

Understanding Contemporary American Science Fiction: The Formative Period, 1926-1970 (Understanding Contemporary American Literature)

Thomas D. Clareson

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During the past 50 years American science fiction has become one of the most popular forms of fiction throughout the world. It provides the best index to the impact of all fields of science, as well as technology, on the literary and popular imaginations. Indeed, it has helped to shape the dreams that lie behind the worldwide interest in space exploration, while at the same time it has provided the cutting edge of social and political criticism and satire. Understanding Contemporary American Science Fiction undertakes an overview of the field during those crucial decades when it evolved from a form of fiction in the pulp magazines to one of the most popular forms of the contemporary novel. Clareson traces the principal thematic strains of the field, from the view of a technologically triumphant humanity that foresaw nuclear holocaust and an earthy dystopia, to the rich diversity of the 1960s. Writers such as Isaac Asimov, Robert A. Heinlein, John W. Campbell, Ray Bradbury, Marjorie Nicolson, Max Ehrlich, Judith Merril, and Kurt Vonnegut are featured.

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