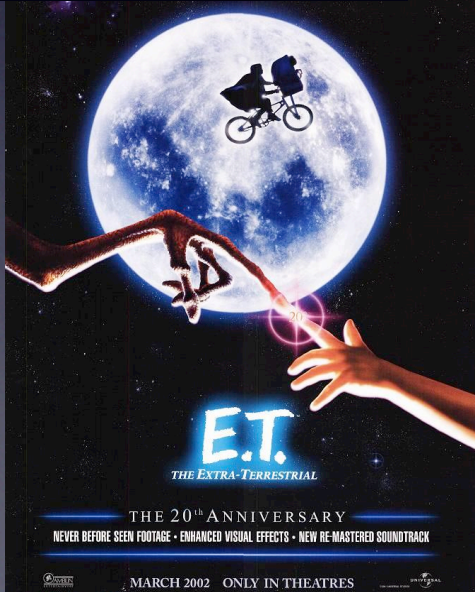
How Science Fiction Conquered the World



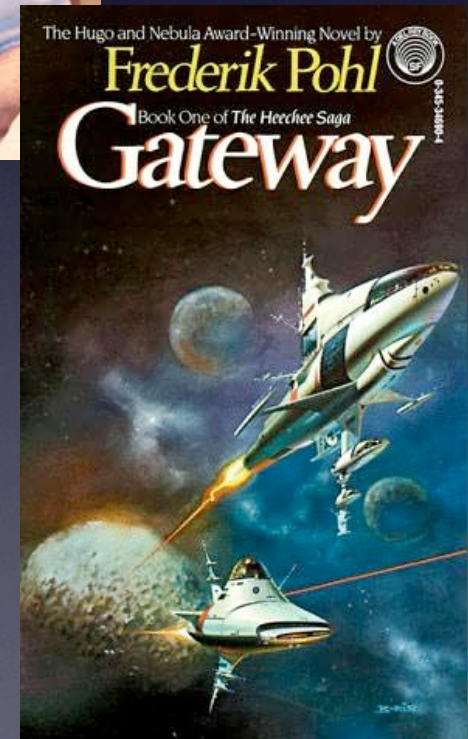
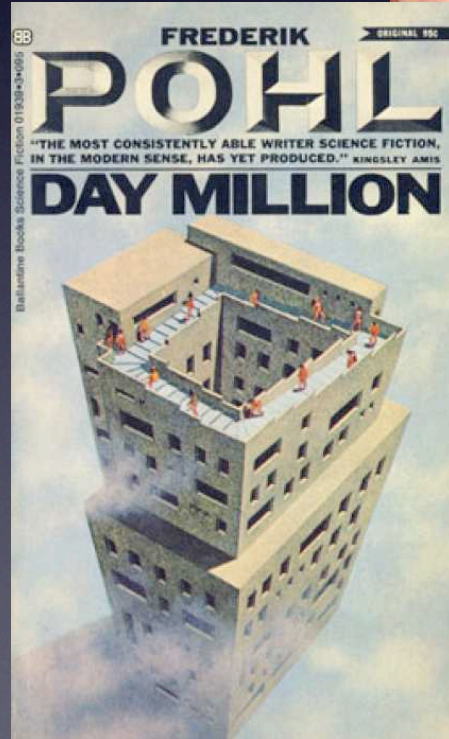
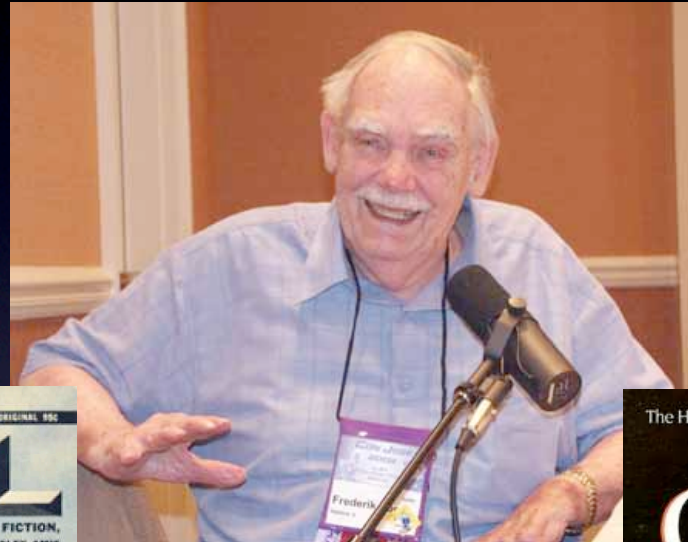
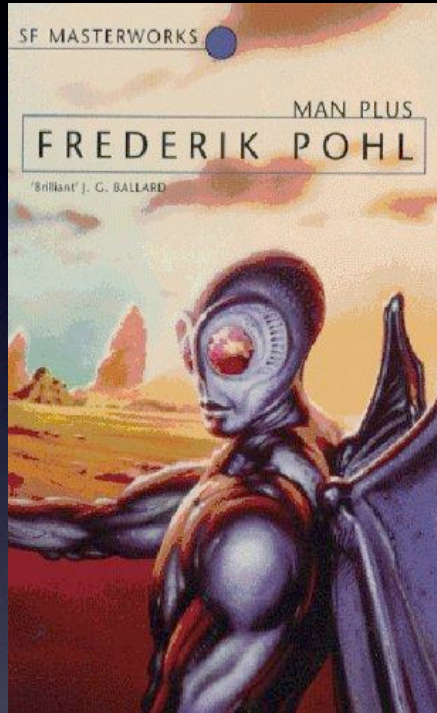
How Science Fiction Conquered the World



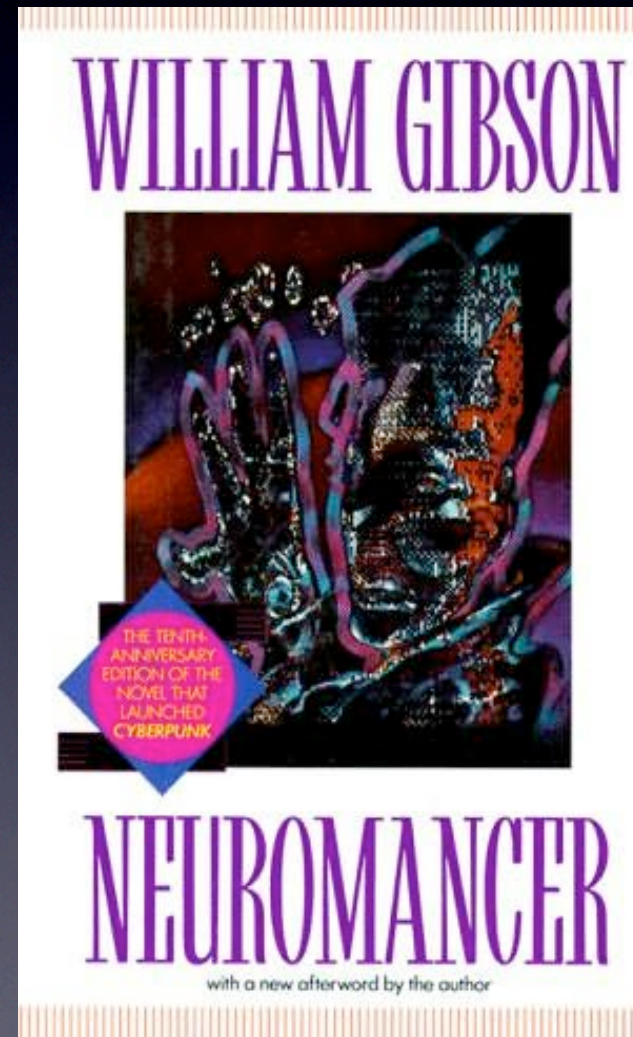
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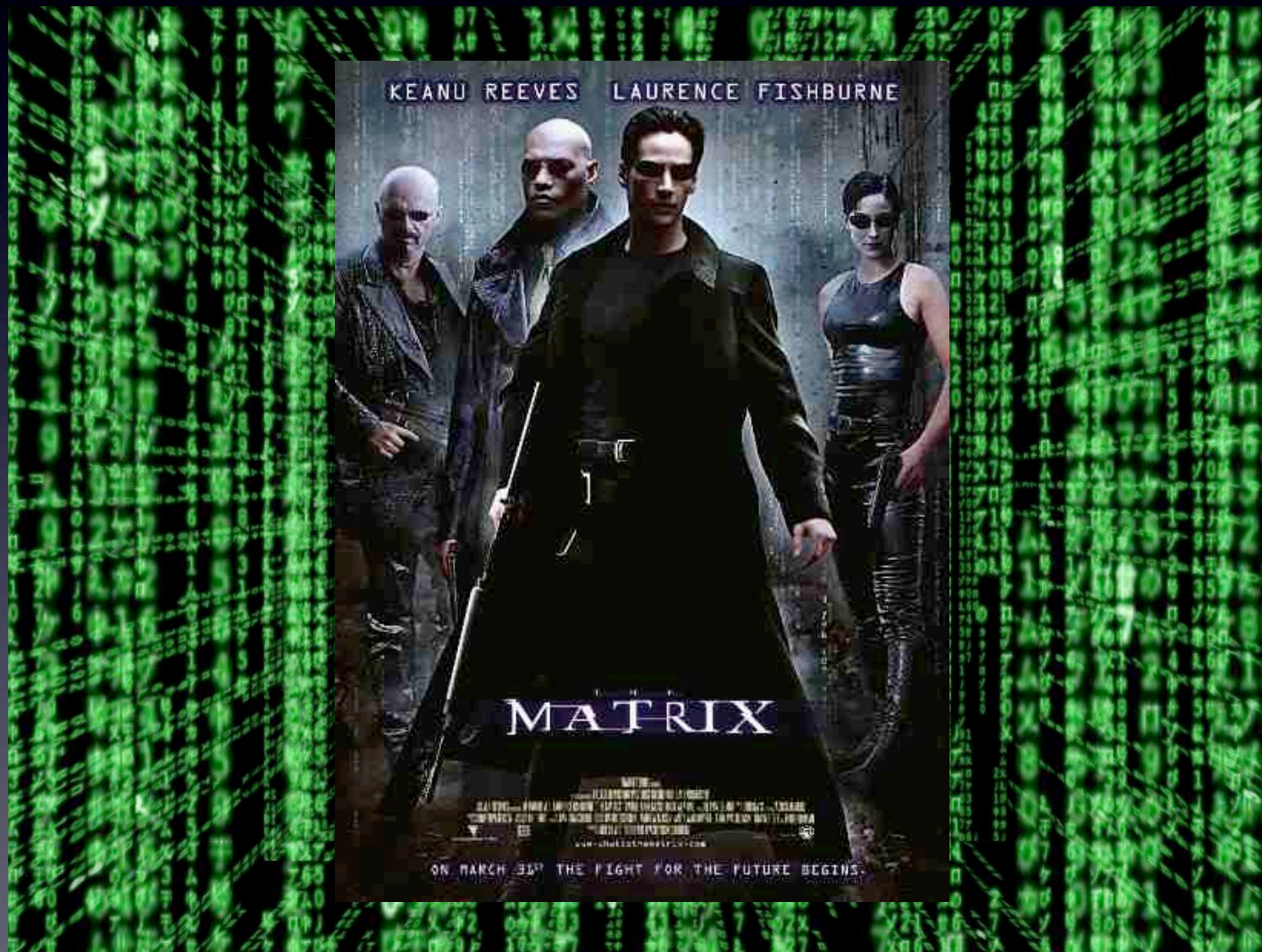
Androids, A.I., & Techno-Augmentation: Frederik Pohl



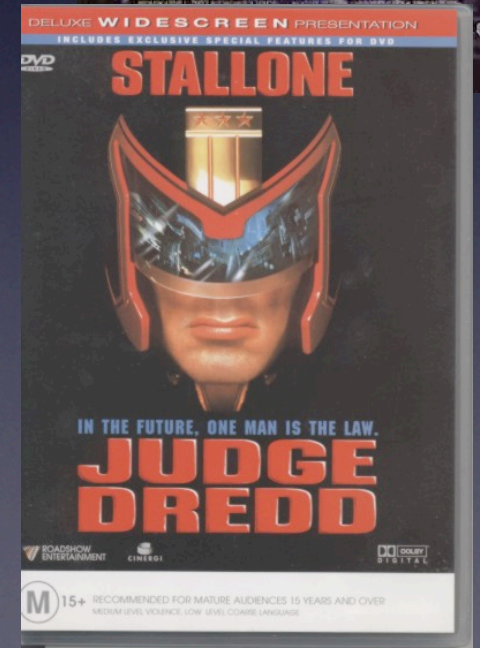
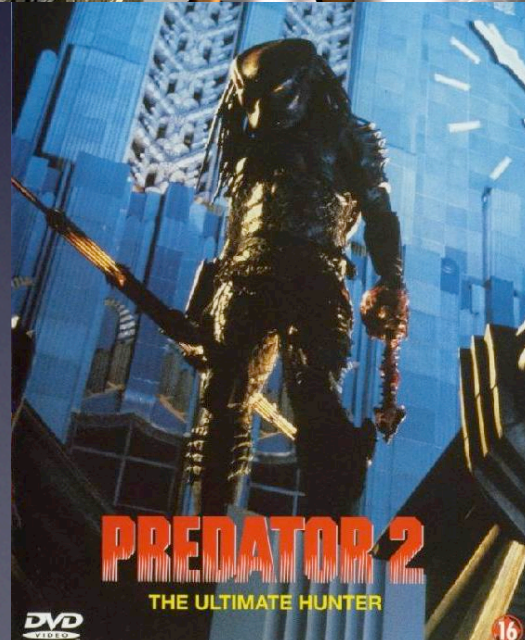
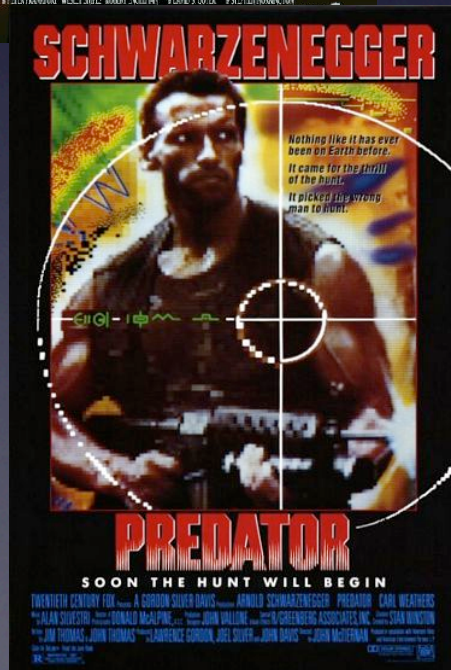
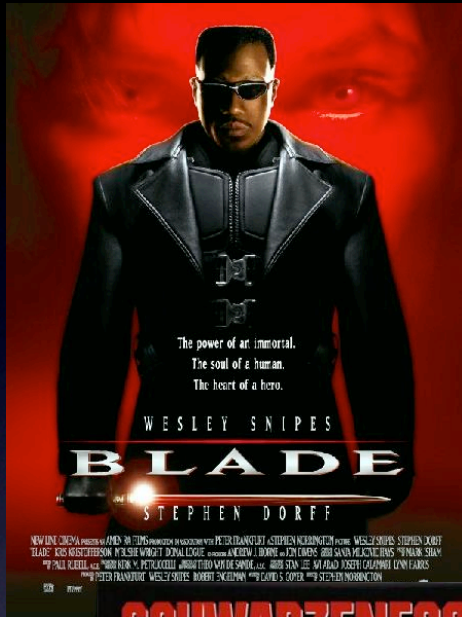
William Gibson & Neuromancer: Cyberspace, Cyberpunk, & Postmodernism



The Matrix as Techno-Metaphysics & Regressive Romanticism



Sci-Fi & Science Fiction

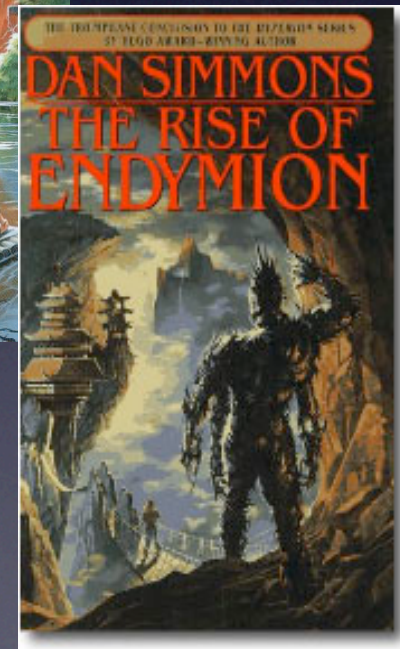
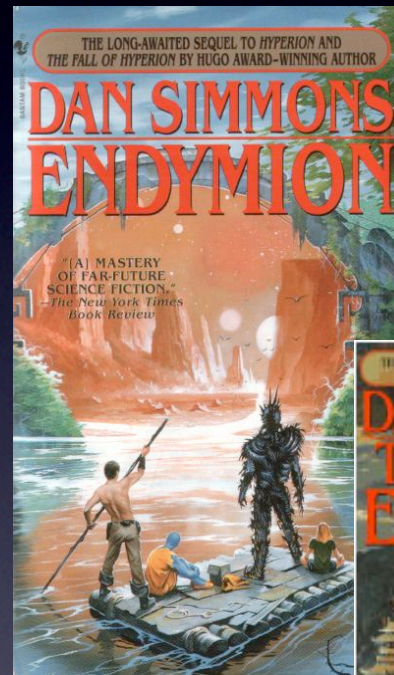
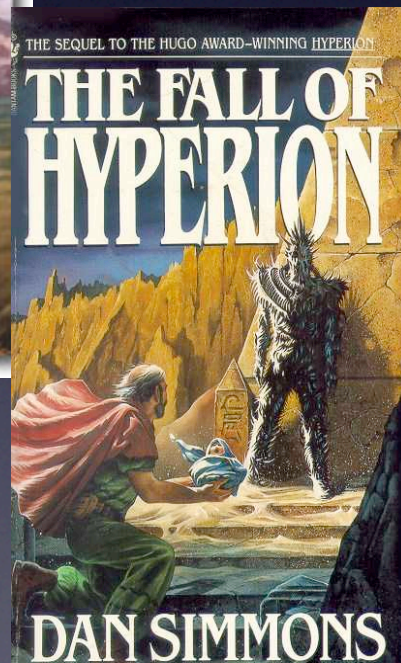
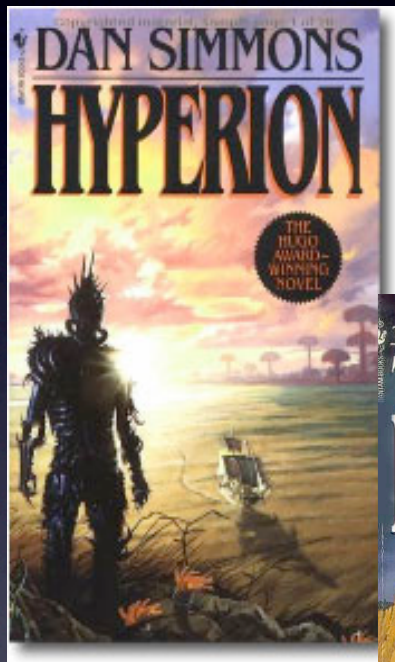


The Farthest Reaches of Space, Time, & Mind

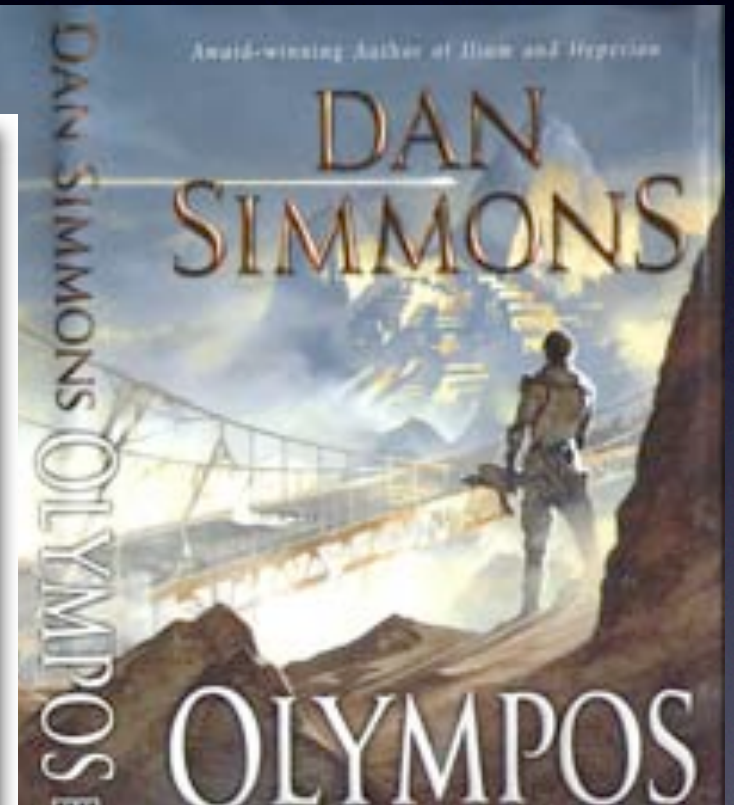
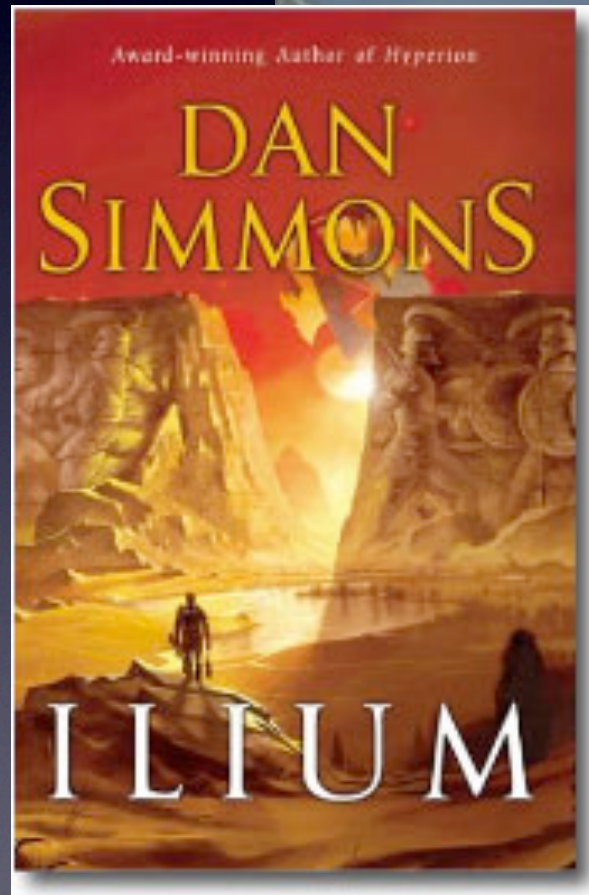


Dan Simmons: The *Hyperion* Epic

A Multiplicity of Worlds, Journeys of the Soul, Space-Humans, & Archetypes of Good & Evil

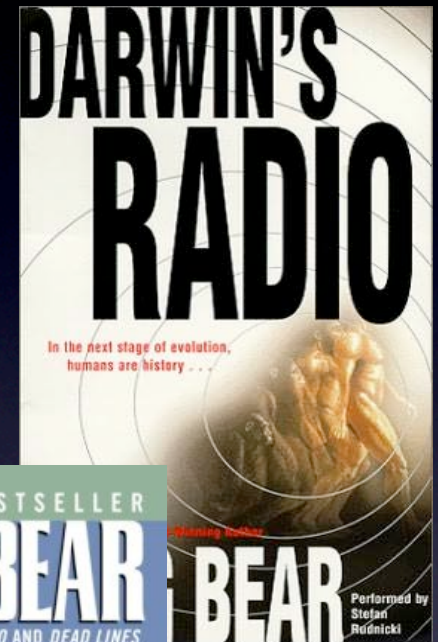
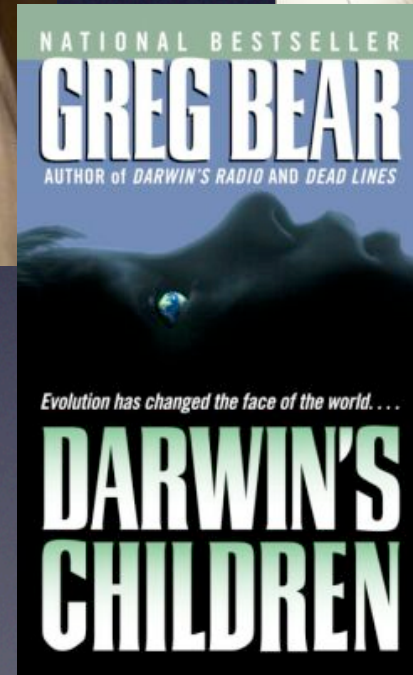
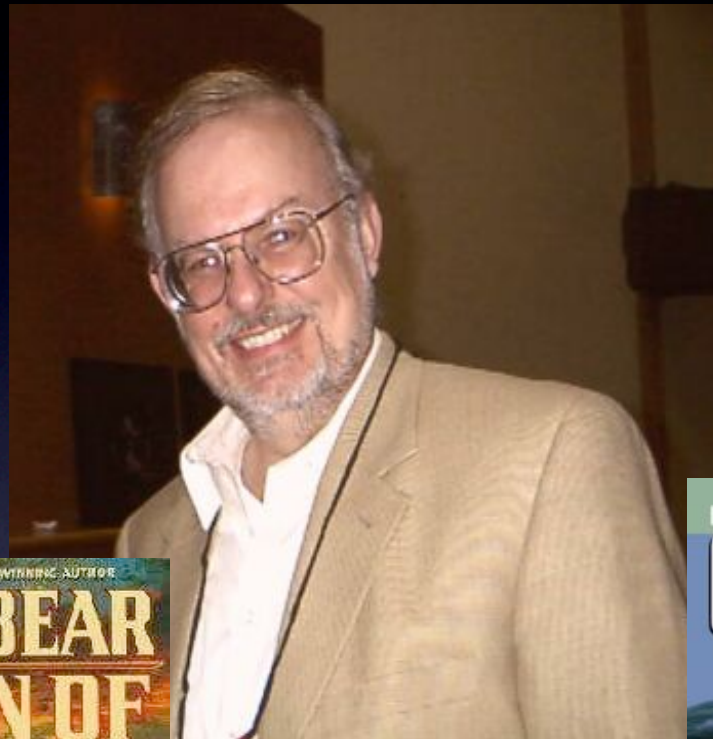
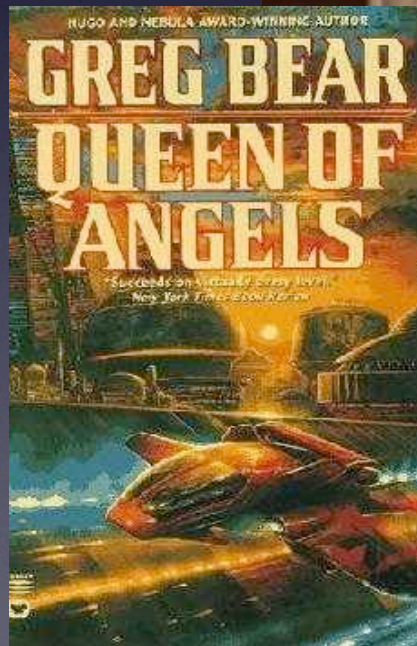
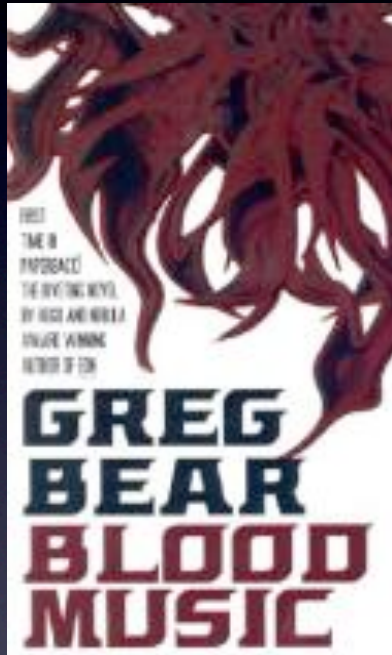


Ilium and Olympos **The Synthesis of Myth & Science Fiction**



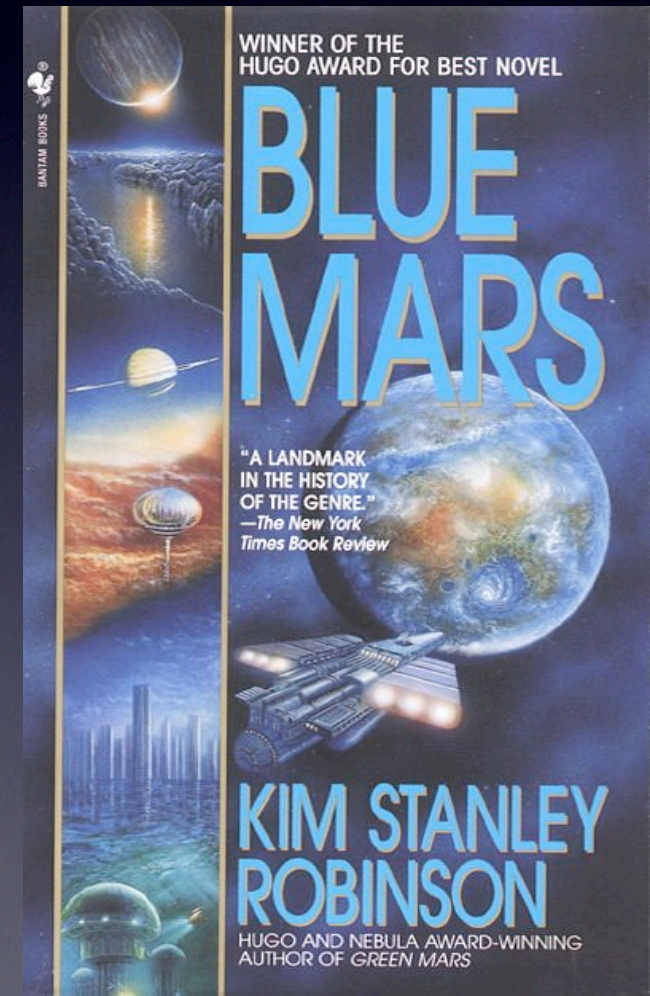
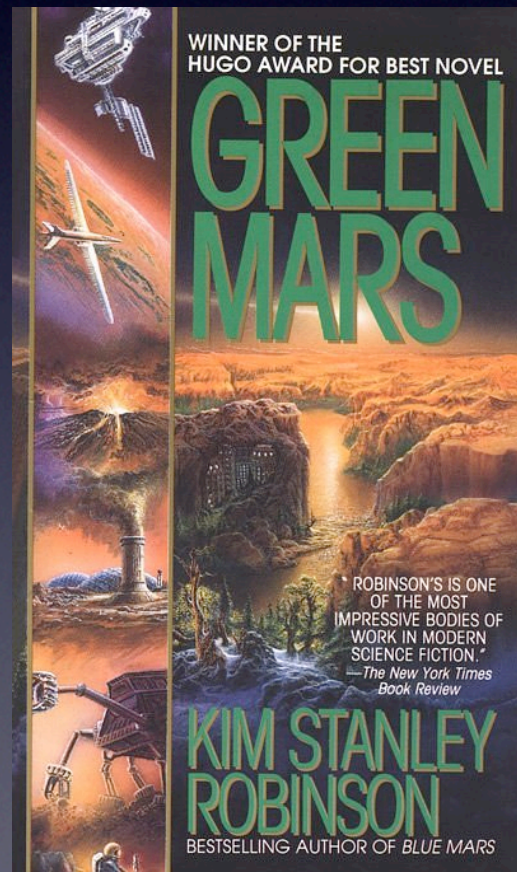
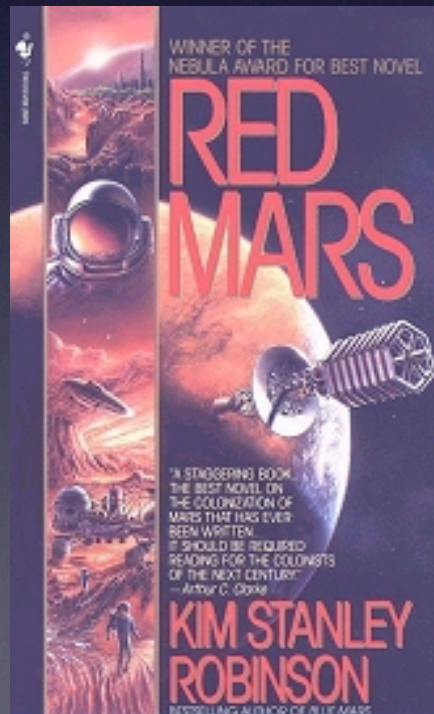
Greg Bear

Evolution & Archetypes of the Mind

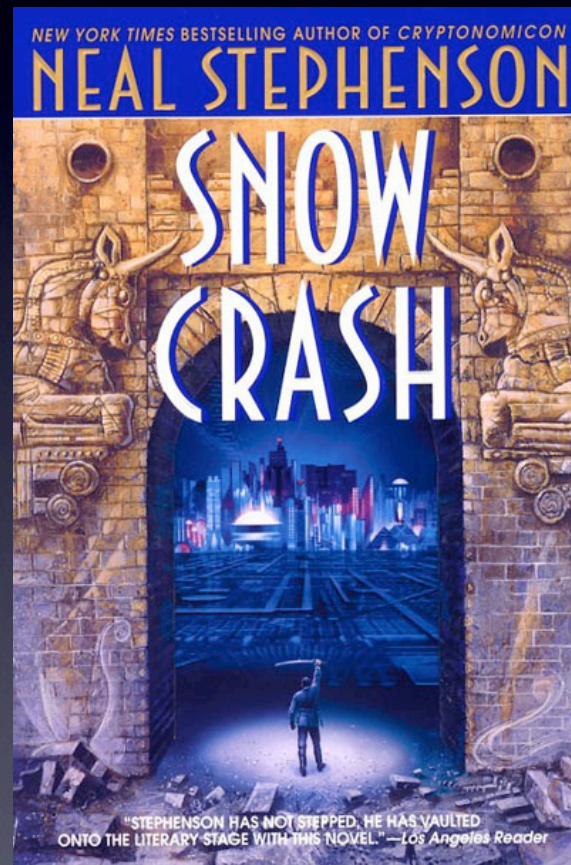




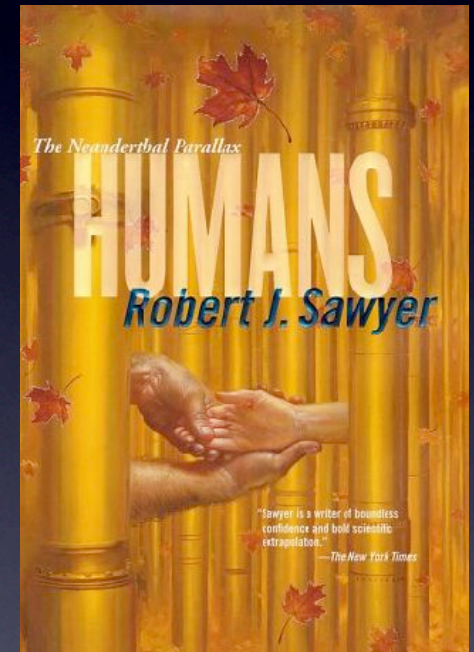
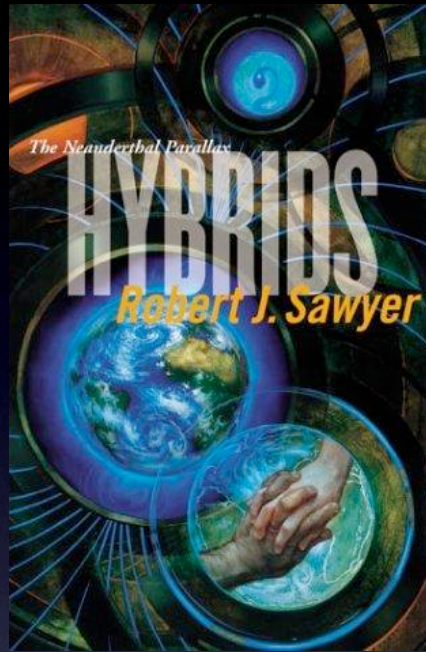
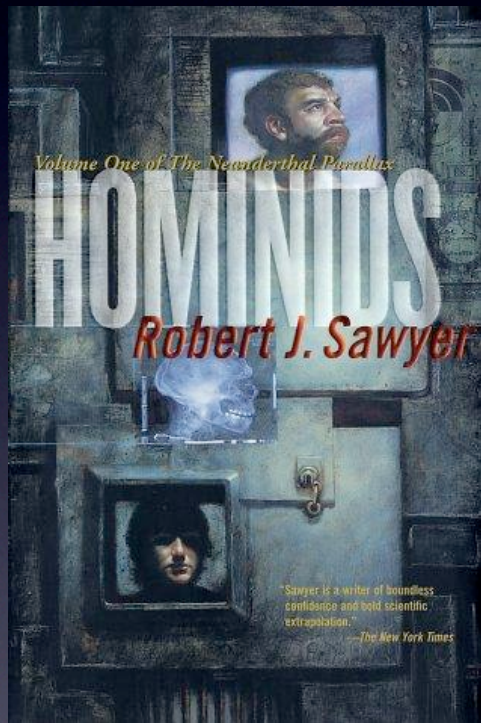
Kim Stanley Robinson Mars & the Utopian Dream



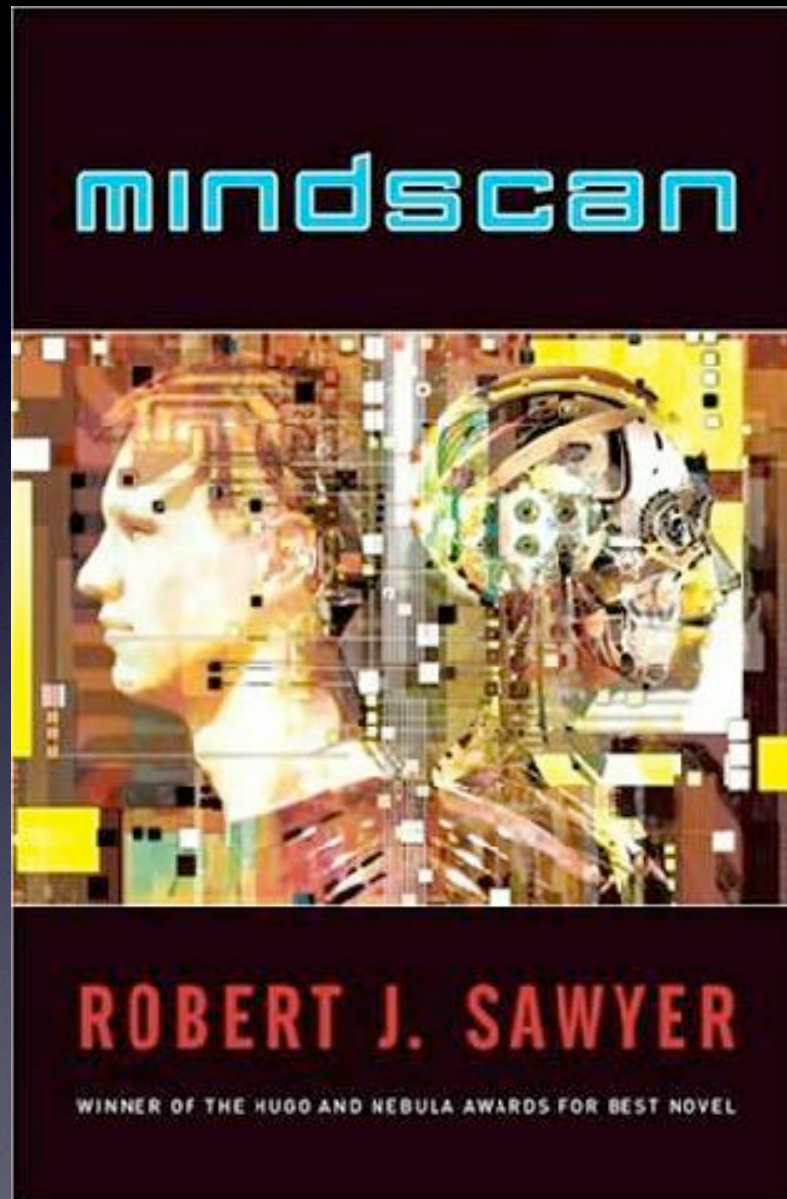
Snow Crash



Sawyer & The Neanderthal Parallax

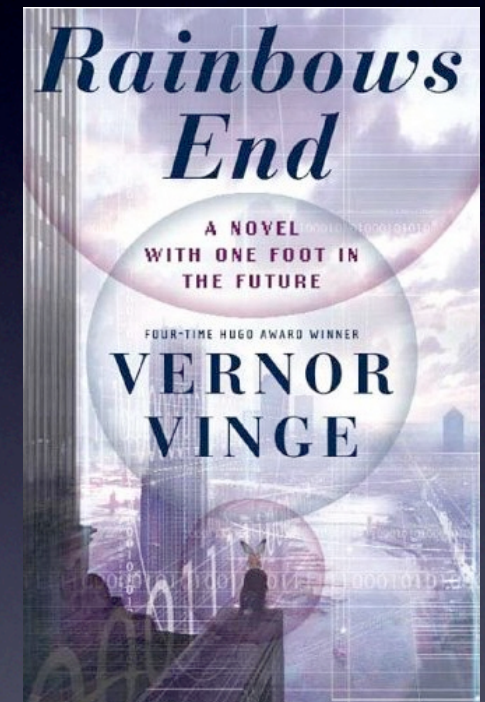
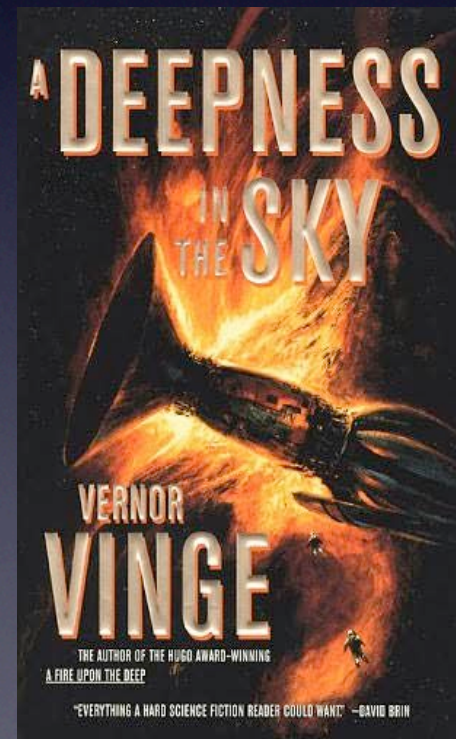
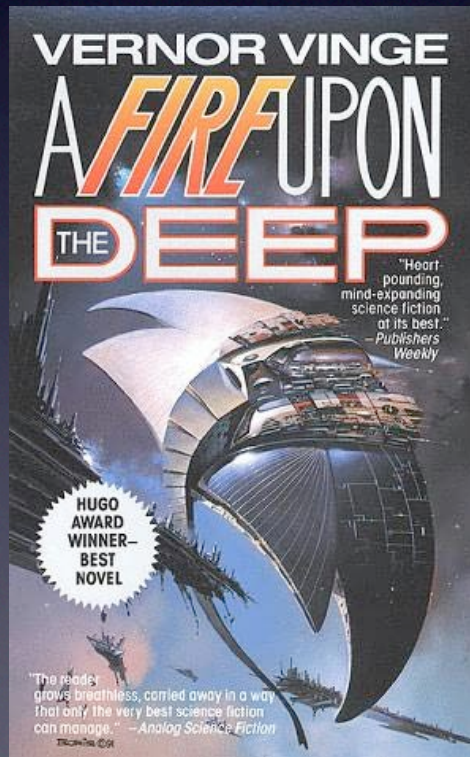


Sawyer & Issues of Human Identity

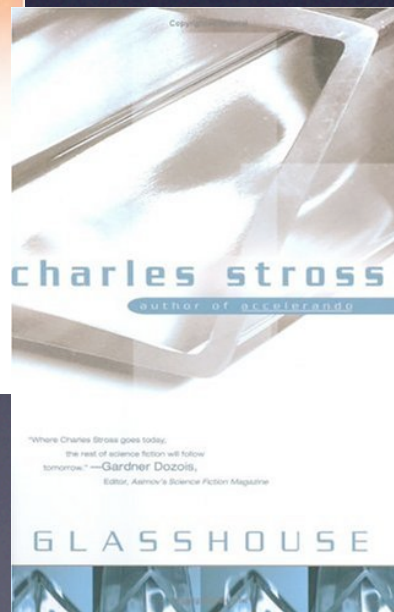
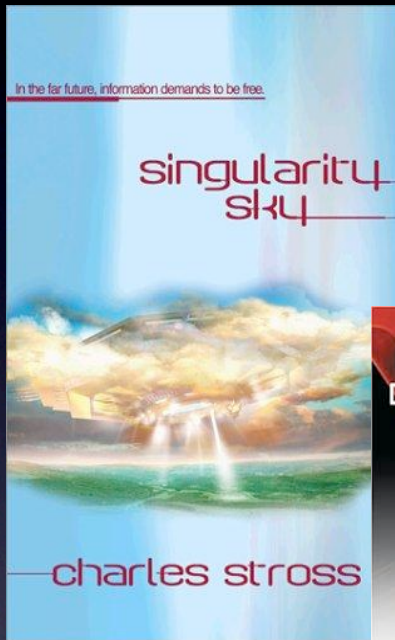


Vernor Vinge

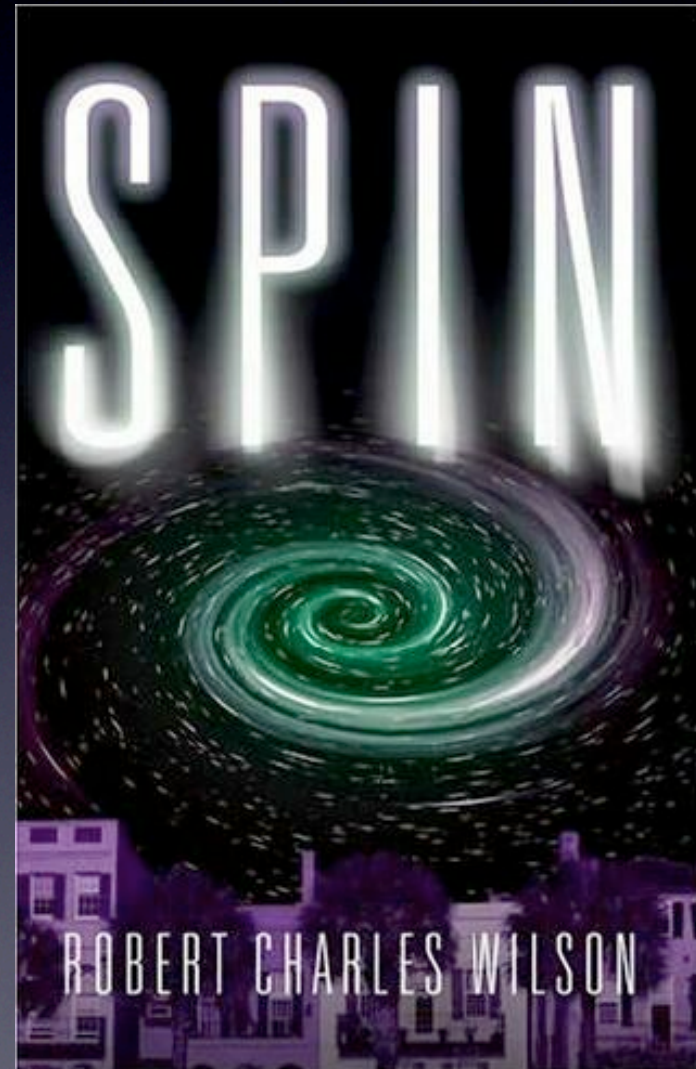
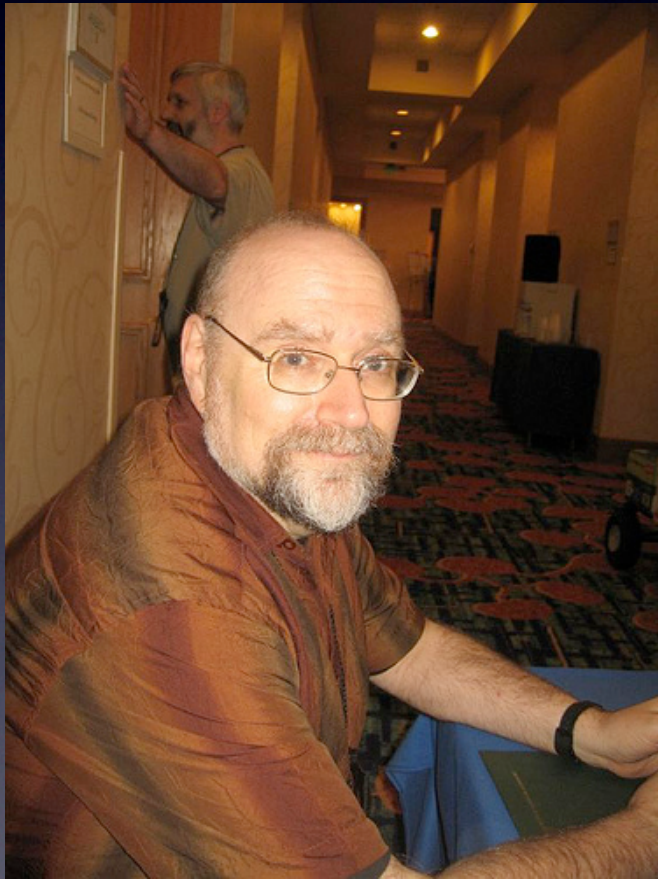
Alien Minds, Mental Evolution, & the Galactic Internet



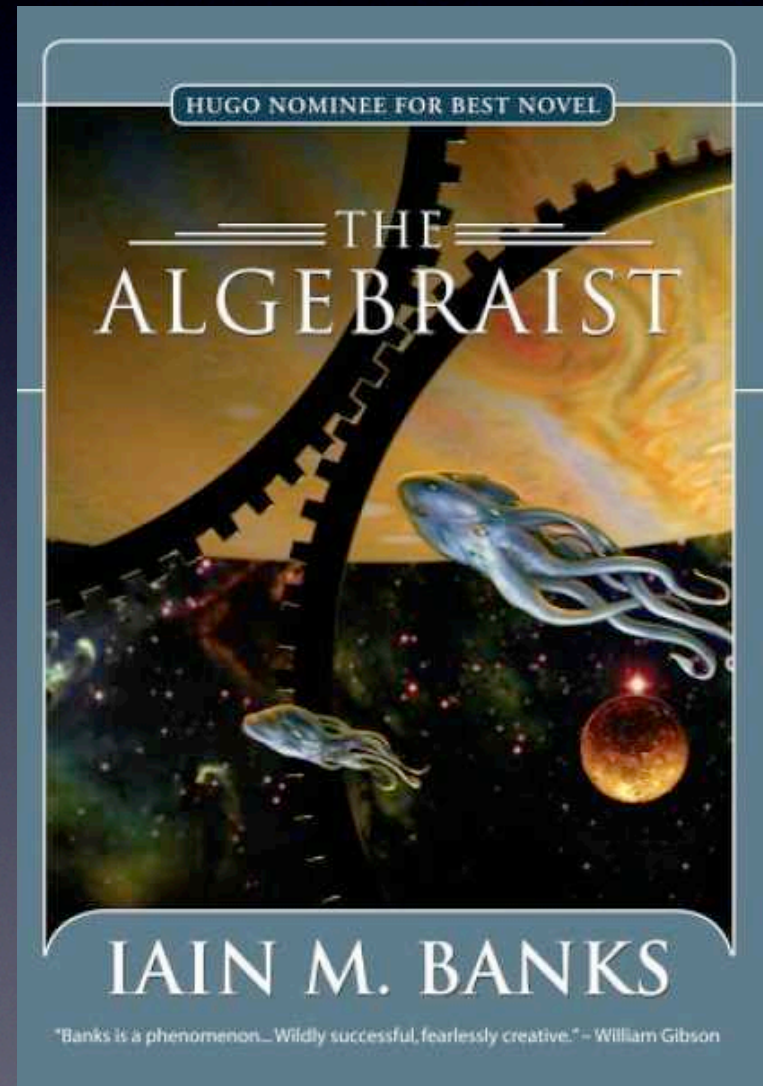
Stross & the Singularity



Wilson's *Spin*



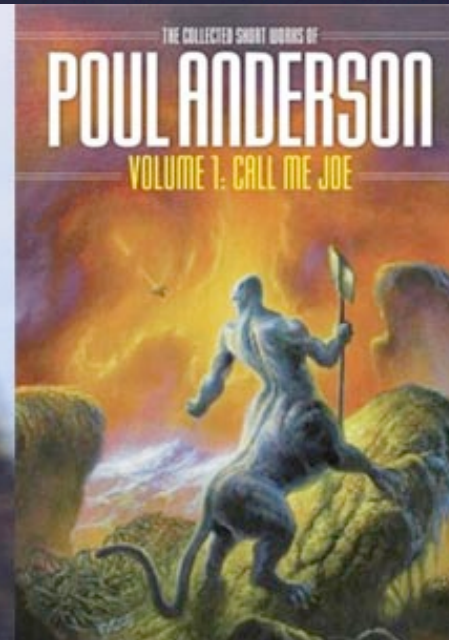
Banks' *The Algebraist*



Avatar & Romantic Naturalism

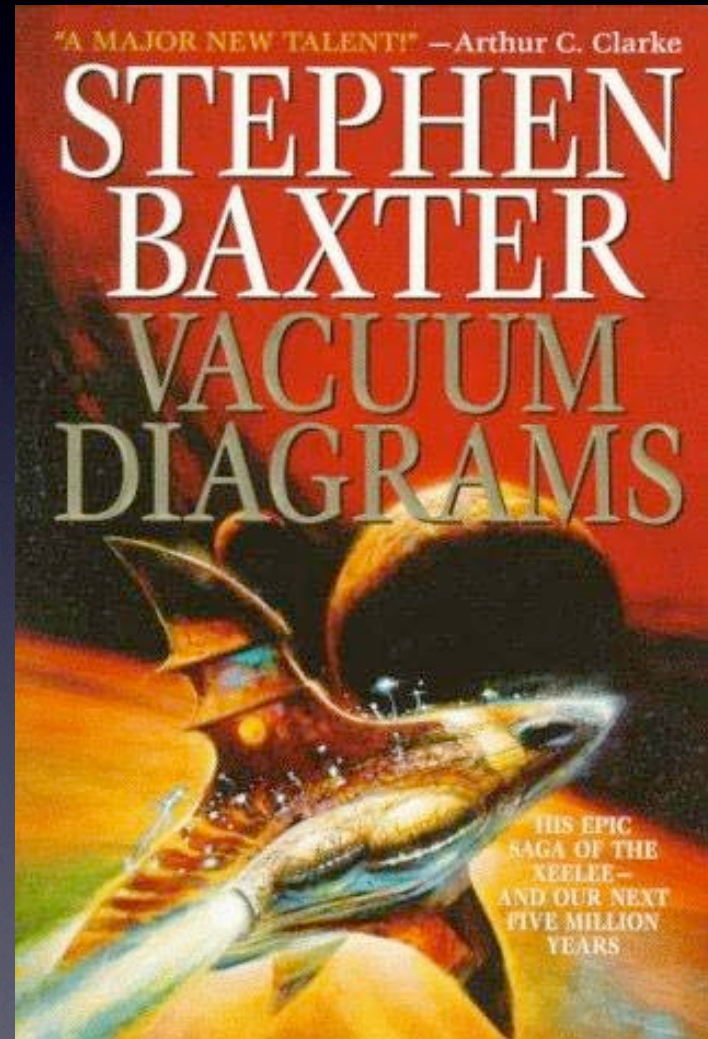


Avatar & Romantic Naturalism

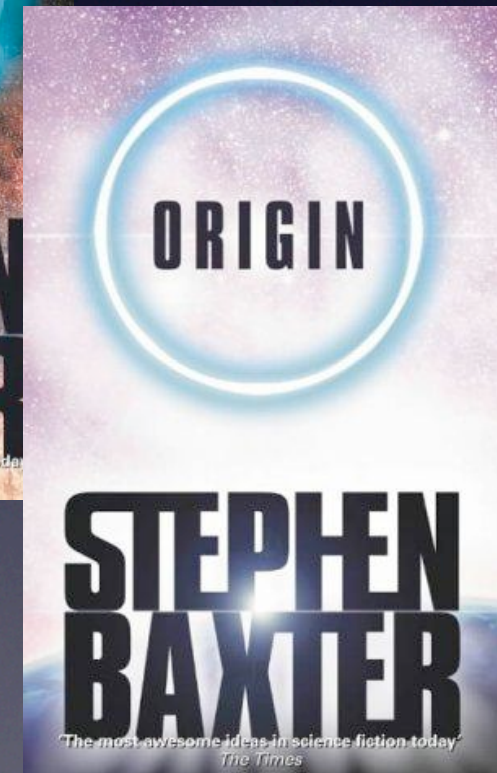
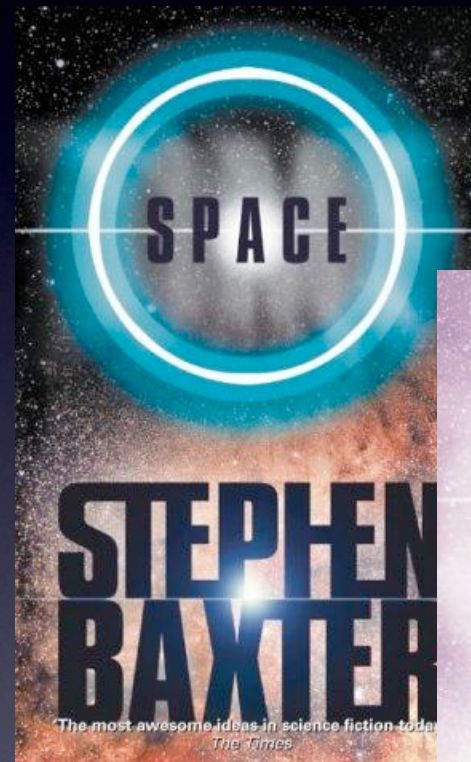
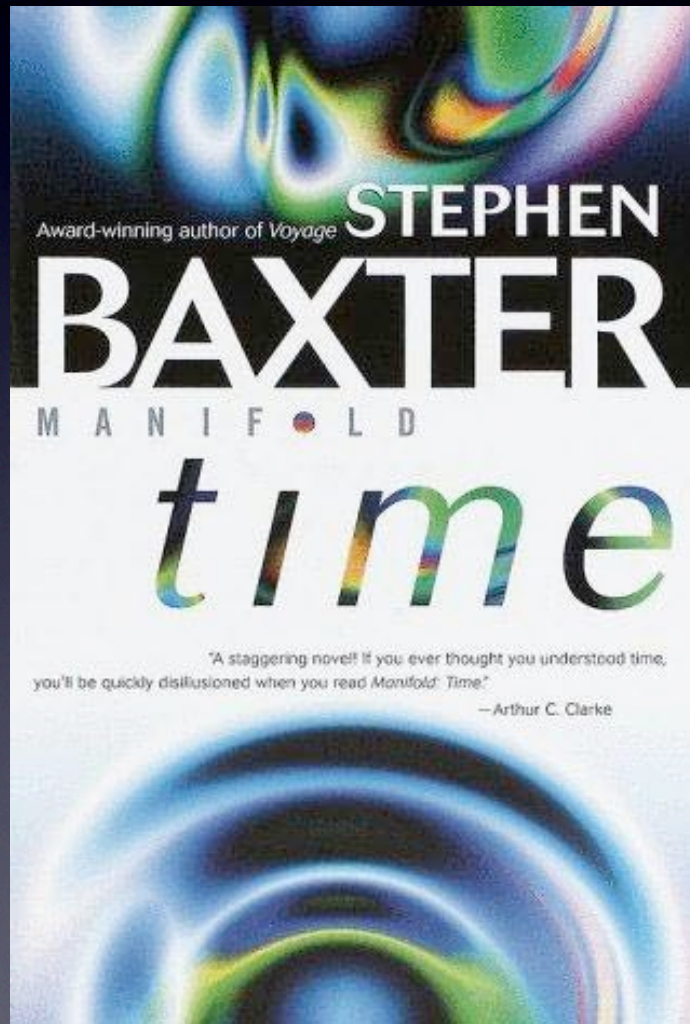


Stephen Baxter

Cosmological Narrative: The Xeelee & the Photino Birds

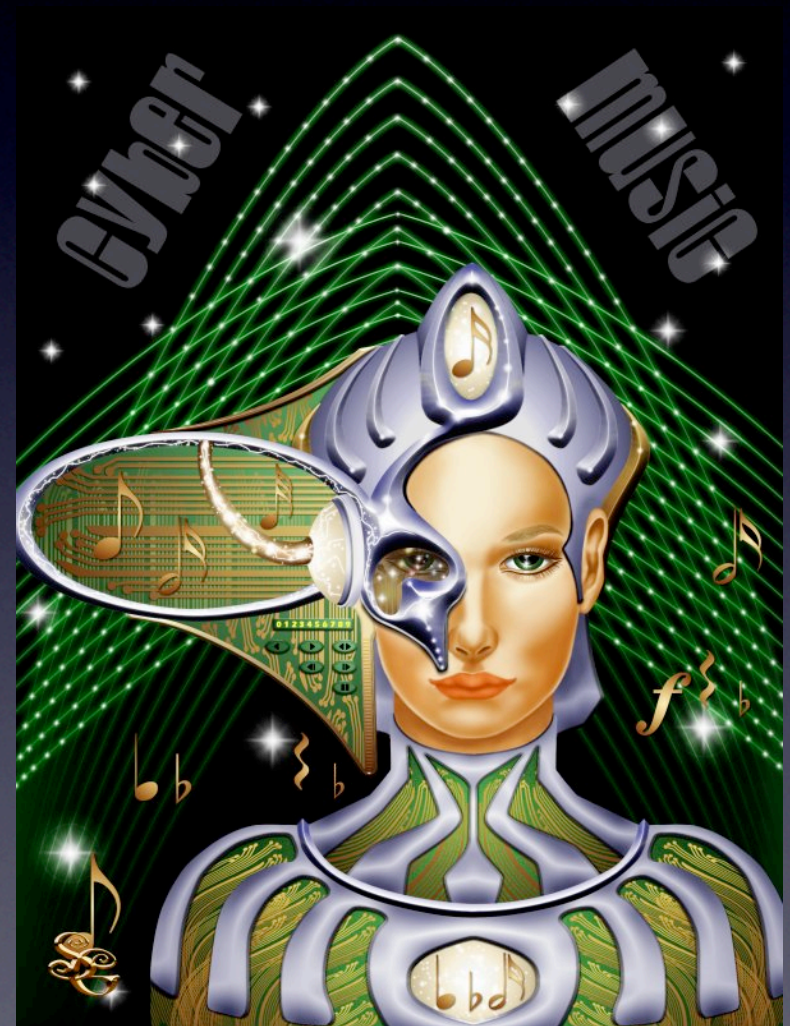


The Manifold Trilogy: Infinite Worlds, Fermi's Paradox, & Human Evolution



Topics & Themes of Science Fiction

- ◆ **Human Society & Cities in the Future**
– Future Cultures - Utopian & Dystopian Visions
- ◆ **Scientific & Technological Discovery & Innovation**
- ◆ **The Relationship of Humanity & Technology**
- ◆ **Human Evolution & the Nature of Mind, Self, & Intelligence**
- ◆ **The Evolution of Life – Biotechnology**
- ◆ **Environmental, Ecological, Solar, & Galactic Engineering**
- ◆ **Robots & Androids - Technological or Computer Intelligence**



Topics & Themes of Science Fiction

- ◆ **Space Exploration & Space Colonization – Exploring & Understanding the Cosmos**
- ◆ **Alien Contact, Alien Civilizations, & Alien Mentality**
- ◆ **Time Travel – The Manipulation of Time**
- ◆ **Philosophical, Religious, & Spiritual Themes - Enlightenment – The Existence & Nature of God**
- ◆ **The Unknown & the Mysterious**
- ◆ **Morality & Values – Good & Evil**



Topics & Themes of Science Fiction

- ◆ **Women, Men, Love, & Sex in the Future**
- ◆ **New or Alternative Forms of Reality - Alternative Universes**
- ◆ **Future Wars**
- ◆ **The Nature & Value of Progress**
- ◆ **Natural & Cosmic Disasters – The End of Humanity**
- ◆ **The Transcendence of Humanity**
- ◆ **“Life, the Universe, & Everything”**



Conclusion: The Functions & Strengths of Science Fiction

- ✦ **Breath & Integration of Topics & Themes - Interdisciplinary**
- ✦ **Synthesis of Science & Art – Synthesis of Science & Myth**
- ✦ **Narration & Dramatization**
- ✦ **Pluralistic/Variied Visions - Possibility Thinking**
- ✦ **Stimulates Multiple Dimensions of Thought – Intellect & Imagination – Critical & Possibility Thinking**



Conclusion: The Functions & Strengths of Science Fiction

- ✦ **Multi-faceted Realistic Scenario Building**
- ✦ **Cosmic – Philosophical & Personalized/Concrete**
- ✦ **Holistic - Synthesis of Cognition, Emotion, & Values**
- ✦ **Satisfies Psychological Motives & Needs (Hope, Fear, Excitement, Power, etc.) - Escapism**
- ✦ **Entertainment & Artistic Creation**
- ✦ **Social Criticism**



Conclusion: The Functions & Strengths of Science Fiction

- ◆ **Predictions & Warnings**
- ◆ **Thought Experiments**
- ◆ **Creates a Concrete Realism of the Future**
- ◆ **Heightened Perception/ Critical Thinking on the Present/ Present Trends**
- ◆ **Creates New Symbols, Icons, and Archetypes**
- ◆ **Creates the Future – Inspiration to Action**

