

SCI-FI and *Fantasy* Stories

According to Isaac Asimov, good Sci-Fi accomplishes two things:

- ✓ Presents a vision of an alternate world or time in which an aspect of science or magic is predominant
- ✓ Provides commentary on our real world



Sam Moskowitz, fan and biographer:

"Science fiction is a brand of fantasy identifiable by the fact that it eases the 'willing suspension of disbelief' on the part of its readers by utilizing an atmosphere of scientific credibility for its imaginative speculations in physical science, space, time, social science, and philosophy"

SciFi History

- 2nd Century A.D.- Lucian's *Icaro Mennipus*
- 1532- Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*
- 1726- Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*
- 1820s- Mary Shelly-
Frankenstein and The Last Man
- 1864- Jules Verne's *Voyage au centre de la Terra*
- 1898- H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds*
- 1930-1950- "Golden Age" of SciFi; "Futurians"
 - Isaac Asimov: *Foundation*; *I, Robot*; *Galactic Empire*
 - Arthur C. Clarke: *Fountains of Paradise*; *2001: A Space Odessey*
 - Robert A. Heinlein: *Starship Troopers*; *Stranger in a Strange Land*



SciFi History

- 50s-70s- Dystopian literature (dysfunctional utopia):
 - Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*
 - Philip K. Dick: *A Scanner Darkly*; "Minority Report"
 - Frank Herbert: *Dune*
- 80s- Cyberpunk (high-tech and low-life):
 - William Gibson: "Johnny Mnemonic"; *Neuromancer*
 - George Alec Effinger's *When Gravity Fails*
- 90s- Steampunk (high-tech 1800s setting):
 - *Wild Wild West* (1999) film starring Will Smith
 - *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) film starring Robert Downey Jr.



James Wallace Harris

on the decline of SF magazines

- Subculture of former sci-fi mag readers are now glued to internet
- Science fiction in other forms is far too common
- People stick with one or few authors and avoid the variety that magazines offer
- eBook, Kindle, internet are replacing magazines
- Sci-fi needs a kid market and kids don't read literature (even though they ARE reading often).
- Sci-fi short stories aren't interesting anymore

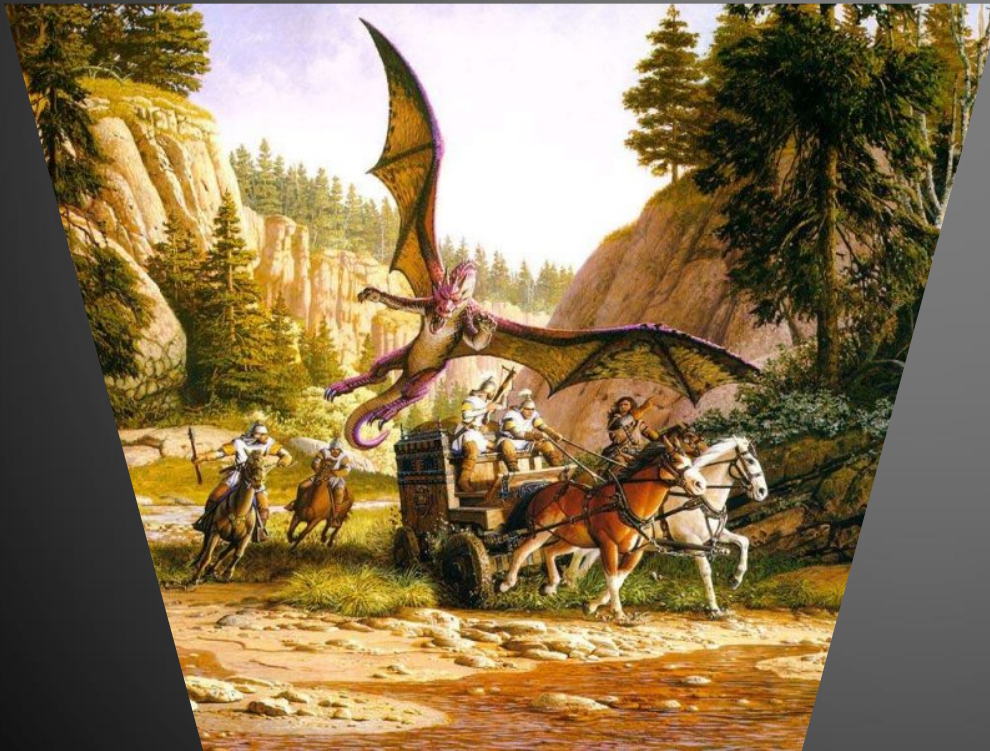
Damien Walter on the literary value of SciFi & Fantasy

- Readers scoff at attempts to analyze escapist entertainment
- There's much debate over fantasy rhetoric
- Types of fantasy are dependent on relationship between protagonist and fantasy world:
 - The portal (*The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*)
 - Immersive (*Lord of the Rings*, most Sci Fi)
 - Intrusive (*Time Bandits*, *Labyrinth*)
 - Liminal (*Jumanji*)
- SciFi & Fantasy coming under attack for representation of race and gender



Steve Bennett on Fantasy Fiction

- Myth and legend are as old as culture itself
- Fantasy helps us to see magic in world and ourselves



- Origins in myth, legend, fairy tales
 - Odyssey -- Gilgamesh
 - Arthurian legend
 - Hans Christian Andersen
- Timeless theme of good vs. evil
- Speculative fiction vs. pure fantasy
- Crossovers: *Star Wars*
- Fantasy is popular with all ages: *Harry Potter*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Chronicles of Narnia*
- Many fantasy subgenres: comic, dark, modern, epic, high, sword and sorcery

J.R.R. Tolkien's "On Fairy Stories"

- Faërie (the "Perilous Realm" of fantasy) cannot be strictly defined: it is "indescribable, though not imperceptible."
- Fantasy is not and should not be "relegated to the 'nursery'"
- Adults need fantasy for "recovery, escape, and consolation"- to overcome our jaded views on life and take a break from the sorrows
- Eucatastrophe- the happy ending



Titles “The Minority Report”

on

quiz:

“Fragments of a Hologram Rose”

“Who’s Cribbing?”

“Barney”

“Leaf by Niggle”

“The Truth About Pyecraft”

Tolkien's “On Fairy Stories”

Walter’s essay on SciFi and Fantasy

Steve Bennett’s blog on Fantasy

J.W. Harris “Is This The End Of

Short (SciFi) Fiction?”

