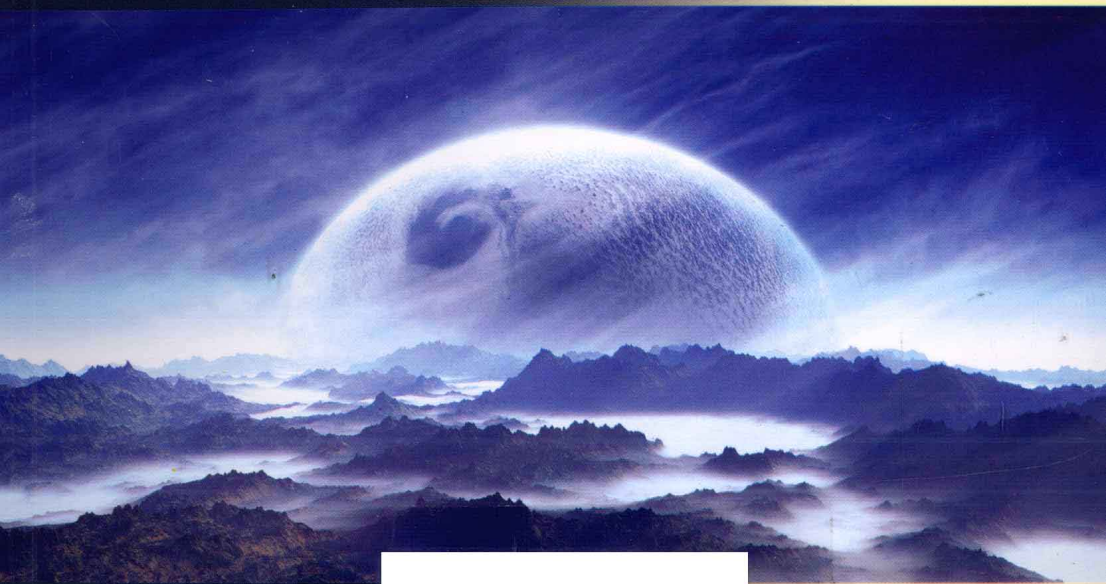


*A Survey of British
and American Science Fiction*



英美科幻小说 简史

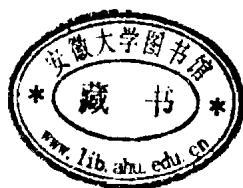
王艳 刘晓娟 许洋/著

南开大学出版社

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王 艳 刘晓娟 许 洋 著



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天 津

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前 言

科幻小说是西方近代文学的一种新体裁，著名科幻文学研究者达科·苏文将其定义为：“科幻小说就是这样一种文学类型，它的必要的和充分的条件就是陌生化与认知的出场以及二者之间的相互作用，而它的主要形式策略是一种拟换作者的经验环境的富有想象力的框架结构。”¹ 科幻小说在 20 世纪得到空前的发展和繁荣，并与主流文学、文化相融合，发展成为当代西方一种不容忽视的文学和文化现象。美国著名科幻小说家托马斯·迪什（Thomas M. Disch）曾在 1998 年宣称：“科幻小说已经以一种微不足道的或意义深远的，显而易见的或潜移默化的方式渗透到我们的文化之中。”² 在当代的西方世界，科幻小说已成为最受人喜爱的读物之一，学术界对科幻小说的研究也日益升温。《英美科幻小说简史》旨在向读者介绍西方科幻小说的发展历史、代表作家和经典科幻作品。

本书在编排上具有以下特点：

1. 本书按时间顺序编写，清晰地勾勒了英美科幻小说从起源至今的发展轨迹，介绍了科幻小说发展的各个阶段的历史背景、重要作家和作品，以及科幻小说的特点。

2. 在作家选取上，以各时期、各类型科幻小说的代表作家及其作品影响力为首选原则，并对所选作家的代表作品作较为详细的介绍和评论。

3. 作为科幻文学的重要组成部分，科幻电影在科幻文学领域中的地位不容忽视。本书在最后一章简要介绍了科幻电影的发展轨迹，以及各时期的重要作品。

4. 为使读者了解科幻小说、电影的基本类型和代表作品，掌握科幻小说批评的基本术语，如“Hard SF”、“Soft SF”、“Space opera”、

“Utopia SF”、“Dystopia SF”、“Cyberpunk”等，本书后列有四个附录：

①科幻名词解释；②按类别划分的科幻小说代表作家名单；③各类型科幻电影一览表；④历年科幻作品大奖“星云奖”和“雨果奖”的获奖作品和作者的名单，以方便读者做进一步的学习和研究。

此外，为确保语言的准确无误，作者特别邀请了美国朋友 William Graham 对本书的语言进行了认真的修改，以确保本书的质量。

最后要特别提出的是，在本书的写作过程中，作者参考了大量的国内外资料，在此对其作者表示诚挚的谢意！由于本书的篇幅有限，尚有一些知名作家和作品未能包括其中，在此谨表歉意。囿于作者的学识和水平，书中定有可商榷之处，恳请专家和读者指正。

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Chapter One

Science Fiction before the Genre

1. Context and Early Precursors

The Scientific Revolution

Science fiction (SF) began in the late Middle Ages, roughly concurrent with the Scientific Revolution, an era associated primarily with the 16th and 17th centuries. The revolution was sparked by the publication of Nicolaus Copernicus'¹ *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres* (1543), in which he proposed the heliocentric theory of the solar system. Upon examining the records of the motions of heavenly bodies, Copernicus contended that the sun was the center of the universe, with the earth and other planets revolving around it. In medieval Europe, people generally accepted the concept that the earth was the center of the universe, and that all other objects moved on circular orbits around it because this geocentric model was consistent both with people's common sense and with the biblical account of the cosmos. Copernicus' heliocentric cosmos became an important champion for the cause of science in its contest against religious faith, and served as a landmark in western thought. Since then a properly materialist understanding of the universe has percolated through to the general culture.

Another two important figures whose discoveries gave Copernicus' theory more credibility were Johannes Kepler and Galileo Galilei.² Kepler

was a German astronomer who concluded in 1609 that the planets moved about the sun in elliptical orbits, not circular orbits as supposed by Copernicus' original model. Galileo's main contributions to the acceptance of the heliocentric system were his mechanics, the observations he made with his telescope, as well as his detailed presentation of the case for the system. The discoveries of Kepler and Galileo challenged Aristotle's geocentric cosmology and marked the paradigm shift of the old Universe into the new.

Kepler's laws of planetary motion and Galileo's mechanics culminated in the work of Isaac Newton, whose laws of universal gravitation combined terrestrial and celestial mechanics into a unified system describable through the use of mathematical formulae.

Admittedly, the great changes at that time took place not merely in the areas of astronomy and mechanics. Similar achievements could also be seen in such diverse fields as optics, biology, medicine, chemistry and other sciences, which altogether challenged the entire system of ancient authority, transforming the longstanding religious comprehension of existence (which was essentially a magical apprehension of the cosmos), and introduced a new, mathematical, non-magical discourse for science to contemplate. Historically then, science fiction was in large part a response to the cultural shock created by the discovery of humanity's marginal position in a universe fundamentally inhospitable to man.³

SF in the 17th and 18th Centuries

The new discoveries and ideas during the Scientific Revolution expanded people's imagination, and offered people new ways of thinking about the world. Writers of the time captured the shift and filled the imaginative vista in radically new and materialist ways. Johannes Kepler was the first to make his imaginative speculation on the basis of solid science. In his *A Dream, or Lunar Astronomy* (1634), Kepler related a tale

of a young Icelfander named Duracotus, who travelled to the moon with the aid of a witch and met with some weird inhuman alien life forms. The book includes a detailed scientific speculation as to what life might actually be like on the moon, where each day and each night lasts about two weeks. It is supported by a series of lengthy scientific notes, exhaustively justifying Kepler's speculations with reference to his scientific observations. Some view this book as the first genuine SF novel.

With the great advances in the understanding of the cosmos, science fiction became a vigorous new form of writing in the 17th century. Francis Godwin in his farfical account of *The Man in the Moone or, a Discourse of a Voyage Thither by Domingo Gonsales, the Speedy Messenger* (1638), playfully blended the new cosmological lore of the scientific revolution and the new geographical knowledge of the age of discovery with the artful fancy of an inventive imagination. In the story, the Spanish protagonist flies to the moon by harnessing a flock of special geese; and once he gets there, the lunar world and occupants are vividly described. Another noticeable early speculative account of lunar voyaging is John Wilkins' earnest essay *The Discovery of a World in the Moon Or, A Discourse Tending to Prove that 'tis Probable There May be Another Habitable World in that Planet* (1638), in which he imaginatively extrapolates from scientific data and proposes that man will one day journey to the moon. Cyrano de Bergerac, in the sprightly and witty lunar voyage *The Other World, or the States and Empires of the Moon* (1657), makes his protagonist fly from France to Canada and then to the Moon by employing a series of imaginative modes of transportation, including a sort of rocket, which transforms the possibility of spaceflight from being merely a fantastic flight of imagination into a scientifically plausible means of transportation.

Although the moon is a common extraterrestrial venue, the more wide-ranging cosmos is also approached. The female protagonist of

Margaret Cavendish's *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing-World* (1666) finds a new planet attached to the Earth at the North Pole and is eventually made its empress. Eberhard Christian Kindermann relates a journey to Mars by balloon in his imaginative novel *The Rapid Journey by Airship to the Upper World, Recently Taken by Five People* (1744). Ludvig Holberg takes his adventure into an imaginary kingdom located within the Earth in *Nikolai Klim's Journey beneath the Earth* (1741), in which the protagonist falls into the hollow space within the Earth and discovers a central mini-sun and a mini-system of planets.

Space travel also figures prominently in French novelist Charles Sorel's *La Vraie Histoire Comique de Francion* (*The True Comic History of Francion*, 1623), in which he supposes lunar aliens may some day come to Earth and subdue our world, and Voltaire's *Micromégas* (*Littlebig*, 1750), in which he imagines aliens from Sirius and Jupiter scrutinizing the inhabitants of the Earth.

Many utopias and speculations about possible futures were also written in this period. Thomas More inaugurated this subgenre with his short prose tale *Utopia* (1516), in which a traveler reports visiting a distant island (an imaginary place) where society functions much better than in our real world. Joseph Hall borrows More's premise and locates his utopia in an imaginary land to the south of Australia in *A World Other and the Same* (1605). The protagonist of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) visits a range of fantastic and utopian earthly societies, some of which are better than the real world and some worse. Of course, utopian writing was not purely spatial in this period, it is also temporal. Louis-Sebastien Mercier led the way in *The Year 2440* (1771), which is regarded by some critics as the first utopia set ahead in time. Other early works of significance within the utopian genre include Charles Sorel's *The True Courier* (1632), Gabriel de Foigny's *The Australian Land* (1676), Joshua Barnes' *Gerania* (1675) and Richard Head's *O-Brazile: or The*