

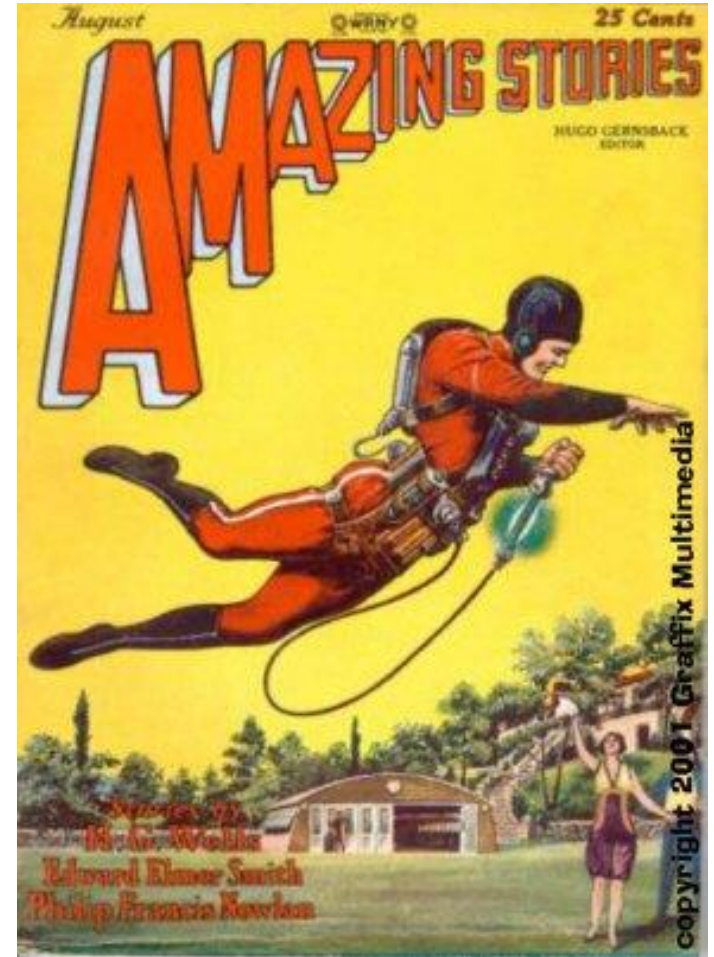
The Challenge of Science Fiction:

“Where is my flying car and my anti-gravity boots??”

Do we get the Future we deserve?

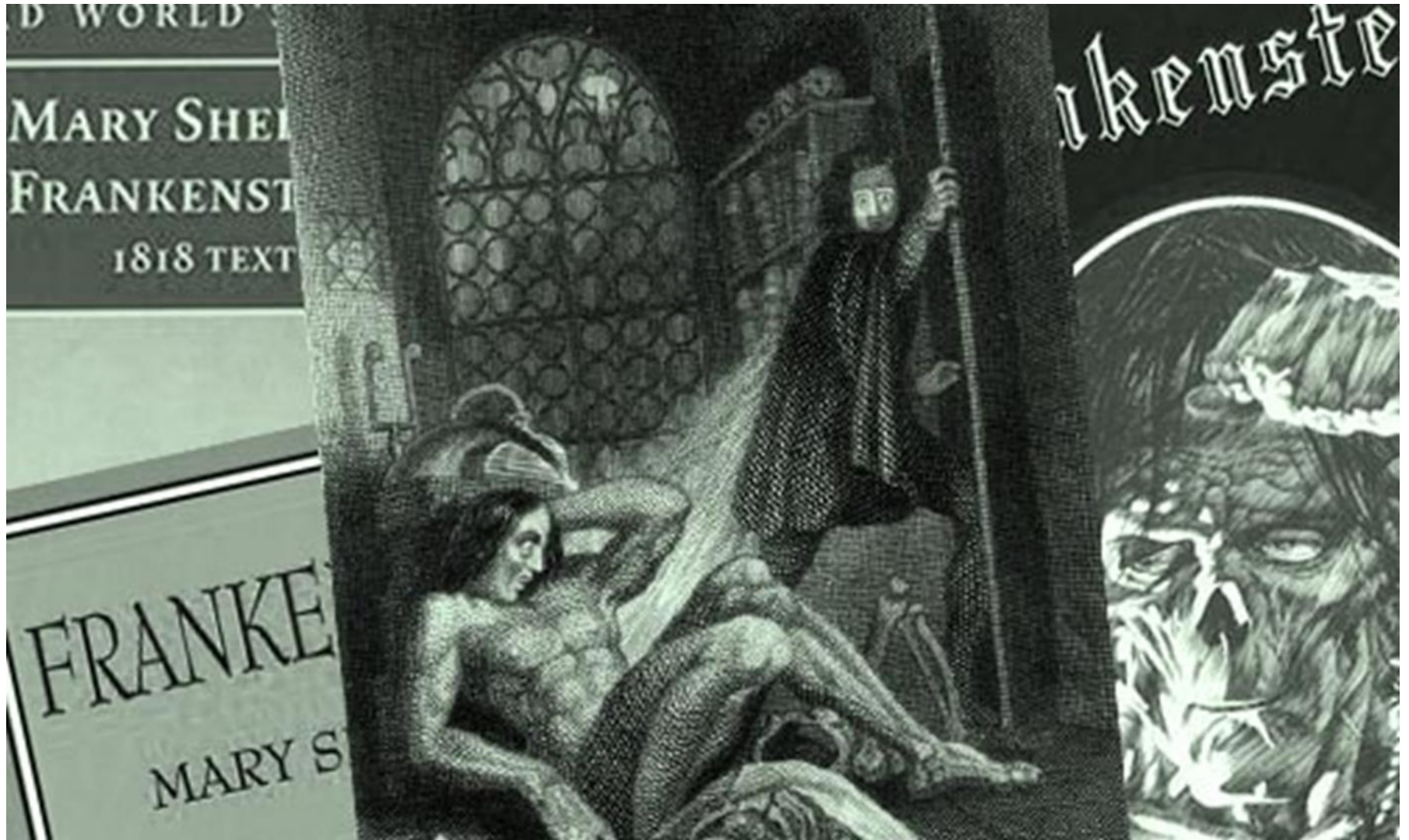
By Maura Heaphy

Columbus Futurists,
September 17, 2015





The Age of Enlightenment: Futuristic, but not the “Future”





fa. l'opt. vers. 1771.

L'AN DEUX MILLE

QUATRE CENT QUARANTE.

Rêve s'il en fut jamais ;

SUIVI DE

L'HOMME DE FER,

SONG E.

Par L. S. MERCIER, ex-Député à la
Convention nationale et au Corps légis-
latif ; Membre de l'Institut national de
France.

O u v r a g e

NOUVELLE EDITION,
IMPRIMÉE SOUS LES YEUX DE L'AUTEUR.

AVEC FIGURES.

TOME SECOND.

A PARIS,

Chez LEPETIT Jeune et GERARD, Libraires,
rue Saint-André-des-Arts, n° 55 ;

Et au Palais de Tribunaux, Galerie de bois, n° 223.

A N X.

L'An 2440, rêve s'il en fut jamais (1771) Literally, "The Year 2440:
A Dream If Ever There Was One"

Herbert George Wells

1866-1946

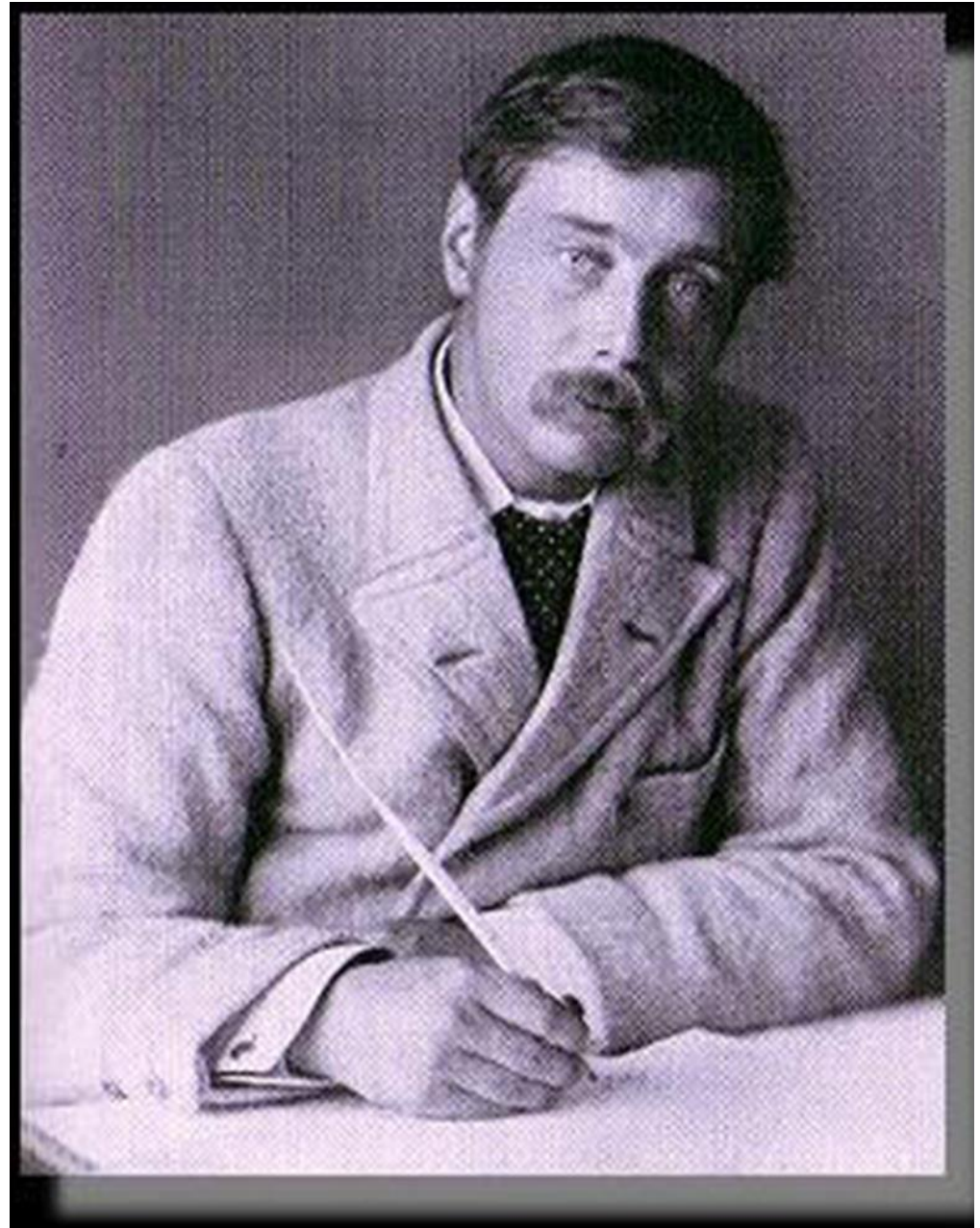
The Time Machine (1895)

The Island of Dr. Moreau
(1896)

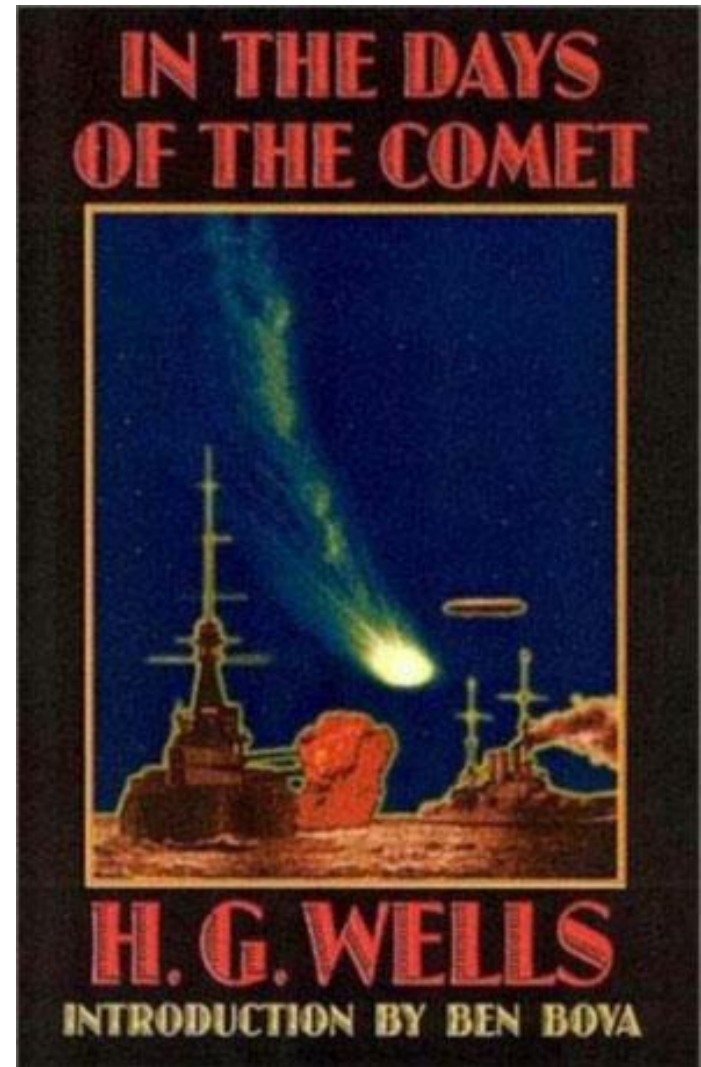
The Invisible Man (1897)

The War of the Worlds
(1898)

Written in the space of just four
years, from the age of 29.

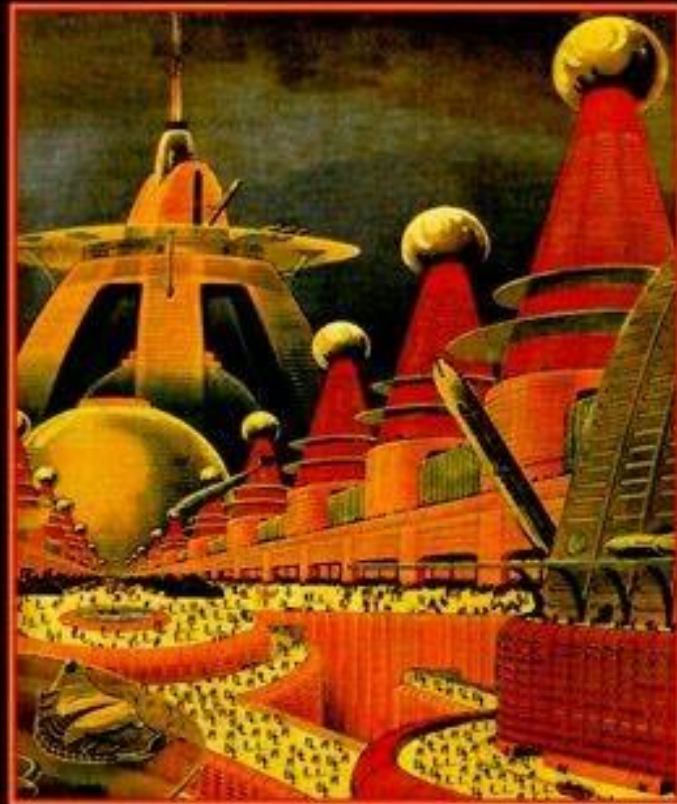


Wells saw the future ...



H.G. WELLS

COMMEMORATIVE EDITION



THE SLEEPER AWAKES

INTRODUCTION BY J. GREGORY KEYES

AFTERWORD BY GARETH DAVIES-MORRIS

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H.G. WELLS
THE WAR OF
THE WORLDS

With an Afterword by ISAAC ASIMOV



The Shape of Things to Come (1933)

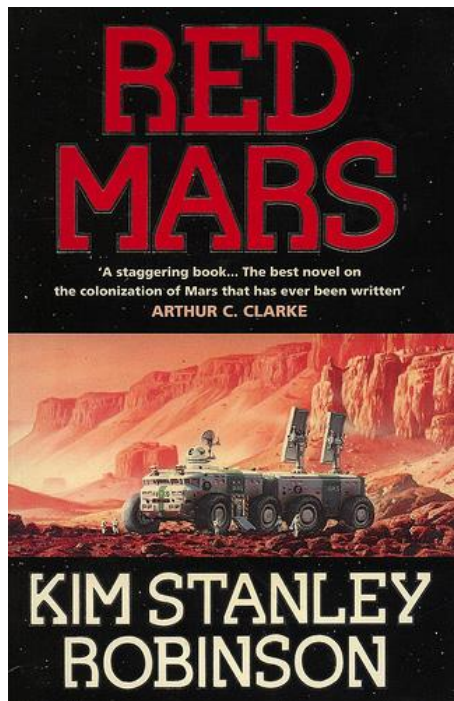






“Science fiction represents how people in the present feel about the future. That’s why ‘big ideas’ were prevalent in the 1930s, ’40s and partly in the ’50s. People felt the future would be better, one way or another. Now it doesn’t feel that way.”

Kim Stanley Robinson
author of the Mars trilogy, *2312*,
Science in the Capitol series

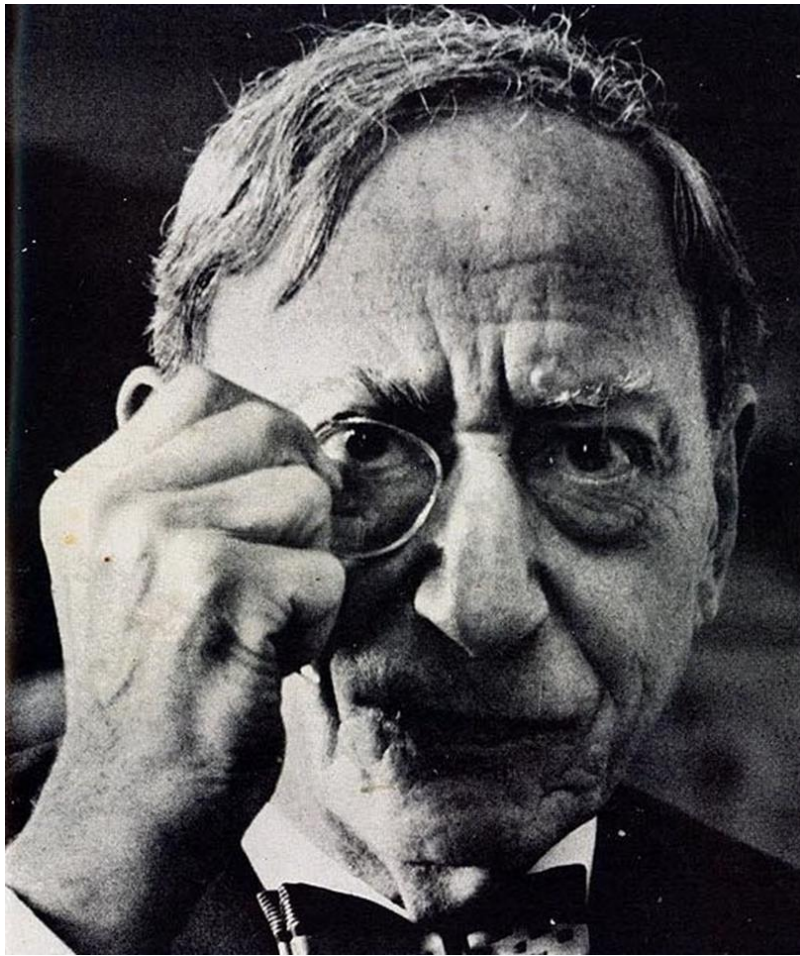


“The Gernsback Continuum” by William Gibson (1981)

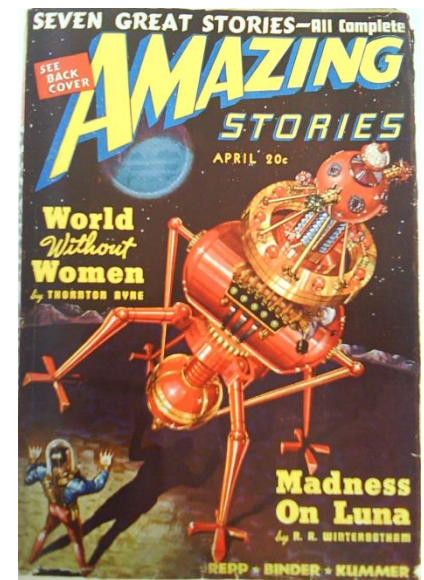
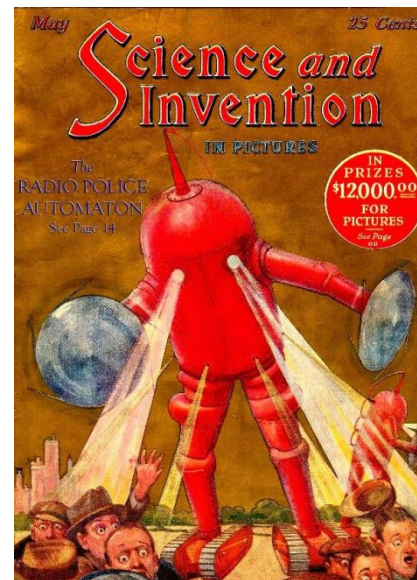
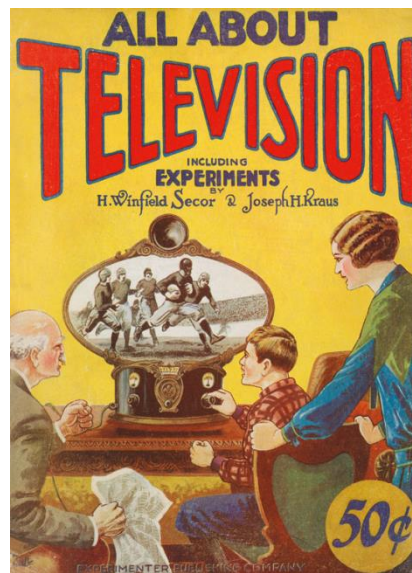
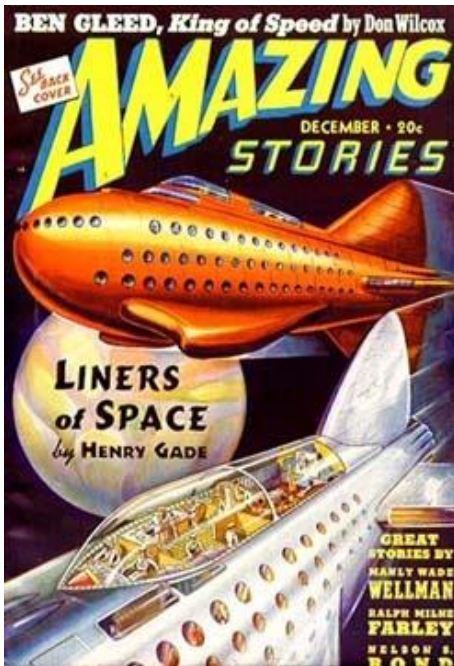
“... segments of a dreamworld ...



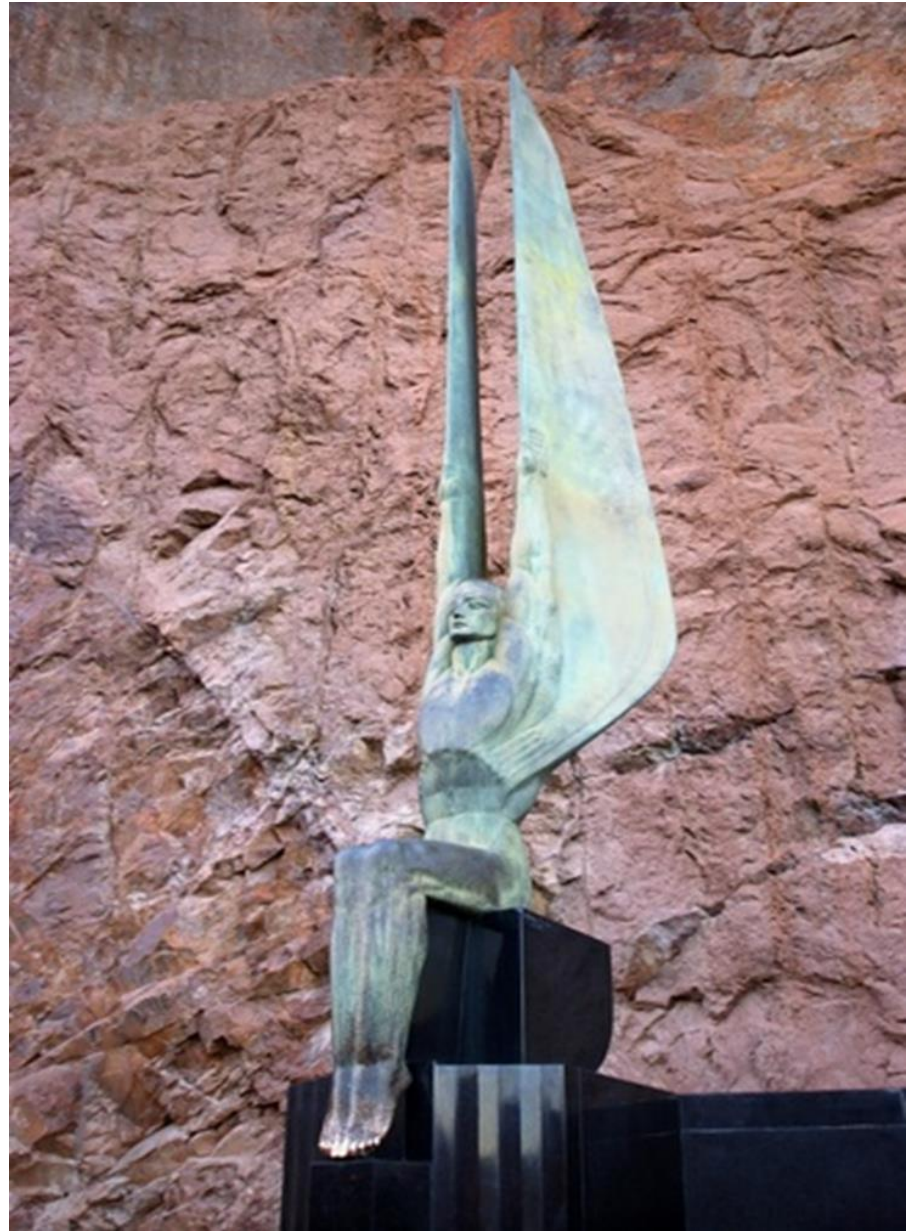
... abandoned
in an uncaring present”



"By 'scientifiction' I mean the Jules Verne, H. G. Wells and Edgar Allan Poe type of story—a charming romance intermingled with scientific fact and prophetic vision ..."



“... the winged statues that guard the Hoover Dam, forty-foot concrete hood ornaments leaning steadfastly into an imaginary hurricane ...”



“... and fifth-run movies houses like the temples of some lost sect that had worshiped blue mirrors and geometry ...”





MING WANTS YOU

“Favoring the architecture of his native Mongo, he cruised up and down the coast, erecting raygun emplacements in white stucco ...”

Copenhagen, Denmark, 1937



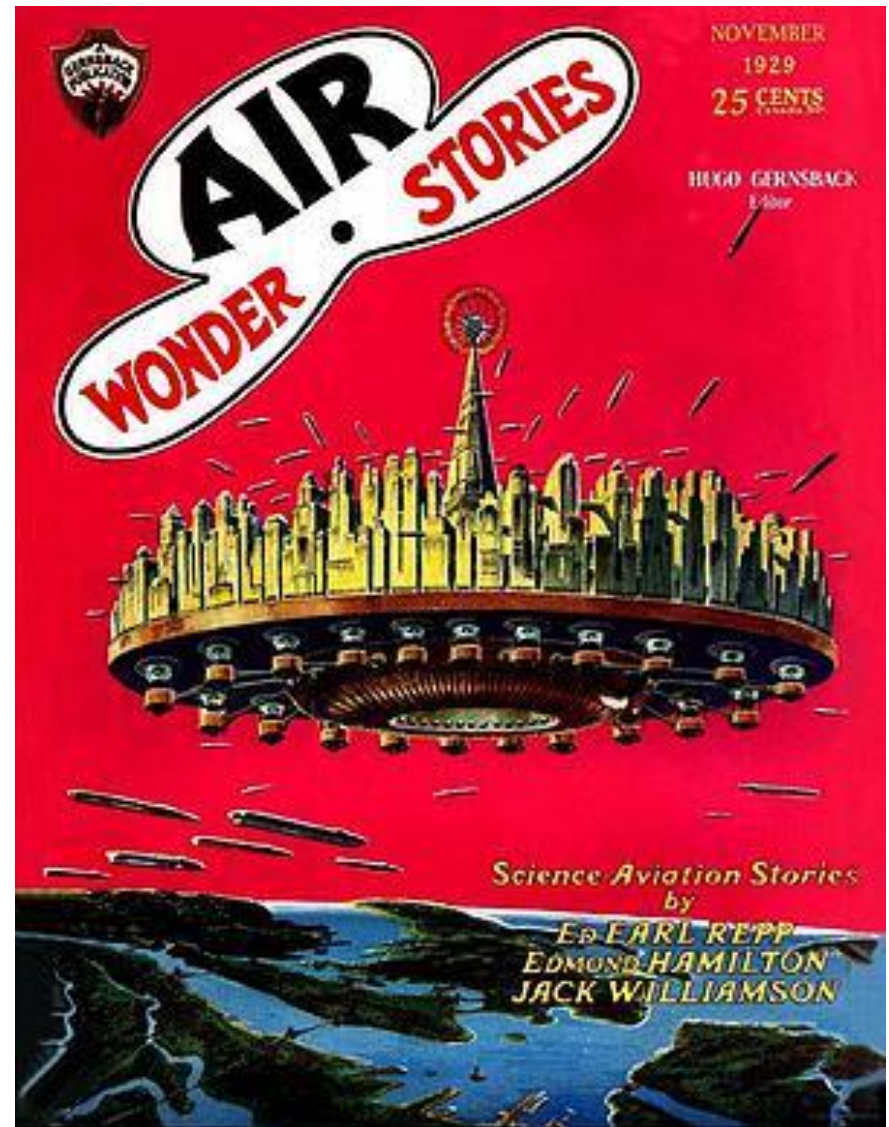
Sacramento, CA



“But the rockets on the covers of Gernsback pulps had fallen on London in the dead of night, screaming. After the war, everyone had a car – no wings for it – and the promised superhighway to drive it down, so that the sky itself darkened, and the fumes ate the marble and pitted the miracle crystal ...”



Our love/hate relationship with the future ...

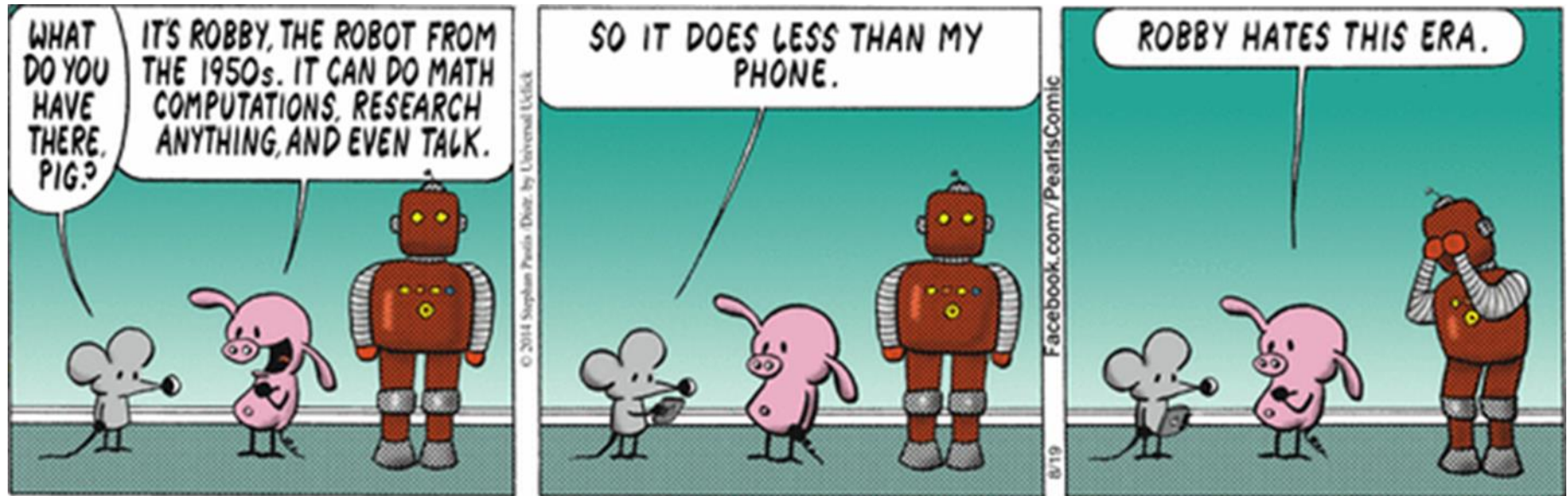


The popularity of Dystopia ...

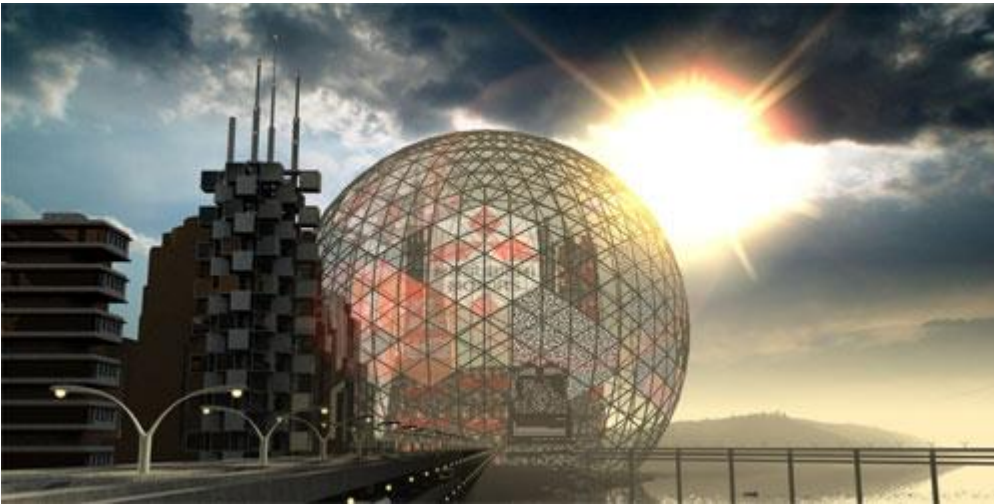


<http://www.cnn.com/2014/11/21/opinion/jones-hunger-games/>

Two visions of the future



If you'd gone to a publisher in 1981 with a proposal for a science-fiction novel that consisted of a really clear and simple description of the world today, they'd have read your proposal and said: 'Well, it's impossible. This is ridiculous.'



William Gibson,
The Paris Review

One Story ...

... two headlines

In 1964, SF legend Isaac Asimov wrote his
predictions for the world of 2014,
for the New York Times.

2014:
UNCANNILY
ACCURATE as
predicted by sci-fi
writer Isaac Asimov
FIFTY years ago.

Yahoo News 1/2/2014

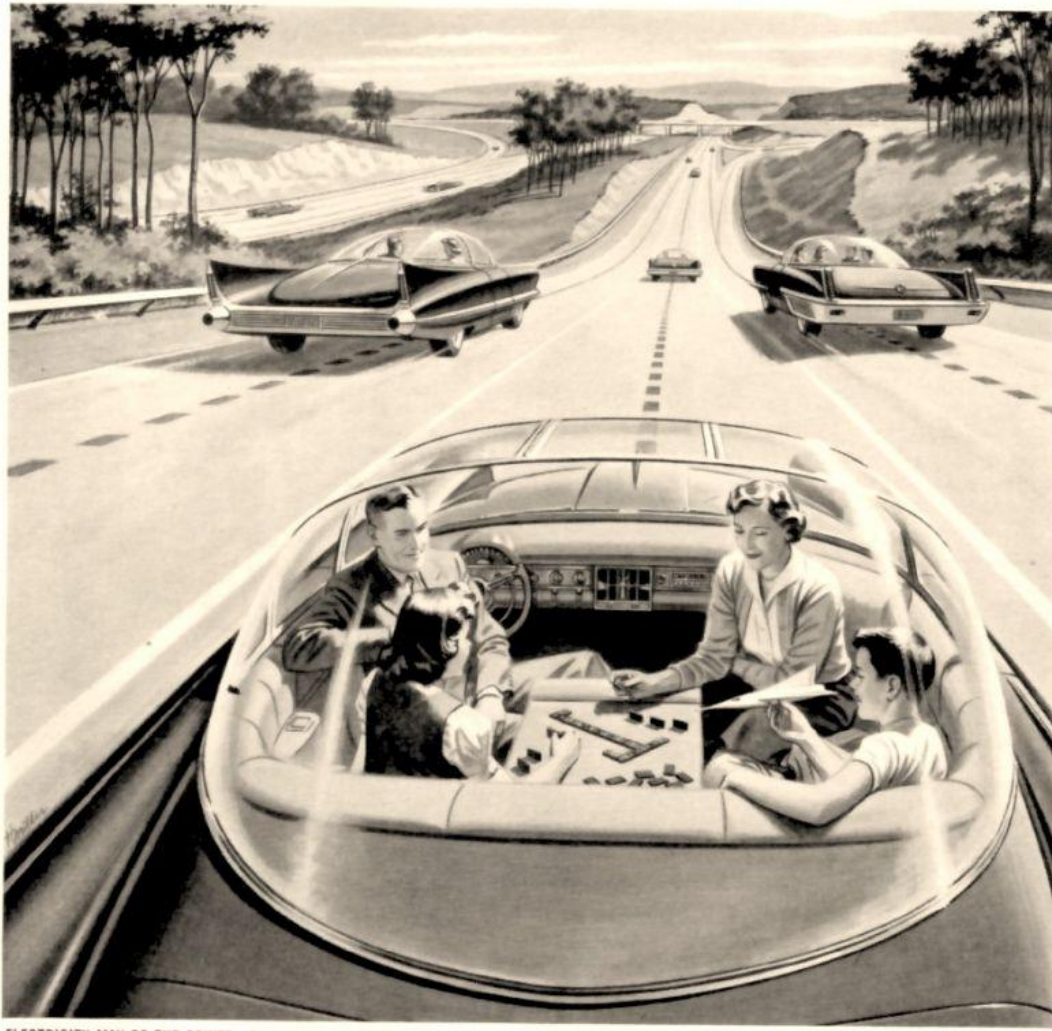
Asimov's 2014
Predictions Were
Shockingly
Conservative For
1964

Gismodo.com 8/29/2013



Looking at the World's Fair of 50 years hence,
Asimov imagined 3D TV, underground cities,
and colonies on the moon.

Self-Driving Cars



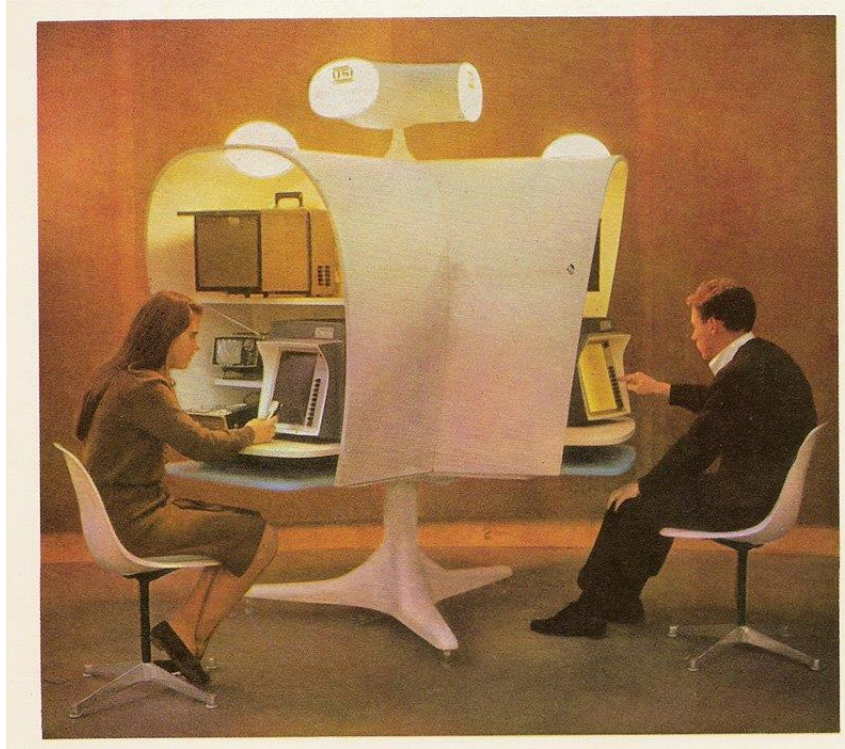
ELECTRICITY MAY BE THE DRIVER. One day your car may speed along an electric super-highway, its speed and steering automatically controlled by

electronic devices embedded in the road. Highways will be made safe—by electricity! No traffic jams . . . no collisions . . . no driver fatigue.

Automated Kitchens

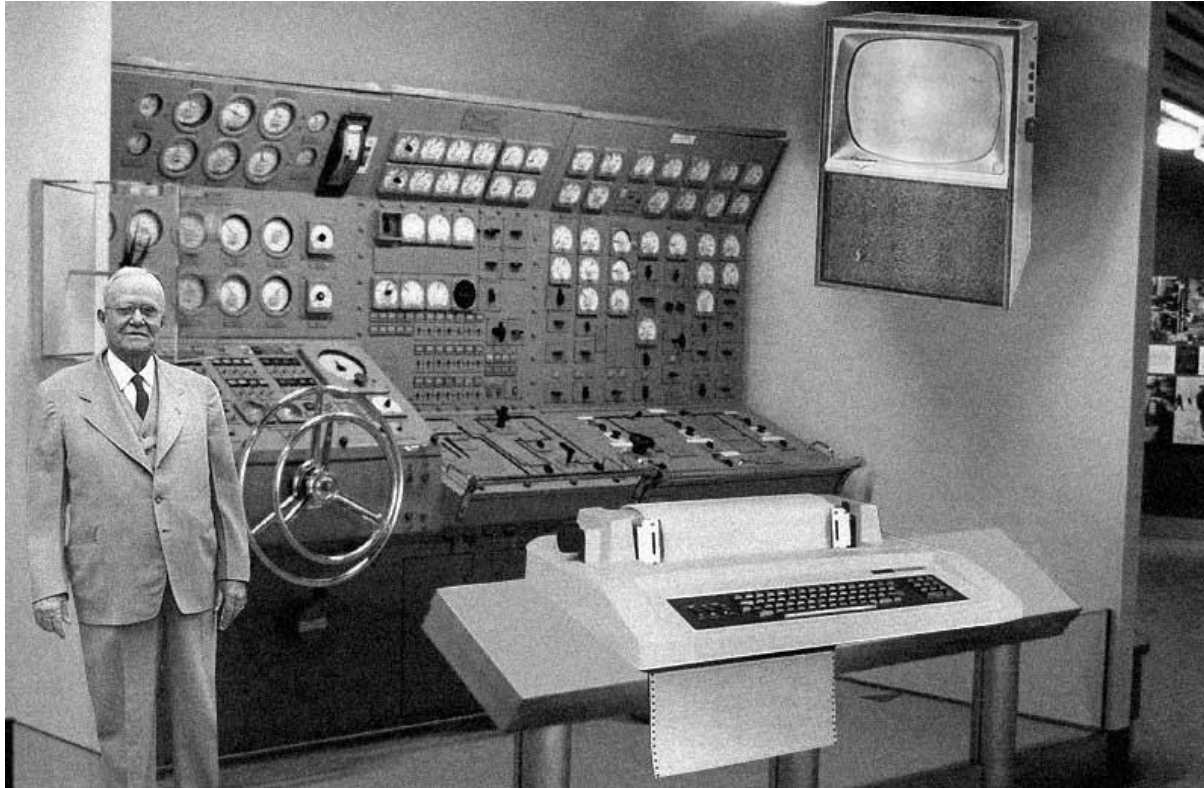


Schools of the future



Asimov: Part of the General Electric exhibit today consists of a school of the future in which such present realities as closed-circuit TV and programmed tapes aid the teaching process ...

... but not PCs, smartphones and iPads ...



Scientists from the RAND Corporation have created this model to illustrate how a "home computer" could look like in the year 2004. However the needed technology will not be economically feasible for the average home. Also the scientists readily admit that the computer will require not yet invented technology to actually work, but 50 years from now scientific progress is expected to solve these problems. With teletype interface and the Fortran language, the computer will be easy to use and only

'I THINK THERE IS A WORLD MARKET FOR MAYBE FIVE COMPUTERS.'

THOMAS WATSON, CHAIRMAN OF IBM (1943)

Like the Art-Deco futures of the 30s, 40s and beyond, we can imagine, and then accept that the reality will be beyond our imaginings.

And just be grateful that it could be worse. “ ... or even worse, it could be perfect.”

