Science Fiction: Origins, Features, And Arab Contributions[1]

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Abstract

Science fiction stands as a vibrant literary genre born from the intersection of scientific advancement and creative imagination. This article presents a thorough exploration of science fiction, starting with its conceptual definitions and major classifications. It delves into key subgenres such as time travel, space opera, robotics, cyberpunk, utopian and dystopian literature, and ecological narratives. The study further outlines the genre's defining features, including its foundation in scientific reasoning, its forward-looking speculative nature, and its interdisciplinary approach. It traces the evolution of science fiction from early mythological, religious, and utopian influences to its formal emergence in the 19th and 20th centuries. Adopting a comparative lens, the article contrasts the robust development of science fiction in the West, where it has gained significant cultural and academic traction, with its slower yet evolving presence in the Arab world. While less established, Arab science fiction has been skillfully adapted by pioneering and contemporary authors to address local concerns, exploring themes of identity, progress, and future challenges. Through this dual focus on theory and cross-cultural analysis, the article enhances the appreciation of science fiction as a meaningful and globally resonant literary form.

Keywords: Arab Literature, Science Fiction, Western Literature, Arabic Novel, Novel.

Bilim Kurgu: Ortaya Çıkışı, Özellikleri ve Arap Dünyasının Katkıları

Öz

Bilim kurgu, bilimsel ilerleme ile yaratıcı hayal gücünün kesişim noktasından doğan canlı bir edebi tür olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Bu makale, bilim kurgunun kavramsal tanımları ve başlıca sınıflandırmaları ile başlayarak konuyu kapsamlı bir şekilde incelemektedir. Makale, zaman yolculuğu, uzay operası, robotik, siberpunk, ütopya ve distopya edebiyatı ile ekolojik anlatılar gibi temel alt türleri derinlemesine ele almaktadır. Çalışma ayrıca, bilimsel muhakemeye dayanan temeli, geleceğe yönelik spekülatif doğası ve disiplinler arası yaklaşımı da dahil olmak üzere türün belirleyici özelliklerini ana hatlarıyla sunmaktadır.

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Bilim kurgunun erken dönem mitolojik, dini ve ütopik etkilerden köken alarak 19. ve 20. yüzyıllardaki biçimsel ortaya çıkışına kadar uzanan evriminin izlerini sürmektedir. Makale, karşılaştırmalı bir bakış açısı benimseyerek, bilim kurgunun önemli kültürel ve akademik bir ilgi gördüğü Batı'daki sağlam gelişimini, Arap dünyasındaki daha yavaş ancak gelişmekte olan varlığı ile karşılaştırmaktadır. Her ne kadar daha az yerleşmiş olsa da, Arap bilim kurgusu, öncü ve çağdaş yazarlar tarafından yerel endişelere değinmek, kimlik, ilerleme ve geleceğin zorlukları gibi temaları keşfetmek üzere ustalıkla uyarlanmıştır. Teori ve kültürler arası analize odaklanan bu ikili yaklaşım aracılığıyla makale, bilim kurgunun anlamlı ve küresel ölçekte yankı uyandıran bir edebi biçim olarak takdir edilmesine katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Arap Edebiyatı, Bilim Kurgu, Batı Edebiyatı, Arap Romanı, Roman.

الخيال العلمي: المنشأ، السمات، والإسهامات العربية

المُلخَّصُ

يُعد الخيال العلمي جنساً أدبياً حيوياً، نبع من التقاطع بين التقدّم العلمي والخيال المبدع. يقدّم هذا المقال استكشافاً شاملاً للخيال العلمي، بدءاً من تعريفاته المفاهيمية وتصنيفاته الكبرى. ويتعمّق في أنواعه الفرعية الأساسية، كالسفر عبر الزمن، وأوبرا الفضاء، والروبوتات، والسايبربانك، والأدب اليوتوبي والديستوبي، والسرديات البيئية. كما يحدّد الدراسة أبرز سمات هذا الجنس، ومنها: ارتكازه على المنطق العلمي، وطابعه التأملي المستقبلي، ونهجه المتعدّد التخصصات. ويتتبّع تطور الخيال العلمي منذ جذوره الأسطورية والدينية واليوتوبية، مروراً بظهوره الرسمي في القرنين التاسع عشر والعشرين. ويعتمد المقال منظوراً مقارناً، فيقارن بين الازدهار الكبير الذي شهده الخيال العلمي في الغرب، فقد نال مكانة ثقافية وأكاديمية راسخة، وبين حضوره الأبطأ لكن المتطوّر في العالم العربي. فرغم أن الخيال العلمي العربي أقل ترسخاً، إلا أن روّاداً ومعاصرين قدّموا له تكييفات بارعة لتناوله قضايا محلية، كالهوية، والتقدّم، وتحديات المستقبل. وبذا المزج بين التنظير والتحليل الثقافي المقارن، يُعزّز المقال مكانة الخيال العلمي بصفته شكلاً أدبياً معبّراً وذا صدى عالمي.

الكلماتُ المفتاحيّةُ: الأدب العربي، الخيال العلمي، الأدب الغربي، الرواية العربية، الرواية.

Introduction

Science fiction is one of the most important literary genres that emerged in the modern era. It developed from a deep interaction between scientific and technological progress on the one hand and literary imagination on the other. This combination created a unique form of writing that explores the future, raises questions about human identity, and examines the role of science and society in shaping our world. Science fiction is highly flexible and wide in scope. It is not limited to specific topics but extends to philosophical and cultural issues related to knowledge, human limits, and the possibilities of technology.

The beginnings of science fiction can be traced to early myths and utopian writings. Later, it took on a distinct novelistic form with works such as Mary Shelley's (1851) *Frankenstein* and H. G. Wells's (1946) *The Time Machine*. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, science fiction grew in parallel with major scientific revolutions, becoming one of the most influential genres in modern literature. Today, it has gained a strong cultural presence in Western societies, especially in the United States, Europe, and Japan, and is studied as an independent literary field.

In the Arab world, science fiction appeared later but has begun to build a presence of its own. Writers such as Tawfiq al-Hakim (1987), Nihad Sharif (2011), and Talib Imran (2016) experimented with this genre, adapting it to local cultural and social issues. These contributions, although fewer compared to the West, raise significant questions about the ability of Arabic literature to engage with modern science and to use science fiction techniques to reflect on identity, progress, and the future.

Western scholarship on science fiction is rich and diverse. For example, David Seed's *Science Fiction: A Very Short Introduction* and Keith Booker's studies on science fiction provide theoretical and cultural perspectives on the field. In contrast, Arab scholarship remains more limited. Notable contributions include Talib Imran's *On Science and Science Fiction* and Samar al-Diyoub's *The Metaphor of Science: Studies in Science Fiction Literature*. In addition, there are some doctoral dissertations, such as Hanan Maachou's research on science fiction in contemporary Algerian narrative and Souad Arbas's dissertation on narrative techniques in the contemporary Arabic science fiction novel. These studies are valuable, but they still leave many areas unexplored, especially regarding comparative analysis between Western and Arab contexts.

This research, therefore, aims to provide a comprehensive study of science fiction. It will:

- Define the concept of science fiction and its main characteristics.
- Present the major classifications of science fiction, including time travel, space opera, robots and androids, utopia and dystopia, future cities, and political and ecological science fiction, among others.
- Discuss the artistic and intellectual features that make the genre distinctive.
- Trace its historical roots, from mythological and religious origins to modern developments.
- Examine the growth of science fiction in both the West and the Arab world.

The research is guided by two central questions:

1. Can science fiction be defined within clear boundaries that separate it from other imaginative forms of literature?
2. What are its main subgenres and artistic features, and how do they appear differently in Western and Arab contexts?

This study, therefore, aims to provide a comprehensive overview of science fiction literature by defining the concept, outlining its main classifications, and examining its artistic characteristics. It also traces the origins and historical development of the genre—from mythological and religious beginnings to its modern form—and highlights its trajectory in Western literature. Finally, the research sheds light on how science fiction has been received and adapted within the Arab world. In this way, the article seeks to offer both a conceptual framework and a comparative perspective that contribute to a deeper understanding of science fiction in contemporary literary studies.

1. Science Fiction Literature

Arriving at a definitive definition for science fiction is a complex task, as scholars and critics often propose widely differing-and sometimes contradictory-interpretations. This lack of consensus stems from the inherently subjective nature of literary categorization. Definitions vary significantly, with some focusing on its futuristic setting, form (e.g., novel or short story), core themes, or social purpose. This diversity has created a degree of methodological confusion, making

it challenging to establish clear boundaries for the genre despite the existence of several complementary definitions.

For example, Hugo Gersback (1926) offered an early, narrow definition by describing it simply as "narratives written in the style of Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, and Edgar Allan Poe".[3]

In contrast, critics like Lacrobe have rejected such traditional approaches for being overly restrictive. Lacrobe argued that equating SF solely with its early pioneers like Verne and Wells misrepresents modern science fiction, which has evolved into something entirely distinct.[4] While this critique is valid, Lacrobe's failure to provide a clear alternative definition limits its practical usefulness.

Other definitions are too vague to be helpful. Harry Harrison (2012), for instance, proposed a circular definition: "Science fiction is what we point to when we call something science fiction".[5] This offers no substantive insight into the genre's defining features.

The German critic J. Genginger provided a more focused description, characterizing SF as a branch of fiction that imaginatively explores humanity's reaction to scientific and technological progress, both in the near and far future. It also contemplates possibilities like life on other planets. Genginger emphasized that its primary goal is to communicate scientific concepts with accuracy and a forward-looking perspective, even when wrapped in an entertaining narrative.[6] However, this view is limited, as it excludes non-novel forms (like short stories or films) and implies a requirement for strict scientific accuracy, which is not always a feature of the genre.

A broader and more useful definition describes SF as a form of speculative fiction. It builds inductive forecasts of the future based on unproven hypotheses. Common themes include space travel, time manipulation, encounters with aliens, and the social impact of biological or psychological changes. Beyond mere entertainment, it is often considered a "literature of change" that anticipates future developments

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3 Muhammad al-'Abd, "Science Fiction as a Narrative Strategy'', *Fusul* 1/71 (Summer/Fall 2008), 28.

4 Azza al-Ghannam, *Artistic Creativity in Science Fiction Stories* (Cairo: al-Wazzan Publishing, 1988), 19.

5 Issam 'Asaqla, *Character Construction in Arabic Science Fiction Novels* (Amman: Dar Azmina Publishing, 2011), 86.

6 John Griffiths, *Three Visions of the Future*, Trans. Raouf Wasfi (Cairo Egyptian General Book Organization: Family Library, 2009), 7.

and examines their potential consequences.[7] This perspective treats SF as a literature of possibilities rather than established facts.

Similarly, James Gunn (1923) defined it as literature concerned with the effects of change on humanity. It uses scientific or technological change as a lens to explore issues that threaten entire civilizations or the human species itself, rather than just individual concerns.[8]

Conversely, the critic G. O'Beilly concentrated on the short story form, defining SF as a genre that transforms scientific discoveries and potential inventions into narratives focused on human drama and challenges.[9]

Perhaps one of the most comprehensive definitions comes from author Robert Heinlein (1988), who described science fiction as the realistic depiction of plausible future events. This portrayal must be grounded in a thorough understanding of the real world, the past, and the principles of the scientific method.[10] This definition is particularly effective for capturing the genre's core commitment to logical speculation and its basis in a recognizable reality

In the Arab context, a seminal definition is offered by the pioneer of the genre, Nihad Sharif**.** He describes it as the "dramatic portrayal of scientific leaps and technological advancements and their evolution, blending and harmonizing literature with science—the former rooted in imagination, the latter in experimentation."[11] In short, it is the "reconciliation of imaginative activity with human scientific activity."[12] It is a literary genre that "incorporates the creativity of imagination and its ability to predict scientific achievements and innovations, visitors from space, time travel, space colonization, disasters of all kinds, utopian cities... etc."[13]

This definition appears to be the most comprehensive and satisfactory, as it synthesizes various elements from the previous

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7 Robert Scholes, *Horizons of Science Fiction Literature*, Trans. Hassan Hosni Shukri (Cairo: Egyptian General Book Organization, 1996), 12.

8 Scholes, *Horizons of Science Fiction Literature*, 15.

9 Nihad Sharif, "Science fiction is one of the most exciting genres of literature", *Science Fiction Journal* 1/1 (August 2008), 12.

10 Salah Ma 'ati, *Science Fiction Between Science and Superstition* (Amman: al-Warraq Publishing, 2014), 9.

11 Fatima Boumaza, "Science Fiction Concept and Species Question'', *Arabic Language* 22/50 (09/2022), 15.

12 Boumaza, "Science Fiction Concept and Species Question'', 15-16.

13 Ma 'ati, *Science Fiction Between Science and Superstition*, 9.

definitions. However, it is important to note that imagination is not the exclusive domain of literature; it is a common thread in nearly all creative human endeavors. Without imagination, humanity could not have transcended primitive existence. In fact, imagination is the very essence of science itself. From this perspective, science fiction literature combines not one, but two types of imagination: the literary (aesthetic) imagination and the scientific (deductive) imagination.

Therefore, it can be argued that science fiction is a genre grounded in the fusion of science and literature, employing both artistic and scientific imagination, which gives the genre its distinctive and captivating character. Furthermore, it is a predictive form of literature, guided by a scientific foundation, that uses a specific present reality to explore a potential future issue through an artistic literary style. In this sense, it can be viewed as the modern counterpart to the role of the seer or the oracle in ancient times.

2. Classifications of Science Fiction Literature

Science fiction literature is commonly divided into two main categories:

1.2. Hard Science Fiction

This subgenre is characterized by strict adherence to scientific accuracy and a detailed focus on the laws of the natural sciences, such as physics, astronomy, biology, and genetic engineering. It often meticulously describes the technical stages of technological development.[14] Prominent authors in this category include Gregory Benford and Geoffrey A. Landis.[15]

2.2 Soft Science Fiction

This type focuses primarily on philosophical, psychological, social, and political themes. Here, technological advancements serve as a background or a tool to explore human experiences and societal issues.[16] The term also applies to stories that emphasize character development and inner emotions.[17] Notable writers include Ursula K. Le

14 al- 'Abd, "Science Fiction as a Narrative Strategy", 29.

15 Muhammad al-Hadi 'Ayyad, *Science Fiction Literature* (Damascus University: Damascus 2015), 50.

16 al- 'Abd, "Science Fiction as a Narrative Strategy", 29.

17 Subhi, Fahmawi, "The Novel of the Future and Science Fiction: Alexandria 2050 as a Model", *Scientific Literature Journal* 9 (April 2014), 189.

Guin (2018) and Philip K. Dick, with Ray Bradbury (2012) considered a pioneer in this area.[18]

Under these two broad categories, several subgenres exist, classified by theme. Some of the most notable include:

Time Travel: A classic theme in science fiction, time travel explores the possibility of moving between past, present, and future using imagined devices. English author H.G. Wells pioneered this subgenre with his famous novel The Time Machine (1895), which depicts a scientist inventing a device that enables time travel.[19]Space Opera: Set in vast outer space, this subgenre focuses on adventures involving space navigation, planetary conquest, and encounters with alien beings, often driven by military, economic, or exploratory motives.[20] It addresses themes such as space disasters, wars, journeys, colonies, and extraterrestrial life.[21] Notable works include Arthur C. Clarke's (2008) 2001: A Space Odyssey and Rendezvous with Rama, which portray space colonies inhabited by non-human beings[22], as well as Ray Bradbury's The Martian Chronicles.[23]

Robots and Androids: This subgenre examines the relationship between humans and machines, tracing its evolution from admiration to anxiety due to excessive technological advancement. It often presents a pessimistic vision where machines (such as cyborgs) dominate and enslave humans, lacking emotions and empathy.[24] Treatment varies: some writers, like Czech author Karel Čapek (in his foundational play R.U.R.), portray robots as threats rebelling against humans, while others, such as Isaac Asimov, depict them as helpful tools in daily human life, governed by famous robotic laws.[25]

Cyberpunk**:** Emerging in the 1980s, the term cyberpunk was coined by Bruce Bethke in 1983 to describe stories reflecting the

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18 Ajser Magazine, "Science Fiction Literature: Its Definition and Means" (Accessed 22 September 2025).

19 Issam 'Asaqla, "Science Fiction: Concept, Types, and Functions", *al-Majla* 2 (2011), 127.

20 'Asaqla, "Science Fiction: Concept, Types, and Functions", 128.

21 Boumaza, "Science Fiction Concept and Species Question'', 20.

22 Ma 'ati, *Science Fiction Between Science and Superstition*, 57.

23 'Ayyad, *Science Fiction Literature*, 24.

24 'Asaqla, "Science Fiction: Concept, Types, and Functions", 128.

25 Ma 'ati, *Science Fiction Between Science and Superstition*, 58.

information explosion and set in a bleak, complex future world.[26] It focuses on the effects of biotechnology, drugs, and physical enhancements on humans within corrupt cities dominated by multinational corporations, surpassing governmental authority. Influenced by nihilism and postmodernism[27], it features anti-heroes—rebellious, marginalized characters contrasting traditional protagonists. Key authors include William Gibson (Neuromancer, 1984), Bruce Sterling, and Neal Stephenson.[28]

Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic: This pessimistic subgenre deals with the annihilation or collapse of human civilization due to a major catastrophe, such as nuclear war, a global pandemic, or an alien invasion.[29] It describes the state of the world and the remnants of humanity in the aftermath. Significant works include H.G. Wells' The War of the Worlds, depicting destruction by aliens[30]; Karel Čapek's Krakatit (1924), warning of atomic explosion risks; and George Orwell's 1984, portraying a nightmarish future where Earth is divided into warring superpowers, and individuals lose all personal freedoms under perpetual surveillance.[31]

Future Cities: This subgenre specializes in envisioning the potential state of future urban environments. Writer Jan Van Herp, in his book Panorama of Science Fiction,[32] classified future cities into three main types:

- Extrapolation*:* This involves creating a technical description of a future world based on current data. The shape of tomorrow's world is predicted by studying ongoing scientific and technological developments. Most works by Jules Verne belong to this type, along with novels like The Shape of Things to Come by H.G. Wells and Last and First Men by Olaf Stapledon, which predict a world dominated by American identity (Americanized) by the year 4000 AD and explore the artificial heating of the poles.[33]

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26 John Clute, *Science Fiction from 1980 to the Present: The Cambridge Guide to Science Fiction Collective authorship*, Trans. 'Ilmi and others (Cairo: National Translation Project, 1991), 141.

27 David Seed, *Science Fiction: A Very Short Introduction*, Trans. Nevin 'Abd al-Raouf (Cairo: Hindawi Foundation for Education and Culture, 2016), 68.

28 Seed, *Science Fiction: A Very Short Introduction*, 68.

29 'Asaqla, "Science Fiction: Concept, Types, and Functions", 128.

30 Ma 'ati, *Science Fiction Between Science and Superstition*, 60.

31 Ma 'ati, *Science Fiction Between Science and Superstition*, 60.

32 Ma 'ati, *Science Fiction Between Science and Superstition*, 60.

33 Ma 'ati, *Science Fiction Between Science and Superstition*, 60.

• Utopia: A Greek term meaning "the good, non-existent place." The term in its modern sense is attributed to Thomas More in the 16th century, referring to an ideal, impossible place.[34] Darko Suvin defines it as a "desired alternative historical structure".[35] Writers in this category attempt to depict ideal civilizations and better future worlds, as seen in works like Francis Bacon's New Atlantis, Tommaso Campanella's City of the Sun, and Thomas More's Utopia.[36]

• Dystopia: Also known as anti-utopia or cacotopia, this is the opposite of utopia. It refers to a corrupt, dysfunctional society that offers a pessimistic view of the future.[37] An early example is Émile Souvestre's The World as It Will Be (1846), which predicts the enslavement of humans by machines and the replacement of human emotions with utility.[38] These works can be sharply satirical, such as George S. Schuyler's Black No More (1931), where the discovery to change skin color leads to social chaos instead of the desired equality.[39]

• The Quest for Immortality and the Elixir of Life: The obsession with immortality and the search for eternal life is one of humanity's oldest and deepest concerns, reflected in literary creations from the ancient Epic of Gilgamesh to contemporary science fiction, which serves as a modern extension of this mythical desire. Thus, the theme of immortality has been a central focus in science fiction, treated by writers from various angles. Some depict a state of perpetual "non-death" rather than true immortality, as in the novels This Immortal and When the Waker Sleeps.[40] Others focus on the pursuit of immortality itself as a central motif, a recurring theme for many authors, as seen in Roger Carasini's The Immortal, Isaac Asimov's The End of Eternity, and Jack Hance's Kingdom of Kill.[41]The imagined methods for achieving immortality are diverse, but the most common is replacing the human body with an enhanced robotic or biological one. Some works explore altering and controlling time itself, such as in Poul Anderson's Time Patrol, where the heroes form a police force guarding time streams from

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34 Muhammad 'Azzam, *Science Fiction Literature* (Damascus: Talas for Studies Translation and Publishing, 1994), 27.
35 Seed, *Science Fiction: A Very Short Introduction*, 73.
36 Ma 'ati, *Science Fiction Between Science and Superstition*, 61.
37 Seed, *Science Fiction: A Very Short Introduction*, 74.
38 Ma 'ati, *Science Fiction Between Science and Superstition*, 61–62.
39 Seed, *Science Fiction: A Very Short Introduction*, 74.
40 John Gattegno, *Science Fiction Literature*, Trans. Michel Khoury (Damascus: Dar Talas for Studies Translation and Publishing, 1990), 132.
41 Gattegno, *Science Fiction Literature*, 133.

pirates who threaten the future. In Asimov's The End of Eternity, the "Eternals" correct the past to influence the present. Ibrahim Bouri's Apples of the Sun offers an example of the butterfly effect, where crushing a butterfly during a trip to prehistory leads to an unexpected change in American election results.[42]

- Space Erotica: This is a common subgenre in Western literature, where the connection between space exploration and sexual themes has established a prominent place within this literary context. This genre often deals with extreme themes, with many texts focusing on artificial reproduction versus natural reproduction or featuring virtual sexual practices within fictional storylines. It also explores the nature of emotional and romantic relationships that might arise between beings from different worlds and planets, and how these relationships can develop to include emotional and sexual dimensions. Prominent authors in this field include Nestor Anderson, author of The Pink Palace and Eight-Hour Savior, and Iain Banks, author of The Use of Weapons (1979).[43]

- Political Science Fiction: This is classified as one of the most prominent subgenres to emerge from science fiction. Initially, it was closely linked to the main genre and considered an integral part of it, but it quickly became an independent literary form with its own distinct identity, especially in recent decades. Since the core of science fiction revolves around speculating about the future, political science fiction focuses on foreseeing the political future and its potential for deep political and social transformations within society. Prominent issues it addresses include: the global dominance of a specific ideology, the hegemony of political violence over social relations, religious extremism, the rise of dictatorships, the domination of another intelligent humanoid species (like apes or wild men), and the forms of government and leadership in future societies.[44]George Orwell's novel 1984 is the prime example of this type, predicting the global dominance of a totalitarian system by the year 1984, which becomes a reality in the novel's world.[45] Other examples include the novel Voyage de mon frère à levis au pays de l'utopie paysanne, which depicts life in Russia in 1984,

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42 Gattegno, *Science Fiction Literature*, 134.

43 Ahmed Khaled Tawfik, *The Riddle Behind the Lines Conversations from the Writing Kitchen* (Cairo: Dar Al-Shoroukd, 2017), 11.

44 Mahmoud Qasim, *Science Fiction Literature: Twentieth Century Literature* (Cairo: Egyptian Book Organization, 2006), 115.

45 Qasim, *Science Fiction Literature: Twentieth Century Literature*, 117.

imagining the Soviet Union transformed into a free peasant revolution and a totalitarian society. There is also the Hungarian author György Dalos's 1985 (a follow-up to Orwell's work), Anthony Burgess's 1985, and General Sir John Hackett's The Third World War, set in August 1984, which depicts the outbreak of World War III between Germany and England, lasting until Russia intervenes a decade later.[46]

• Alternate History: This branch of literature emerged in the late 19th century and became an independent genre after World War II, which remains one of its most popular topics, alongside others like the continued existence of the Byzantine or Roman Empire, or the extended aftermath of the American Civil War.[47] These stories rely on what is known as a "point of divergence," a crucial crossroads in the actual historical timeline; at this point, the author abandons accepted historical facts to follow an alternative and parallel path,[48] thereby answering a key hypothetical question: "What if?".[49] Among the novels classified under this type, Philip K. Dick's The Man in the High Castle stands out as one of the most famous works of alternate history, exploring the question that has intrigued many: what if Hitler had not committed suicide and his forces had not been defeated by the Allies?[50]

• Biological Science Fiction and Genetic Engineering: From the researcher's perspective, this category encompasses multiple themes, including medicine, pharmacology, genetics, biochemistry, ecology, and other life sciences. Writers in this genre have focused on embodying their hopes and fears regarding tremendous advances in biology, making their texts a mixture of optimism and pessimism. On one hand, they express hope for improving humanity's condition by finding radical solutions to diseases threatening human existence (especially genetic diseases) and producing new, healthy generations free from defects. They also address organ transplantation, which has become a tangible reality (like hand, ear, heart, liver, spinal cord transplants...), even going beyond that to the idea of manufacturing human "spare parts" similar to those used in machines—an idea derived from cloning technologies, where clones are used as a reserve supply of replacement organs for the original.[51] On the other hand, the fears are portrayed as dangers

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46 Qasim, *Science Fiction Literature: Twentieth Century Literature*, 117.
47 Seed, *Science Fiction: A Very Short Introduction*, 111.
48 Falah Post, ''Falah Al-Abd Al-Aziz'' (Accessed 22 September 2025).
49 Falah Post, ''Falah Al-Abd Al-Aziz''.
50 Falah Post, ''Falah Al-Abd Al-Aziz''.
51 Qasim, *Science Fiction Literature: Twentieth Century Literature*, 97.

surrounding humans from all sides, threatening not only individual lives but the future of all humanity under cloning technologies. Some writers predicted the domination of a specific human species, while others saw that biological advancement could lead to a new kind of war, a "biological war" potentially more deadly and destructive than traditional wars. Some novelists have blended science fiction with medical concepts, as in the works of Isaac Asimov, notably his novel Fantastic Voyage (1966), which details the adventure of a medical team miniaturized to microscopic size to be injected into the body of a wounded scientist; they travel through his bloodstream to treat him, observing internal bodily components as if on a real science fiction journey.[52] Similarly, the Russian writer Alexander Belyaev's (1942) novel Professor Dowell's Head (1925) explores the possibilities of transplanting and transferring human organs between bodies.[53]

- In the field of ecology: (environmental science), writers have started from scientific findings to envision a future based on environmental degradation, such as the expanding ozone hole (which has become a tangible reality threatening the planet), acid rain that destroys various forms of life indiscriminately (wiping out plants, animals, and humans), alongside climate change, global warming, and the resulting spread of famines and hurricanes, and the potential flooding of parts of continents due to polar ice melting.

Science fiction (or scientific narrative) diversifies according to the issues and themes it addresses. However, it is notable that these subgenres rarely appear in pure form; it is uncommon to find a literary work that falls under just one type, especially in novels, where their narrative length and breadth allow authors to blend several themes into a single work. For example, in H.G. Wells's The First Men in the Moon, the themes of space exploration and the search for new worlds on the moon are combined with the theme of the ideal society (utopia), depicting a highly organized lunar society structured like a bee colony.[54] However, this ideal image soon transforms into its opposite, a dystopian society, as dark aspects of this world are revealed, an absence of real-life manifestations and individuals lacking freedom, becoming slaves to a specific program they must execute until death. Wells presents a

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52 Qasim, *Science Fiction Literature: Twentieth Century Literature*, 97.
53 Ma 'ati, *Science Fiction Between Science and Superstition*, 58.
54 al-Ghannam, *Artistic Creativity in Science Fiction Stories*, 37.

powerful image of workers who are drugged and discarded like giant meat plants simply because they are surplus to that society's needs.[55]

This overlap between genres makes classifying a novel into a specific type problematic, but this difficulty can be overcome by focusing on the dominant theme or central idea the writer seeks to highlight and convey.

3. Characteristics of Science Fiction Literature

Science fiction literature is distinguished by a set of characteristics that differentiate it from other literary genres and maintain its independence. The following is a summary of its most prominent features:

1. Predicting the Future (Literature of Foresight): This is one of its most prominent traits. It builds on current or potential scientific facts and theories to envision future events (or an alternative past) that are imaginable and plausible, thereby answering essential hypothetical questions like "What if?"[56]

2. Imaginary Journey: A fundamental structural element, it is the mechanism that enables travel to other worlds (in space, to the past, the future, or even inside a living organism).[57]

3. Primacy of Idea (Literature of Concepts): The scientific or philosophical idea represents the core and spirit of this literature, to the extent that it often becomes the main "protagonist" of the work. The absence of a deep idea leads to trivial content.[58]

4. Departure from Reality to Foresee the Future: It does not merely transcribe reality literally but uses it as a platform to launch into visions of a future or an alternative virtual reality, which may be optimistic or pessimistic.[59]

5. Interdisciplinary Integration (Plurality of Knowledge): It blends scientific knowledge (in its various branches) with philosophical, political, economic, and social knowledge, making it an intellectual and educational tool capable of raising profound questions.

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55 al-Ghannam, *Artistic Creativity in Science Fiction Stories,* 38.

56 Bouchaib Saouri, ''Science Fiction in the Moroccan Novel: Concerns and Specificities'', *Fusul* 1/71 (Summer/Fall 2008), 59.

57 Gattegno, *Science Fiction Literature*, 109.

58 'Asaqla, *Character Construction in Arabic Science Fiction Novels,* 88.

59 Mohamed Ahmed Mustafa, ''Contemporary Arab Science Fiction and the Future'', *Fusul* 1/71 (Summer/Fall 2008), 81.

6. Essential Reliance on Scientific Logic: Science appears not merely as background décor or a magical force but as the foundational cornerstone upon which the work's events are built, unlike other literary genres where it might be mentioned as part of the daily context.[60]

7. Progressive Outlook (Orientation Towards the Future): It looks forward towards the future, while many other literary types focus on the past and its heritage.[61]

8. Objectification of Character (Dominance of Machine/Idea): As a product of the industrial revolution, the centrality of the "human hero" declines in favor of the machine or abstract idea. Human characters are often flat or mere tools for presenting technical developments, subservient to the plot and central idea of the work.[62]

9. Language and Style: The language in many of its works, especially in soft science fiction, is freed from the rigidity of dry scientific terminology. It has developed a unique hybrid language combining literary poeticism and metaphor on one hand with the precision and objectivity of science on the other, inventing new vocabulary and terms to express future or impossible concepts.[63]

4. The Origins and Development of Science Fiction Literature

There are many different opinions about the earliest roots of science fiction. This is because it's difficult to agree on a single definition for it. These opinions can be grouped into several main views: some see its origin in mythology, others connect it to religious sources, some consider it a product of utopian ideas, while a fourth group sees it as a modern literature, born directly from the contemporary technological revolution.[64] Each of these views has its own arguments and justifications.

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60 Jacques Goimard - Gérard Klein, *Histoires de planètes* (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1975), 8.

61 Griffiths, *Three Visions of the Future*, 27.

62 'Asaqla, *Character Construction in Arabic Science Fiction Novels*, 89.

63 Colin Wilson, *The Reasonable and the Unreasonable in Modern Literature*, trans. Anis Zaki Hassan (Beirut: Dar al-Adab, 1978), 161.

64 El-Yassin Mohamed Abdullah, *Science Fiction in Modern Arabic Literature in the Light of Comparative Studies* (Homs: Al-Baath University, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Master's thesis, 2008), 26.

4.1 The Mythological Origin

Supporters of this view believe that science fiction is as old as humanity itself. They argue that its roots go back to the imagination of early humans and the myths they created to explain the world around them. Science fiction and myth are similar because both present a world that is completely different from our familiar reality. "The earliest roots of science fiction began with human imagination and the myths they wove to explain the phenomena around them, which were born from a fear of the unknown."[65]

Many science fiction stories draw inspiration from mythological backgrounds, whether obvious or hidden. For example, Greek myths are behind many modern works, like Edmund Spenser's The Faerie Queene, which inspired contemporary works such as J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series. [66]

The Egyptian writer Nihad Sharif emphasizes that the early forms of science fiction were a kind of myth. However, these myths weren't just imaginary tales; they were serious attempts by ancient societies to explain life, nature, and the universe, helping to calm their fears of the unknown. Thus, myth was a form of primitive scientific thinking.[67]

Therefore, supporters of this view see myth as the direct ancestor of science fiction. Early humans used myth to explain everything they couldn't understand, like giving the wind a god and the rain another god. Examples cited by its supporters vary; some point to the Epic of Gilgamesh, which features a superhuman hero searching for the secret of immortality, while others see the true starting point in the works of the Greek writer Lucian, such as A True Story and Icaromenippus. [68]

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[65] Fatima Boumaza, ''The Science Fiction and The Circumstances of Its Genesis'', *Semiotics Journal*17/2 (March 2022), 366.

[66] Assam University, ''A Cross-Study of the Trend of Science Fiction through History'', (Accessed 23 September 2025).

[67] Abdullah, *Science Fiction in Modern Arabic Literature in the Light of Comparative Studies,* 26.

[68] Yasmine Boularas-Salma Khoudari, *Science Fiction in Contemporary Arabic Language: A Reading of Models* (Algeria: University of Yahia Fares, Faculty of Arts and Languages, Master's thesis, 2024), 14-15.

4.2 The Religious Origin

Proponents of this opinion rely on religious texts and sources, noting the similarity between the supernatural events in these texts and the themes of science fiction. For example, the Torah and Isra'iliyyat (Jewish and Islamic narratives) became a rich source for science fiction writers to fuel their imaginations and fulfill their storytelling dreams. "A critic might take a passage from a religious book and interpret it in a way that shows its connection to a science fiction story."[69]

Books often referenced include the Egyptian Book of the Dead, which describes the soul's journey to the afterlife, and the Chinese (I Ching) or Book of Predictions. The most used text in this context is the Book of Ezekiel in the Old Testament, with its description of God's strange vehicle. [70]

Science fiction writers also found inspiring content in the Holy Quran. Muhammad Najib al-Talawi suggests that "the story of the People of the Cave is a form of time travel, Noah's Flood represents the destruction of humanity, and the Isra and Mi'raj (the Night Journey and Ascension) is a conquest of space."[71]

From all this, it is concluded that religious beliefs played a major role in shaping the awareness of science fiction ideas, as they contained news and descriptions of supernatural events beyond human capabilities.

4.3 The Utopian Origin

Most critics and researchers agree that utopian ideas represent one of the main roots of science fiction. If we look at most stories in this genre, we find they contain many elements of the ideal city. "Utopia refers to the ideal city or society that an artist dreams of, free from all the flaws and problems of the real world we live in."[72]

Science fiction and utopia meet in their shared goal of addressing aspects of social development and searching for a better world, even if their methods differ. "If we consider science fiction the

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69 Abdullah, *Science Fiction in Modern Arabic Literature in the Light of Comparative Studies,* 28.

70 Abdullah, *Science Fiction in Modern Arabic Literature in the Light of Comparative Studies,* 28.

71 Abdullah, *Science Fiction in Modern Arabic Literature in the Light of Comparative Studies,* 28.

72 Jabbour Abdul Noor, *Literary Dictionary* (Beirut: Dar al-Ilm Lilmalayin, 1932), 220.

literature of searching for utopia, then Plato's Republic must be considered a very early form of science fiction."[73]

Throughout history, many philosophers and thinkers from both the West and the Arab world have presented their models of the ideal city. After Platos' The Republic 360 BC, came Christianopolis (1619), and then Francis Bacon's New Atlantis (1627). In Arab civilization, this trend is embodied by Al-Farabi (d. 339 AH) in his book, The Opinions of the People of the Virtuous City, where he outlined the conditions for an ideal state. Similarly, Ibn Tufail (1185) presented a different model in his philosophical story Hayy ibn Yaqdhan, which focuses on an ideal individual isolated from the constraints and laws of society.[74]

The common factor in all these models is their focus on science and reason as tools for building a virtuous society and an ideal life. This creates a strong link with the core of science fiction literature.

4.4 The Modern Origin

Supporters of this view reject the idea that science fiction has ancient roots in myths or religious stories. They insist it is a product of the modern era, unknown to humanity until the beginning of massive scientific and technological progress.[75]

Proponents of this direction believe science fiction was born at the moment science began to take its true place as the engine of the world. Some even deny that any earlier forms of literature resembling it existed before the Industrial Revolution and the practical application of scientific developments.

With the incredible speed of scientific discoveries in recent decades, writers began to follow these achievements and draw inspiration from them for their writing. This led to th e birth of a new, independent literary genre: science fiction. "This type of literature was born at the end of the 19th century and grew strong in the early 20th century with the scientific renaissance and the modern industrial and technological revolution."[76]

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73 Assam University, ''A Cross-Study of the Trend of Science Fiction through History''.

74 Abdullah, *Science Fiction in Modern Arabic Literature in the Light of Comparative Studies,* 29.

75 Boumaza, ''The Science Fiction and The Circumstances of Its Genesis'', 222.

76 Mohamed Eid Al-Kharboutly, ''Mohamed 'Azzam and His Book on Science Fiction Literature'', *Science Fiction Magazine* 47 (2012), 7.

Therefore, while the early seeds of science fiction might be found in previous works like Western utopias or Arabic folk tales and myths, it did not crystallize as a distinct art form with its own term, features, and characteristics until the end of the 19th century. This was the time of the rise of the machine and humanity's deep engagement with technological progress.

5. Science Fiction Novel in The West

In the Western world, science fiction stands out as one of the most brilliant forms of literary creativity. This genre found fertile ground to flourish, benefiting from a European environment that witnessed tremendous scientific and technological progress, along with a deep appreciation for the role of science.[77]

References such as A Dictionary of Literary Terms indicate that the roots of this literature date back to the second century AD, when the Greek writer Lucian created a main character who traveled to the moon.[78]

If we trace the true beginnings of this art, we find that scholars agree that its actual emergence was in the sixteenth century with the English writer Thomas More (1478–1535), who drew inspiration from Plato's Republic. More wrote about an ideal place he called "Utopia," imagining a virtuous society governed by justice, with a national system that ensured development and provided employment for all.[79]

The British writer H.G. Wells is considered one of the most prominent pioneers in this field, so much so that some critics regard him as the spiritual father of science fiction literature. While Jules Verne paved the way, Wells expanded his horizons, relying on the scientific theories of his time and creating imaginary worlds and machines that amazed readers. He made time travel possible through a special machine, imagined strange Martian creatures waging a fierce war against humans, depicted an ideal world in his novel A Modern Utopia, introduced the idea of the invisible man, traveled to the moon and walked on its soil, and imagined saving the Earth by colliding it with a flaming celestial body.[80]

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77 Abdullah, *Science Fiction in Modern Arabic Literature in the Light of Comparative Studies,* 216.

78 Ibrahim Fathi, *Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Sfax: The Arab Publishing Union, 1932), 263.

79 Boumaza, ''The Science Fiction and The Circumstances of Its Genesis'', 22.

80 Boumaza, ''The Science Fiction and The Circumstances of Its Genesis'', 22.

From all this, it is clear that the great interest in science and technology in Western societies was a key factor in the flourishing of science fiction literature, with writers emerging who demonstrated a deep understanding of the characteristics and dimensions of this art.

Among the most famous science fiction writers in the West is Edgar Rice Burroughs, who wrote A Princess of Mars (1912). It tells the story of a soldier mysteriously transported to Mars, where he encounters strange egg-like creatures with large heads and shrunken limbs. [81]

There is also Jack Finney's The Body Snatchers (1955), set in a small town in California, where mysterious plants begin producing identical human copies that replace the original humans. This story was turned into a famous film titled Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1957).

Philip K. Dick's Vulcan's Hammer (1975) presents a terrifying scenario of a comprehensive surveillance system run by a supercomputer named Vulcan, based south of Geneva, which releases mobile electronic units to collect information about humans.[82]

It is noticeable that science fiction writers ventured far into their imagination. Some of their ideas became reality, such as traveling to the moon, while others remained confined to the realm of imagination, such as time machines and strange alien creatures.

Despite the great successes achieved by this literature, it now faces a significant challenge in envisioning the future. The rapid technological changes in our world have made it difficult for literary imagination to precede or even keep pace with them. In fact, some critics believe that current technologies have surpassed the imagination of the writers themselves, making dystopian works—such as George Orwell's 1984 or Aldous Huxley's Brave New World—seem more realistic than optimistic models.[83]

It is also notable that science fiction literature today no longer fulfills its original purpose with the same intensity. Instead, it addresses complex human issues and even infiltrates the spiritual and private

81 Seed, *Science Fiction: A Very Short Introduction*, 32-66.
82 Seed, *Science Fiction: A Very Short Introduction*, 32-66.
83 Roger Boizenu, ''Western Science Fiction in Crisis'', *Science Fiction Magazine* 5/6 (2008/2009), 9.

aspects of humanity.[84] The question now is: Will this literature in the future seek to adopt a new path through which it contributes to solving the complexities of human life rather than adding to them? Only time will tell.

6. Science Fiction Novel in The Arab World

Arab scholars and critics hold differing views on the origins of science fiction literature within Arab culture. While some argue that it is an ancient form of literature deeply rooted in Arab mythology and folk tales, others contend that it is a modern import from Western culture, flourishing alongside global scientific and technological advancements. This divergence of opinion has long kept this genre on the margins of critical attention, primarily due to the nature of the traditional Arab environment, which did not experience the same degree of scientific and technological revolution as the West.

Nevertheless, science fiction literature has ancient Arab roots that can be traced through a number of classical texts. Frequently cited examples include Ibn Tufail's allegorical tale Hayy ibn Yaqdhan, Abu al-Ala al-Ma'arri's Epistle of Forgiveness—which depicts an imaginary journey to the afterlife—and One Thousand and One Nights, with its supernatural elements such as flying carpets, winged horses, magic lamps, and islands of giants.[85]

The roots of this genre extend even further back. Many critics consider the satirical story A True Story by the Syrian writer Lucian of Samosata[86] (2nd century AD) to be one of the earliest examples of science fiction in history. The story recounts an imaginary sea voyage that ends with a ship being lifted to the moon, where sailors encounter strange creatures and participate in a war between the King of the Moon and the King of the Sun over the ownership of the planet Venus. The story also includes the discovery of an entire world inside a giant whale, making it a precursor to later space travel tales and science fiction.[87]

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84 Siham Drissawi-Abdullah Khenshali, ''Science Fiction Literature Between Reality and Horizons: His Majesty the Great Father by Habib Mounsi as a Model'', *Journal of Arts and Humanities* 17 (December2017), 7o.

85 Alarab-News, ''Science Fiction Literature as the Literature of the Future'', (accesssed 23 September 2025).

86 Lucian of Samosata, A Syrian Writer under Roman Empire Rule (190–120 AD), works include The Fly's Praise, A True Story, and The Saturn Letters.

87 Samar Al-Diyoub, *The Metaphor of Science: Studies in Science Fiction Literature* (Damascus, Syria: Syrian General Organization for Books, 2012), 12.

In the modern era, the influence of Western novels on Arabic literature is undeniable, contributing to the clearer emergence of science fiction. Rifa'a al-Tahtawi's The Locations of the Orbits in the Events of Telemachus (a translation from French) was among the first works to introduce this genre into modern Arabic literature.[88]

A number of pioneers also emerged who contributed to establishing this genre, including Youssef Ezzedine Issa through his radio plays such as We Want Life and The Flood.[89] Tawfiq al-Hakim in plays like Journey to Tomorrow, A Poet on the Moon, and Lunar Report. Youssef El-Sebai, in his novel You Are Not Alone (1970), explores an advanced plant-based world. Fathy Ghanem in his novel From Where? (1959), and Mustafa Mahmoud, in a series of novels such as The Spider (1964), Man Below Zero (1967), and Opium, address ideas like reincarnation and scientific progress. Sabri Moussa, in his novel The Man from the Scrap Metal Field, offers a futuristic vision of humanity's destiny in the age of technology.[90]

Nihad Sharif is considered one of the most prominent specialists in this field, earning the title Dean of Arab Science Fiction. His works include The Conqueror of Time, Under the Microscope, and Inhabitants of the Second World. In Syria, Dr Talib Imran stands out as one of the pioneers of the genre, enriching Arabic literature with numerous works of scientific short stories and novels, such as Those Who Pass Behind the Sun (1979), Beyond the Barrier of Time (1985), and Planet of Dreams (1987).[91]

Science fiction literature was not limited to its early pioneers but expanded to include writers from across the Arab world, such as the Mauritanian writer Moussa Ould Ebnou, author of City of the Wind (1992), the Moroccan writer Ahmed Abdel Salam El-Baqqali, author of The Blue Flood (1992), the Sudanese writer Gamal Abdel Malik, author of The Ayyubid Era (1991), the Kuwaiti writer Taiba Ahmed Al-Ibrahim, author of The Extinction of Man and The Secret Village [92].

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88 Yasmine Boularas-Salma Khoudari, *Science Fiction in Contemporary Arabic Language: A Reading of Models,* 22.

89 'Azzam, *Science Fiction Literature,* 23.

90 Boularas-Khoudari, *Science Fiction in Contemporary Arabic Language: A Reading of Models,* 24.

91 Boularas-Khoudari, *Science Fiction in Contemporary Arabic Language: A Reading of Models,* 24-25

92 Boularas-Khoudari, *Science Fiction in Contemporary Arabic Language: A Reading of Models,* 26.

The contemporary period, particularly since the dawn of the twenty-first century and the spread of globalization, has been characterized by the emergence of new existential questions. Novels published during this era have addressed pressing global issues such as Deadly diseases and pandemics. The dangers of nuclear war and environmental destruction. The rise of artificial intelligence and robots, and their potential to replace humans.

Prominent authors who have emerged during this period include Moroccan writer Abdel Rahim Bahir with his novel Just a Dream (2002). Tunisian writer El Hadi Thabet with his two novels, The Jinn's Cave (2002*)* and If Hannibal Returned (2002). Mauritanian writer Moussa Ould Ebnou with his novel Pilgrimage of the Wicked (2002), Syrian writer Talib Imran with his novel The Dark Ages (2002), Lebanese writer Samir Shamss with his novel At the Edge of the Universe (2002). Algerian writers: Nabil Daouda with Beautiful Words – A Journey to Venus *(*2000); Habib Mounsi with Jalaltahu - The Supreme Father (2000); Faycel El Ahmar with Amin El Alwani (2003); and Waciny Laredj with The Tale of the Last Arab (2012).[93]

In conclusion, it can be said that the science fiction novel is present and active in the Arab literary scene, albeit to a lesser extent compared to other literary genres or even its counterpart in Western literature. This disparity is due to several reasons, foremost among them being the weak relationship between modern Arab culture and scientific achievement, which affects the nourishment of science fiction with ideas and technologies.

Ultimately, despite its deep historical roots from Hayy ibn Yaqdhan to Lucian, Arabic science fiction remains a marginal genre compared to its Western counterpart or other literary forms. This marginalization is attributed to the gap between Arab culture and scientific progress, which has weakened the nurturing environment for this genre. Critical perceptions and audience challenges have also contributed to keeping it out of the spotlight. However, recent years have witnessed a noticeable awakening, with an expanding base of writers and a diverse geographical spread. Arabic science fiction has begun to vigorously address contemporary concerns such as artificial intelligence, pandemics, and future risks, heralding a brighter future for this literature capable of envisioning tomorrow.

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[93] Boularas-Khoudari, *Science Fiction in Contemporary Arabic Language: A Reading of Models,* 27-28*.*

Conclusion

Science fiction literature emerges as a dynamic field where imagination and science converge to explore the profound questions of human existence. This study has shown that the genre cannot be confined within a single rigid definition; rather, it thrives on its multiplicity of forms, ranging from hard science fiction with its precision and technical rigor to soft science fiction emphasizing philosophical, social, and cultural dimensions. A key finding of this study is that science fiction resists any single rigid definition; instead, it uniquely fuses two forms of imagination—the literary-aesthetic and the scientific-deductive, as best captured by Nihad Sharif's formulation. Another major result concerns the genre's current crisis in the West: rapid technological advances have outpaced literary imagination, making dystopian visions such as Orwell's 1984 appear more realistic than optimistic futures. This challenge, however, is not yet fully present in the Arab world, where science fiction is still developing its own identity and potential.

Through its subgenres-time travel, utopia and dystopia, cyberpunk, ecological narratives, political science fiction, and many others-science fiction demonstrates its capacity to address pressing questions about humanity's future, the limits of knowledge, and the transformative power of science and technology.

Tracing the historical roots of the genre reveals a rich and complex genealogy. While some scholars connect its origins to mythology and religious traditions, others emphasize its ties to utopian visions or regard it as a product of the modern scientific revolution. Each perspective sheds light on how humanity has long sought to explain the unknown, envision alternative realities, and dream of better futures. The modern crystallization of science fiction in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, through writers such as Mary Shelley, Jules Verne, and H. G. Wells, marked its rise as a distinct literary genre, capable of combining rigorous logic with narrative creativity. In the West, it flourished against the backdrop of rapid industrial and technological advances, establishing itself not only as entertainment but also as a respected cultural and academic field.

In the Arab world, science fiction has followed a more complex trajectory. While its classical roots can be traced to texts such as Ibn Tufail's (1185) Hayy ibn Yaqdhan and Abu al-Ala al-Ma 'arri's (1057) Epistle of Forgiveness, its modern form began to take shape under the

influence of translated works and pioneering local contributions. Writers like Tawfiq al-Hakim, Nihad Sharif, Talib Imran, and others localized the genre by weaving it into Arab cultural, social, and political realities. Although the volume of works remains modest compared to Western literature, Arab science fiction demonstrates a growing awareness of contemporary global challenges, from environmental crises and pandemics to artificial intelligence and identity struggles. These contributions highlight the genre's potential to act as a bridge between scientific thought and cultural reflection in Arab societies.

A further finding specific to the Arab context is that the genre's marginalization stems primarily from a weak connection between modern Arab culture and scientific achievement, which has limited the intellectual nourishment available to science fiction writers. However, the study also reveals a recent awakening since the twenty-first century, with a growing number of Arab authors addressing contemporary issues such as artificial intelligence, pandemics, and environmental crises, signalling a promising future for the genre in the Arab world.

The comparative perspective presented in this study reveals both convergences and divergences between Western and Arab science fiction. While Western science fiction has historically benefited from a direct interaction with scientific progress, Arab science fiction has been shaped by questions of identity, cultural continuity, and the search for relevance in an age of globalization. Yet, both traditions share the conviction that literature can anticipate the future, challenge prevailing assumptions, and open imaginative pathways toward alternative possibilities.

Ultimately, science fiction must be seen not as a marginal or secondary form of literature, but as a vital field of human creativity that enriches intellectual and cultural discourse. It extends beyond entertainment to function as a lens through which humanity contemplates the ethical, political, and existential implications of science and technology. By combining the accuracy of scientific reasoning with the depth of literary imagination, science fiction becomes a literature of foresight, capable of illuminating both the promises and the perils of human advancement.

Therefore, the findings of this research affirm that science fiction is not merely a Western import or a passing literary trend. Rather, it is a global genre with diverse roots and evolving forms, one that has already begun to leave its mark on Arabic literature and promises to play an

even greater role in the future. It stands as a testament to humanity's endless quest to imagine, question, and shape what lies beyond the horizon.

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