

Rhetoric Literature

I, Robot by Isaac Asimov

Read biographical information about Isaac Asimov in *Poetics*.

List 3 things about his life/worldview that show up in his writing

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

From *Poetics* on the genre of science fiction. . .

Definition of Science Fiction: Science fiction is a type of speculative fiction based on exploring what might happen if various natural or engineered changes took place in the physical universe.

- The foundation of science fiction begins with the questions “what if?” or the statement “if this were true, then here is what would happen as a result.”
- Science fiction might, for instance, speculate about a future in which we could bend the laws of gravity and allow human beings to fly, or construct machines that travel through time.

Content of Science Fiction:

- The majority of science fiction works are concerned with some type of scientific or technological advances.
- Science fiction often deals with interactions between aliens (and alien worlds) and humans (and Earth), or sometimes is set entirely in alien worlds with no interaction with humans.
- Many science fiction works also turn on some kind of time manipulation, involving humans or aliens traveling or existing in the past or the future.

Form of Science Fiction:

- Science fiction is almost always written in the realistic mode.
- Science fiction is very rarely written in poetry; prose in the form of short stories, novellas, and novels is the dominant form. Also, it is written as screenplays for movies or television. It seldom takes the form of stage plays.

History of Science Fiction:

- The science fiction genre has roots in 18th & 19th century English works like *Gulliver's Travels* and *Frankenstein*; also the works of Jules Vern (*20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, *Around the World in 80 Days*, *Journey to the Center of the Earth*) and H.G. Wells (*The War of the Worlds*, *The Time Machine*, *Invisible Man*).
- What we think of modern science fiction seems to have begun in the late 1930's and developed rapidly, especially after the space race began in 1957. The “Big Three” science fiction writers of the 1950's - 1990's in America were ARthur C. Clarke, Isaac Asimov, and Robert A. Heinlein.

According to the definition and description of science fiction that we have just explored, why might we call *I, Robot* an example of science fiction? (write a paragraph with 4 points)

What are the Three Laws of Robotics?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Each story in *I, Robot* involves some kind of dilemma in which the Three Laws of Robotics are set in contrast or balanced against one another. Solving these balances and contrasts in logically satisfying ways is the climax of each story.

Choose 3 stories and tell how the laws of robotics are featured in each. Do not just list the laws. Please evaluate how each story contrasts or balances the laws.

Story:

Laws:

Story:

Laws:

Story:

Laws: