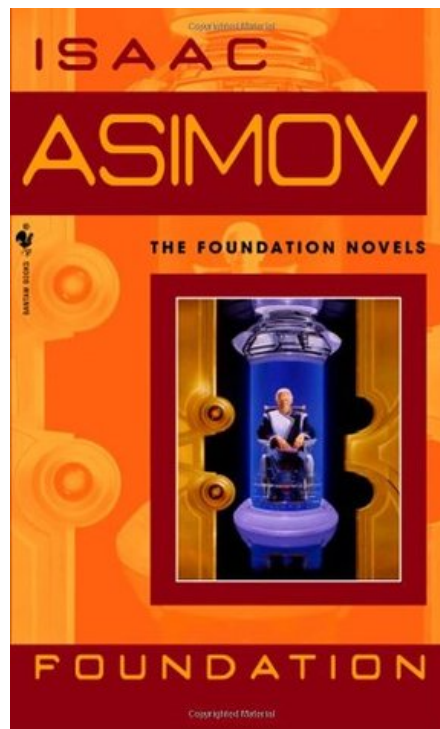




Foundation

Isaac Asimov

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Foundation Isaac Asimov

For twelve thousand years the Galactic Empire has ruled supreme. Now it is dying. But only Hari Seldon, creator of the revolutionary science of psychohistory, can see into the future -- to a dark age of ignorance, barbarism, and warfare that will last thirty thousand years. To preserve knowledge and save mankind, Seldon gathers the best minds in the Empire -- both scientists and scholars -- and brings them to a bleak planet at the edge of the Galaxy to serve as a beacon of hope for a future generations. He calls his sanctuary the Foundation.

But soon the fledgling Foundation finds itself at the mercy of corrupt warlords rising in the wake of the receding Empire. Mankind's last best hope is faced with an agonizing choice: submit to the barbarians and be overrun -- or fight them and be destroyed.

Foundation Details

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Author : Isaac Asimov

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Lyn says

I read this again after about a thirty year hiatus. I remember as a high schooler liking it, and I read and liked some of the sequels, but not entirely getting the full ideas presented.

After some time to grow up and mature, I think I can appreciate Asimov's vision better than before. Maybe it was the lack of much action that hindered my enjoyment as a teenager, but as an adult I really liked the concepts approached and the ideas put forth.

Great science fiction and very influential on the works that came later. This is a MUST read for SF fans.

Ken-ichi says

An amusing read, but I think I still prefer Brin and Simmons when it comes to epic space opera. Probably the most interesting thing about this book (and, I assume, the rest of the series) is the millennia-spanning time scale of its narrative, which Asimov handles by establishing Hari Seldon's statistical prophesy, and then dropping in at critical junctures to investigate how individuals contrive to fulfill that prophecy. It's kind of a fun model, always knowing the general direction of the plot without knowing the detail, a bit like reading the last page first. It can also be dull, contradictory, and occasionally unpleasant. There isn't that much suspense when you can always know Seldon is going to end up correct, and in the end the Foundation will end up ushering in the Renaissance. Asimov's characters also aren't all that likable, or human. They're like strategic robots, avatars the author can inhabit to explain the brilliance of the little political puzzle he's concocted.

It's also slightly ridiculous that in a universe where computational power is so great as to statistically model the destiny of civilizations with great accuracy, we are asked to believe that individual wills and intellects are responsible for shepherding these statistical trends. Characters are always saying, "Oh, it's a Seldon crisis, we should make sure we don't screw this up." Of course they won't screw it up.

This is also a universe of white guys. I'm not against books about white guys, and I don't think every book needs to have a sympathetic, fully-realized representative of every socio-sexual-political-racial identity, but I don't love books about *boring*, soulless white guys in which all the other humans are pointedly idiotic. I think there is one woman in the entire book, and she's a petulant, impotent princess who's easily impressed by fancy jewelry. I guess it's not really a book about people.

Anyway, a decent read, though I'm not feeling particularly compelled to read the next. Should I?

mark monday says

psychohistory - "that branch of mathematics which deals with the reactions of human conglomerates to fixed social and economic stimuli" - says that the patterns and cycles of human societies can be accurately predicted.

Hari Seldon - that genius psychohistorian whose homely visage speaks to his followers hundreds of years after his death - says that the Empire must fall and that thousands of years of barbarism must follow.

The Foundation - that secretive colony of scientists established by Seldon on the planet Terminus - says that they will be humanity's last hope for shortening those thousands of years of barbarism and building humanity back up to its former glory.

Isaac Asimov - that celebrated science fiction Grand Master and clear-eyed progressive - says that he can fix up five linked stories and make of them a single novel with a single-minded purpose, a novel with prose that is straightforward but often witty and resonant, and a narrative that moves forward swiftly but with a decidedly fateful inevitability.

mark monday - that dilettante - says that this novel was a pleasure to read. it often told instead of showed, but that was no problem. it often lead to a climax that was purposely anticlimactic, and that was no problem either. it had one story of the five that held familiar pleasures such as action and sweet revenge and a face-off with a villain, and that was a delightful surprise. it had mystery and intelligence and a dry tone with spiky undercurrents and a lot for him to think about. can humanity's behavior over time truly be predicted?

history - that condescending know-it-all, that ignored librarian, that screaming Cassandra - says that Yes, it can!

Kane says

Foundation. The name is apt.

Isaac Asimov's sprawling scifi tale is the rock on which much of today's space opera is built. Truer scifi historians than me would cite the late 1920s and pulp magazines such as *Amazing Stories* and E. E. "Doc" Smith as the DNA donors that spawned a thousand space operas. They would be right, but Asimov's fame towers above all others. His 1952 story of the decline and fall of the Galactic Empire is space opera's... foundation.

Unfortunately, the analogy continues. Foundation has all the elements of poor writing that makes stuffy literary aristocrats stick their noses up at the genre. And rightfully so. Flat characters, a lack of economical yet creative prose, and endless dialogue are the genre's Achilles heel, and not in a cool Ilium way.

This rant covers only Foundation itself. Despite owning an old edition which includes the entire original trilogy, I only managed to slog through the first book. Barely.

The first chapter with Hari Seldon and a death-or-exile-decision was promising. But the plot device that makes the story potentially interesting also pulls it apart like the gravity of a gas giant. Foundation spans decades and with each shift into a new era, you're introduced to new characters. You learn almost nothing about them and in some scenes the dialogue is so pervasive, violating the hallowed "show-don't-tell" rule so thoroughly, I was actually unsure where these people were.

One of my favorite parts of reading science fiction is being exposed to the new ideas of smart visionary authors. Good scifi ends up being right, cool or both. I obviously try to give anything as old as Foundation more of a pass on this front but I really didn't find any of its concepts mind-bending, or even mind-tickling. Psychohistory, as I understood it, was alright. I guess. Statistics.

Dated elements abruptly eject the reader from the ever so important suspension of disbelief. For days I couldn't shake the scene where two characters shared a bunch of "snuff". I thought, is it reasonable that humans are still using tobacco products 12,000 years in the future?? And snuff?? Atomic energy is the big technology in the Foundation universe. That's like, fascinating, and stuff.

Immediately after I "finished" Foundation, I picked up Scott Westerfeld's *The Risen Empire*. A quote on the cover claimed "In the tradition of Asimov". Uh oh. But wait. Intelligent turns of phrase? Break-neck action? Verisimilitude in the progression of civilizations? Technology that drives the plot, is extremely inventive and is extrapolated from today's knowledge base? Well-thought out characters whose behaviour makes sense but is not cardboard predictable? Other wicked-cool oddities like undead royal families? No snuff? Yes, I'm in the safe and familiar bio-tech embrace of a trusted friend: New Space Opera.

Stories like Foundation are the reason why we even needed a New Space Opera in the first place. Unlike the misadventure of New Coke, this was a significant improvement on the original. The authors of this reinvigorated genre like Banks, Hamilton and Westerfeld (with all due respect to Stephen Baxter and his physics lectures some call novels) focus on quality writing, character development and social commentary. Oh and scientific accuracy verging on "whoooooa there". A few, like Dan Simmons' gorgeous *Hyperion*, are masterworks in any genre.

All this poison being said, I can easily watch old GI Joe and He-Man cartoons and marvel at their sheer genius while a 10-year old today would brand me an idiot. Nostalgia is a shiny prism through which we all view our past. If I had not first read Foundation in my thirties but instead in my teens this review would like be entitled "Asimov is like chewing on expensive snuff!". But alas I am stuck with current me.

This review also marks several times now that I give poor grades to scifi written prior to 1980. I'm a linear person: old before new, read things in order, cake before coffee, no spoilers please. So I've attempted to read Asimov, Niven, Pohl and I have to say: meh. I now vow brown cow to not feel guilty by skipping the basement of my favorite genre and instead enjoy the first floor, second floor, jacuzzi, balcony and pool. I'll get to that basement. One day. When it's raining. Ooo look a squirrel!

Being a solid fan of New Space Opera, I must give proper respect to works upon whose shoulders it stands. I do so. But as with many of you, I have more books on my to-read list than I can tackle in a lifetime. I must prune and trim aggressively and I'm afraid the rest of the Foundation series is likely to end up on the greenhouse floor. Hopefully before I'm dust a clever New Space Opera idea about extending human life expectancy will give me more time to explore books about advanced civilizations prone to cancer of the mouth due to snuff addictions. Until then, I give thanks to the Old and say bring on the New.

Christy says

Honestly, I don't get why this book/series is so popular. There are some interesting elements to it (for instance, the use of religion as a tool of mass control and the implicit resultant argument that religion is no more than a fraud, "the opiate of the people," after all), but the book gave me little to enjoy or dig into. The forces of the novel are broad, historical, dealing with masses of people; this means that there is little to no room for individual characters here and little to be done by the few characters who do appear. One leader says, in fact, in response to a crisis, the threat of warfare and annihilation, "I'm going to do nothing. One hundred percent of nothing, and that is the secret of this crisis" (191). This is a recurring theme. Plus, there are no female characters to speak of. One man's wife makes a brief and apparently unnecessary appearance for a page-long chapter, but that's it. All else is done by and to men.

There are a couple of minor things I do like about the book. One is Salvor Hardin's statement that "violence is the last refuge of the incompetent," which I like for its endorsement of nonviolent alternatives. Another is the characters' habit of saying "Space" or "Galaxy" instead of God when they exclaim or curse.

Bookdragon Sean says

This is the most ambitious thing I've ever read.

The scope of this is just hugely imaginative. The idea is to create the new, and perfect, galactic empire. The old one is dying. But new empires don't just pop up overnight; it takes years for the right circumstances to arise; it takes years for all the pieces to slot perfectly into place. The brightest mind of the age has used his incredibly farfetched, yet incredibly brilliant, psychohistory to predict the exact date the empire will fall. He has used this field of academia to predict the future, and because of this he can alter events, long after his death, and guide his fledgling civilisation into power.

The old empire will crumble in exactly 300 years, so he manipulates the ruling body to send him, and his following, to a remote planet that will eventually develop into something grand. The settlers are all scientists, and they're all set on one manipulated goal. Harry Seldon controls the future from the grave; he knew what would happen, and he knew exactly when the people of the future should act. He predicted that it would take 1000 years for the new empire to be born. So he appears to them in real moments of crisis in pre-recorded holograms to guide them in the right direction.

"To succeed, planning alone is insufficient. One must improvise as well."

It's a remarkable book, so broad and innovative. I'm shocked reading this today; imagine what it would have been like reading it in the 50s. It clearly defines so much of the genre. Star Wars and Star Trek clearly drew upon Asimov's foundation. Would they have existed without it? The parallels are here. It's a visionary book, though there are a few problems with it. All the characters are scientists and politicians; they are powerful and driven; they are singular in their forceful purposes. None of them really have the chance to develop. That's not the purpose of this story. The idea is to show the development of a nation, of an empire, across the centuries. I found it hard to fully invest in it because of this. The scenes that didn't have Harry Seldon in felt a little flat. He was the glue that held it together, the rest of the characters were forgettable.

Thus, there is no action or real climax. Structurally speaking, this is essentially five short stories put together. They're decades apart, and so were the characters. It shows the development of an empire, but from a great deal of distance. There was no real human element or emotions involved. This work is practically a work of genius, though it was impossible to fully care about the story because everything was objectified. It was a major case of show rather than tell. So I couldn't rate it five stars even if I was tempted to. I'm a realist, I know he couldn't have told the story any other way, but for me it lacked the human angle.

"The fall of Empire, gentlemen, is a massive thing, however, and not easily fought. It is dictated by a rising bureaucracy, a receding initiative, a freezing of caste, a damming of curiosity—a hundred other factors. It has been going on, as I have said, for centuries, and it is too majestic and massive a movement to stop."

This was a great book, though it lacked that vital element of storytelling. It was very deceiving at the start too; it was quite dry. I almost gave up with it, but I'm glad I persisted. I will be reading further into the series to see how things go, but I will most likely only go so far as the original trilogy.

Aldo Meza says

Este sí me ha gustado bastante ! Tal vez cometí el error de no leer la saga en el orden en que se publicó, ya veremos.

Bradley says

From my first reading of this Foundation Trilogy when I was fourteen to my latest reading today, I still put these in my top ten books of all time. No question.

Why?

So many reasons. And even though the characters and the short-story-like presentation of the different times are quite fine and memorable, it isn't these that I point to.

It's the ideas.

It's also how our history is writ large as SF.

It's the social exploration. It's the re-establishment of civilization, one building block at a time. It's the scary devolvment of all civilization, too. All dystopia and the glimmer of optimism. It's a grand slide and a hard scrabble in a far future galactic civilization that might as well be us in a mirror.

I've since read Gibbon's The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire and I've read about the ancient history of India's economic empire around 5 thousand years ago, mainly accomplished peacefully and with great demand, eventually leading to a grand civilization.

Both of these histories played a huge part in Asimov's imagining of his empire, but it's mostly the Roman Empire's history that this book emulates, from the ousting of its malcontents, the fracturing of the provinces, the devolvment of knowledge and learning into dogma and religious pomp.

Asimov curtails the worse parts of the Roman empire by having the Foundation eventually focus upon economics as a last-ditch stopping point before outright violence overwhelms the rest of the galaxy.

It's not a perfect solution, but this is merely the first of three novels that absolutely need to be read together. :)

I'm still absolutely amazed that history is retold so convincingly and grandly as an epic SF with such clear and sharp prose.

Asimov has always been known as a wonderful teacher. Even his most entertaining and important works, such as this, always remain a testament to his own learning and his absolute insistence on making everything perfectly understood to his audience.

The novel is ambitious, wide-sweeping, and terrifying. It's honestly mind-blowing, taken together with the other two, just how much information and development and implications are poured out onto the page. :)

If this is any indication, I think we're all doomed to repeat our History. :)

Of course, with all the things we know now, I'd have loved to see how Asimov would have written this today. :)

Sanjay Gautam says

Absolutely Loved it! Hail Asimov! He is brilliant! His writing is enchanting and filled with awe inspiring genius. Work of sheer Ingenuity! Height of Inventiveness!

.....

Apatt says

Yes, I have read Foundation before, chances are you have too! However, for some reason I missed out on the later Foundation books from Foundation's Edge, I can barely remember who Hari Seldon is or why "Violence is the last refuge of the incompetent". So reread the series from the beginning it is then; no great hardship really, a fun time is already guaranteed, and the three volumes combined are shorter than a single book by Peter F. Hamilton.

The very first Foundation story was published in 1942, around the time poor Anne Frank was writing her diary. I first read the trilogy in an omnibus volume in the early 80s, before Foundation's Edge came out. I did, of course, gobble up all three books up at once, and I did love it, in fact I have never met anyone who does not like the Foundation Trilogy (and I don't want to, I suspect they are all churls).

The trilogy is auspiciously my first sci-fi series, I have since read many others, though I don't think I have read a better one (yes, I prefer it to the Dune trilogy). This first Foundation book is a fix-up novel of connected short stories, unlike some fix-up novels I have read these stories join up beautifully into one cohesive novel. In this volume we meet the legendary Hari Seldon, the founder of the Foundation and ultra-brilliant "psychohistorian", who is able to predict the future through mathematical algorithms combined with history, sociology and goodness knows what else. Such prediction is necessarily based on aggregate behavioral trends of vast numbers of people (billions). Seldon predicts the fall of the Galactic Empire and makes it his life's mission to reduce the span of the dark ages which will inevitably follow. To this end the Foundation is established on a remote planet called Terminus ostensibly to compile a mega Encyclopedia Galactica but in truth to save mankind as a whole from an extended period of dark ages, and eventually to set up a Second Empire.

Seldon is not the only protagonist of Foundation, as the book spans hundreds of years and several generations three other heroes (no anti-heroes here) follow him: Salvor Hardin, Linmar Ponyets, and Hober

Mallow. The first is a politician and the other two are traders. What they have in common is a can-do attitude, a disdain of violence, and the instinctive wiliness to outwit just about anybody they come across. In fact this series is a fine example of “The Triumph of Intellect and Romance Over Brute Force and Cynicism” (thank you Craig Ferguson). The showdown between these heroes and their antagonists are all battles of wit, no ass kicking is ever implemented.

What I did not appreciate in my teens is what a good writer and story teller Asimov is. He is not great prose stylist (witness the ample use of exclamation marks in the narrative), nor did he need to be for the type of stories he wanted to tell. However, there is a sincere and infectious enthusiasm in his story telling and a clarity that render the narrative very readable and entertaining; not to mention the witty and sardonic humour in much of the dialog. The scene where the Foundation citizens are waiting outside a vault for a hologram of Seldon to appear after 50 years is really quite thrilling.

The futuristic tech and world building are a lot of fun of course, though you will have to allow for some dated tech ideas or anachronisms such as messages printed on tapes, the use of microfilms and lack of AI (computers are not mentioned).

As good as this first Foundation volume is I find it to be the least exciting of the trilogy. I distinctly remember some edge of the seat developments in the two follow-up volumes; see links below.

Notes:

- My review of Foundation and Empire (Foundation #2)
- My review of Second Foundation (Foundation #3)
- My review of Foundation's Edge (Foundation #4)
- My review of Foundation and Earth (Foundation #5)

- Here is an excellent reference for the series: Omni's Ultimate Guide to the 'Foundation' Series (spoiler galore!).

Markus says

”Now that the Empire had lost control over the farther reaches of the Galaxy, these little splinter groups of planets became kingdoms – with comic-opera kings and nobles, and petty, meaningless wars, and a life that went on pathetically among the ruins.

A civilization falling. Nuclear power forgotten. Science fading to mythology – until the Foundation had stepped in.”

After twelve thousand years of peace, prosperity and expansion, the Galactic Empire is crumbling. Its vain aristocracy is ignorant of this, but the psychohistorians, making predictions of the future under the guidance of the brilliant Hari Seldon, know it for a statistic fact. By careful planning and manipulation, they start the project that will provide a beacon of light and knowledge lasting through the Dark Ages in preparation for the formation of a new empire: the Foundation.

The book centres around the leaders and people of the Foundation itself, mostly on an around the main planet of Terminus, a faraway rock in outer space. The story is a series of novellas set at various points during the first two centuries of the foundation, and chronicle the future and developments of Hari Seldon’s ideal.

The internal workings and tenets of the Foundation are quite interesting, mainly how it manipulates, threatens and employs divide and conquer strategies to combat those who would seize its resources, all without using violence. *”Violence is the last refuge of the incompetent”* is a fascinating mantra, and one the

Foundation builds itself around.

The innovative and prolific Isaac Asimov is by many regarded as the greatest and most popular science fiction author of all time, the *Foundation* series often coming in second behind *Dune* on rankings of sci-fi series. More?

Most importantly, this book has become such a solid pillar of the genre, sending ripples through the future into the minds of later science fiction authors who became the heirs to Asimov's legacy. While journeying through the pages of *Foundation*, the reader will discover so many passages and descriptions reminiscent of the greatest works the genre has later produced.

There are flaws. One issue that invited curiosity followed by annoyance is the astounding lack of women. I was two thirds through the book when I realised there had been not a single female character nor any mention of the existence of women. I was curious because I assumed there would be some form of explanation, and that this was all part of the setting. Then the appearance of one single unimportant female character only to try on some jewelry made it abundantly clear that there was no good explanation.

Another point, which is hardly a flaw, but something readers should be aware of, is that *Foundation* is not about the setting, the characters or even the story, but rather the ideas. As others have pointed out before, this reads more like a fictionalised essay than a tale of science fiction. Characters and places are never particularly compelling compared to later works of the genre.

But despite the flaws, and more than anything, this is an early work that inspired so many brilliant stories yet to come. Isaac Asimov's most famous series is indeed a foundation for the genre of science fiction to stand on and develop from.

Adina says

2.5* rounded up to 3 for the idea.

I postponed writing the review as I was hoping that something would click in my head and I would realize just how magnificent this novel is. It did not happen, unfortunately.

First of all, I was made to believe that this is a SF book. It isn't. Not really. It is more of a socio-political one. It is not even a novel, but a set of stories who present a series of political, sociological, psychological and religious ideas all based on the famous Psychohistory concept. The ease with which a religion can be created and the power it can have over the masses scared me as it is so valid even today. To use religion to control planets was a brilliant and scary idea and it felt the most interesting part of the book.

The premise of the Foundation is brilliant, I admit. However, it would have been marvelous if the author have made me care about any of it. The characters had no growth, no real personality and the prose was so dry. The book is mainly a series of dialogues between different people who scheme and try to outrun each other with their cunning and intelligence in order to gain power. The fact that the whole thing takes place in space feels secondary to me.

Please do not throw virtual tomatoes at me for what I am about to say. Here it goes...I believe Asimov is not a very good writer. It seems he can only write in dialogue and descriptive passage longer than a paragraph gives him the chills. This is a pity as it adds up to the (false) idea some people have that SF is not literature. I read enough of the genre to know that there are well written SF novels but I don't think this one (or the

Prelude) is one of them.

If the novel is not very well written, too sciency or too deep than it is fun, right? Well, not really. It has its moments but mostly it is filler, filler and at the end we realize how smart the main guy of the story was.

A funny thing that I observed is that there are only male characters except for a single chapter about a bitchy, sour wife who makes life miserable for one of the rulers of a planet. I know, I know, it's the time the book was written. I am not offended. Still, I could not observe a phrase that went something like this: On the Foundation planet (forgot its name) there were X people together with their wives and children. So wives are not people, interesting idea.

I appreciate the idea of the series and it could have been a wonderful experience had it been written by someone else. Like Ray Bradbury or Frank Herbert.

Kevin Kelsey says

A great story, told in a terribly boring fashion. One-dimensional characters engaged in various trade negotiations, political upheavals and general planning. Dry beyond belief. The concepts are very engaging-- religion as a means of control, psychohistory, etc--but the telling of the story leaves much to be desired. Some sections are much better than others, particularly 1 & 3. There is a really good story between the lines here; one that I think would work much, much better as a television series.

Thomas says

The Foundation trilogy (three first books) and the Foundation series (all seven) are often regarded as the greatest set of Science Fiction literature ever produced. The Foundation series won the one-time Hugo Award for "Best All-Time Series" in 1966. Isaac Asimov was among the world's best authors, an accomplished scientist, and he was also a genius with an IQ above 170, and it shows in the intelligently concocted but complex plots and narrative. There are already 331 reviews for this Science Fiction novel, however, I still believe I have something unique to contribute which is stated in my last paragraph.

This book and the rest in the series take place far in the future (allegedly 50,000 years) at a time when people live throughout the Galaxy. A mathematician Hari Seldon has developed a new branch of mathematics known as psychohistory. Using the law of mass action, it can roughly predict the future on a large scale. Hari Seldon predicts the demise of the Galactic Empire and creates a plan to save the knowledge of the human race in a huge encyclopedia and also to shorten the barbaric period expected to follow the demise from 30,000 years to 1,000 years. A select people are chosen to write the Encyclopedia and to unknowingly carry out the plan to re-create the Galactic Empire. What unfolds in this book and in the books that follow is the future history of the demise and re-emergence of a Galactic Empire, written as a series of adventures, in a similar fashion to the Star Wars series.

Even though this is arguably the greatest set of Science Fiction novels ever written, I do not recommend it to those who are only mildly interested in Science Fiction. Character development is not the focus of these novels and the large amount of technical/scientific details, schemes and plots can become both confusing and heavy for the uninitiated Science Fiction reader. If you read this one you will feel the need to read the others which may take a long time. If you are new to Science Fiction start with something lighter and when you are

hooked you can continue with this series. Also, in my opinion the second and third books were better than the first.

Luca Ambrosino says

English (Foundation)/ Italiano

«HARI SELDON... born in the 11,988th year of the Galactic Era; died 12,069»

The life of the brilliant mathematician Hari Seldon, protagonist of the two prequels to Foundation series, draws to a close. However, thanks to "psychohistory", the complex discipline founded by himself to predict the behaviours of the masses over time, he timed it all perfectly. He leaves to future generations precise instructions in order to avoid several millennia of intergalactic barbarism. "Psychohistorians", "Encyclopedists", "Mayors", "Traders" and "Merchant Princes", five categories of people which characterise five different time points, told in the novel through the vicissitudes of three generations.

Well, it starts for me the science fiction (and political fiction) series that goes further into the future than any other book I read. A distant future where the origins of humanity can't be tracked anymore, where you doubt about the assumption that the human race was born on one, single planet.

Vote: 7,5

«HARI SELDON... nato nell'anno 11.988 dell'Era Galattica, morto nel 12.069»

La vita del matematico Hari Seldon, protagonista dei due prequel al Ciclo delle Fondazioni, volge al termine. Ma, grazie alla psicostoria, la complicata disciplina fondata da lui stesso allo scopo di predire i comportamenti delle masse nel tempo, ha calcolato tutto. Lascia in eredità alle generazioni future delle preziose indicazioni allo scopo di evitare decine di millenni di barbarie intergalattiche. "Psicostorici", "enciclopedisti", "sindaci", "mercanti", e "principi mercanti", cinque categorie di persone che contraddistinguono cinque momenti temporali differenti, narrati nel romanzo attraverso le vicissitudini di tre generazioni.

Comincia per me il ciclo di racconti di fantascienza/fantapolitica che si spinge decisamente più in là nel futuro rispetto a qualsiasi altra cosa io abbia letto. Un futuro talmente remoto da far perdere le tracce delle origini dell'umanità, dove si dubita del fatto che la razza umana sia nata su di un unico pianeta.

Voto: 7,5