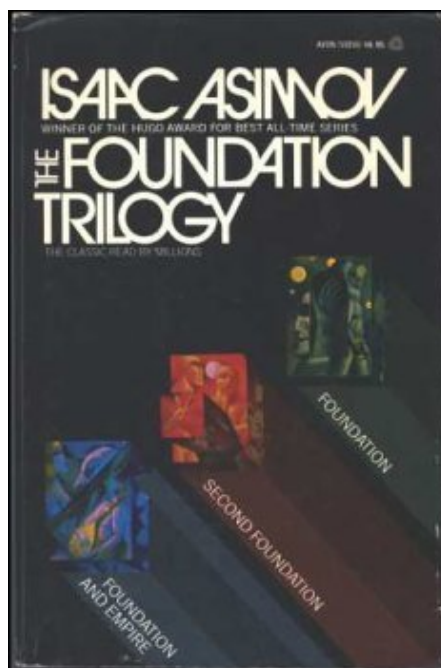




## The Foundation Trilogy

*Isaac Asimov*

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# The Foundation Trilogy

*Isaac Asimov*

## **The Foundation Trilogy** Isaac Asimov

A THOUSAND-YEAR EPIC, A GALACTIC STRUGGLE, A MONUMENTAL WORK IN THE ANNALS OF SCIENCE FICTION

FOUNDATION begins a new chapter in the story of man's future. As the Old Empire crumbles into barbarism throughout the million worlds of the galaxy, Hari Seldon and his band of psychologists must create a new entity, the Foundation-dedicated to art, science, and technology-as the beginning of a new empire.

FOUNDATION AND EMPIRE describes the mighty struggle for power amid the chaos of the stars in which man stands at the threshold of a new enlightened life which could easily be destroyed by the old forces of barbarism.

SECOND FOUNDATION follows the Seldon Plan after the First Empire's defeat and describes its greatest threat-a dangerous mutant strain gone wild, which produces a mind capable of bending men's wills, directing their thoughts, reshaping their desires, and destroying the universe.

## **The Foundation Trilogy Details**

Date : Published January 1st 1974 (first published 1953)

ISBN : 9780380508563

Author : Isaac Asimov

Format : Paperback 679 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction, Classics

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## From Reader Review The Foundation Trilogy for online ebook

### Andy Wenman says

I read some short stories by Asimov in High-School and although he never measured up to the likes Rohald Dahl or Kurt Vonnegut I seem to remember actually enjoying some of them, but there's no way I can pretend that this novel was anything other than awful. This is bad science fiction in every sense of the word, overly descriptive of irrelevant details, filled soulless characters all with the same emotionless analytical voice, events that seem to have no purpose and all take place in a world that's extremely difficult to contextualise and even harder to care about and written with no style or eye for pacing. I read at least half of the book and I honestly can't tell you what was happening, who any of the characters were or what was at stake. This is one of those books that is so uninteresting it's actually infuriating. Great science fiction uses the conceits of the genre to deal with big philosophical and questions and confront socio-political constructs, but it makes the reader care about these issues by putting a relatable character with basic human dilemmas at the centre. This is where Foundation fails, it's all ideas and no humanity. I'd love to disseminate it more, but honestly, who cares? Who the fuck even cares? Do not recommend.

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### Mark says

When Isaac Asimov learned that the World Science Fiction Convention would be giving a special Hugo Award in 1966 for "Best All Time Series," he believed that the category had been created specifically to honor J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Indeed, for a modern reader, it's surprising to learn that Asimov's *Foundation Trilogy* was once so highly revered in the canon of speculative fiction that it beat Tolkien's masterpiece for the prize. Such are the fortunes of a genre built on the challenge of looking forward: when the future actually arrives, even its greatest masterpieces are left looking like the relics of a hopelessly distant past.

*The Foundation Trilogy* is not the greatest multi-novel series to emerge from modern science fiction. Nor is it, by even a generous assessment, a masterpiece. Perhaps the series fared better in a time when the expectations placed upon sci-fi writers was that they would produce entertaining pulp -- when the novelty and intellectual reach of Asimov's ideas could distract from his lacking style. By today's standards, however, the work is almost hopelessly inept.

The premise is this: Harry Seldon, the greatest psychologist of the far future, predicts that the Galactic Empire will crumble ala Rome within a few hundred years of his writing. Using the "science" of psychohistory (his own invention), he foresees an intellectual Dark Age of approximately 30,000 years following this collapse, but he also calculates that this period can be shortened to a single millennium if the right people are in the right places to keep the flame of knowledge lit. Thus, he creates two "Foundations," groups that work behind the scenes to keep learning alive through the empire's fall.

The story spins bizarrely but predictably from there: wars, rumors of war, deranged mutants, psychologists with seemingly supernatural abilities, resolution. Asimov's unflinching faith in the potential of science is the real focus throughout. In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, we've come to understand that even closed systems are fundamentally unpredictable over any considerable length of time; in Asimov's time, there was still faith that science could predict the future of a galaxy-spanning empire over the course of thousands of years.

The naivety of the late 40s and early 50s, however, is not what prevents *The Foundation Trilogy* from being

the masterpiece it was once considered to be. Asimov's plot isn't perfect, but it's functional. Rather, the work's real failings are literary. The characters are flat, cardboard cutouts of people, the great leaders of one generation virtually indistinguishable from the next (women, of course, are almost never to be seen, with the notable exception of a rather likable young heroine in the second part of *Second Foundation*). Nor is there poetry in Asimov's prose; instead, there are merely endless pages of expository dialogue occasionally graced with the most meager of descriptions.

Fundamentally at issue here is the fact that science fiction has earned the right to be considered literature, and that the canonization of works like *Foundation* serve only as unpleasant reminders of the genre's humble beginnings. It is not an altogether terrible work, and certainly worth reading for historical context alone, but advocates of contemporary science fiction can only hope that novels such as these will one day no longer be the standard by which the genre's literary merits are weighed.

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### **Silvia says**

Creo que la trilogía va de menos a más. En ocasiones me ha parecido que tenía un ritmo algo irregular, con algunas partes que se me han hecho un poco más tediosas pero la impresión que me queda al final es bastante positiva.

Es un libro muy entretenido, tiene un montón de giros en la trama que me han vuelto loca (sobre todo el tercer libro que es un no parar), me deja con muchas ganas de seguir explorando este universo creado por Asimov.

La única pega que le pondría es la escasa presencia femenina en la novela, aunque 'Fundación e imperio' y 'Segunda fundación' cuentan con dos personajes femeninos bastante fuertes y con un peso importante en la novela, no deja de ser algo que me llama la atención. En el tercer libro (es el que tengo más reciente en la memoria) tan sólo aparecen tres mujeres y en los anteriores creo recordar que son incluso menos. El personaje que más me ha gustado de todo el libro es Arcady, una niña de 14 años, aunque también me ha gustado mucho Callia.

Lectura obligatoria para los amantes del género.

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### **Javier Santaolalla says**

Les presento la mejor novela que he leído hasta ahora, una trilogía, en concreto, con la que se inicia el Universo Asimov, una colección de 16 libros de ciencia ficción que desde luego forman parte de los clásicos de la literatura Universal.

Un estilo narrativo excelente, tramas originales e inteligentes, personajes atractivos y un libro muy adictivo, que engancha. Pero por encima de todo hay algo que hace que este libro sea especial, tiene un mensaje, y es un mensaje sobre el valor de la ciencia.

Les dejo una reseña completa en mi vlog de física, sin spoilers, para el que quiera profundizar un poco más: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Br3Hv...>

Yo creo que es de esos libros que todo el mundo debería leer, de los que incitan a que seamos mejores ciudadanos. Un verdadero homenaje a la ciencia.

¡Viva la ciencia y viva Asimov!

## Chris says

**Foundation** (1951): Gigantic brain-warping grand science-fiction, this is as big as it gets, so big it's difficult to fully comprehend. From the first page of Chapter 1, "The Psychohistorians", which begins with a quote from the "Encyclopedia Galactica", beginning in the 11,998th year of the Galactic Era, you know that Isaac Asimov is going to be writing on the largest possible scale. Let's take a look at what type of a man would dare write on such a staggeringly gigantic scale:

This is the most confident looking man in horn-rimmed glasses and a bow-tie that you will ever see. That confidence and determination in his eyes is borne from the knowledge that he is going to blow your world into another freaking universe. He is concocting a story which will encompass *25 Million inhabited worlds* and will involve time-lines which play out over tens of thousands of years, involving sciences which will stretch your powers of comprehension. With 'Foundation', Asimov sets his sights as high and as far as it is possible to conceive, resulting in a marvelous, and indeed humbling, intellectual edifice of awesome proportions. I was very satisfactorily and indubitably rocked by it's mind-warping majesty. It makes perfect sense that the Hugo Award for 'Best All Time Series' was created in 1966 specifically to honor this achievement in science fiction.

This first book in the series begins with establishing both a new science, psychohistory - a type of mathematical sociology. The first book is a whirlwind of ideas and descriptions of a gigantic and futuristic human empire of the distant future.

**Foundation And Empire** (1952): Perhaps not so great as 'Foundation', this book is written in two main parts, the first of which was gigantic, epic science-fiction that I was hoping for. The second part, 'The Mule', I frankly did not like. I did not care to be reading about the Mule or Magnifico the Clown, I wanted hard Foundation stuff, big science, psychohistory and scientists performing stunning upsets. I was unsure how all this played into psychohistory or how these characters fit into Hari Seldon's timeline of the future. Maybe I didn't like it because it derailed Seldon's psychohistory and thousand year plan. However, these concerns were assuaged in 'Second Foundation'.

**Second Foundation** (1953): Split into two parts, the first part deals with the Mule and his easy conquest and the disruption of the Seldon plan. I did not particularly care for this and was anxious for it to be over. The second part finally does away with the Mule and it's back to Foundation scientists and Second Foundation psychohistorians, which I absolutely loved. Asimov basically tells a plausible story with some weird bits, and then in the last chapter, a character comes along and you have to totally reinterpret what has happened, and why the weird bits were absolutely important even though the reader overlooked them and was focused on other events in the story. Asimov does this again and again and it's always marvelous. He did it in the first book, a bit in the second, and here in 'Second Foundation'.

As a trilogy, I had some concerns which may or may not have been cleared up but that I perhaps didn't notice - maybe I just wasn't smart enough to notice them being cleared up in the subtle and elegant fashion which Asimov moves the plot along by slipping in facts which become relevant later.

1) With interplanetary travel, the people on any given planet will age normally, but people traveling between worlds will not age as fast, because space travel is time travel. If you travel from planet A to planet B, then back again, you may have taken 5 years to travel, but once you get back to planet A, it should be hundreds of years from when you left (depending on how fast you were traveling). Asimov must have known this, but it

seems to not have been incorporated into the story. A possible workaround is that they make 'jumps' in space, so traveling from planet A to planet B requires no great disparity in the elapsing of time on either the planets, or to the travelers - However, this is never explicitly stated. Perhaps this is obvious to other SF readers?

2) There seemed to be no great emphasis on the advancement of human biology or culture. One girl character is 5'4" and Hari Seldon dies when he is about 73 years old. That's not very futuristic, is it? I would expect the human race of thousands of years hence to be vastly taller, to live longer, and to have very high IQs. There were other anachronistic elements, like Darrell having a maid (?), and a soldier saying "Ain't". Keep in mind that these events take place at least 12,000 years after the establishment of a galactic empire, where the original home world of humans is no longer even known because it is lost in the mists of prehistory. But people still say "Ain't" and sit around smoking cigars and reading newspapers? And there are farmers? Is this the future, as conceived of circa 1950?

3) I am likewise incredulous that Asimov has constructed a fictional galaxy of over 24 million inhabited worlds in which there is no mention of any alien life, sentient or otherwise. Given the vastness and age of space, and the uniformity of physical laws and elements, many astronomers will opine that the universe is quite literally teeming with life. It seems implausible that human life is the only one across millions of inhabited worlds.

Despite these issues, Asimov has constructed a grand universe and plot which takes place over 500 years, a trilogy which is not only grand but very detailed, his story is filled with intricacies and shows a dedicated attention to detail and story construction. An absolute monument of Science Fiction.

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## Patrick says

Am rereading these after 30+ years. The first still has the compelling ideas of psychohistory, although less developed than I had remembered, or would have liked. To Asimov's credit, the character of the Mule was still vivid enough in my memory that the second book lost most of its tension.

What I had forgotten was just how virulently misogynist and patriarchal these books are - it is kind of embarrassing given that he came of age when women had been working in factories, serving in war, and holding families together on their own. Their depiction as silly, vain, and useless seems adolescent at best. I remembered Robert A. Heinlein being a militaristic jerk, but had a more romantic image of Asimov. Rereading this series has altered that view. E.g., in Asimov's future, society has somehow become race-less (if not all-white), nicely matching the purely decorative role for women.

Having recently re-read City, and considering that a young Asimov should have read Vannevar Bush, it is also embarrassing how quaint is his depiction of a galactic future where messages are still passed on paper, all history is on microfilm and in physical libraries, etc. That everyone smokes all the time is just silly. Asimov says he read Clifford D. Simak, and yet somehow completely missed his remarkable prescience in areas of technology, communications, media, social evolution, etc.

To call this a trilogy is disingenuous - it would have been only a moderately long novel as one, and each part would be completely unsatisfying on its own.

All in all, disappointing as a re-read (I changed from 5 stars in my memory to just 3 now). There are still some great ideas in here, but maybe you just have to be very young, and enthralled with space to overlook

the faults.

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## David (???) says

Wow, WHAT AN END to the trilogy!! :)

After going through the 'pains' of the three books, because I am not used to reading Space Operas like this, the third book ended on an extremely satisfying note.

All the three books contained some dull sections for me, not to mention several times when I was coming across what I would call Asimov's bad writing style. However, I will say that the chronicling of the events taking place within the confines of the trilogy have been in itself brilliantly structured and placed. It was the mystery of the Second Foundation that made me kept going, and the twists! (It is surprising however, that Asimov has avoided the inclusion of any extra-terrestrial life-forms in the books, which to me makes me think: that either they were irrelevant and thus intentionally not included, or perhaps they have been kept away from the brinks of the Galaxy in the Foundation Universe only to may be include them in the later books of the series.) :P

(view spoiler)

The ways and levels to which the Second Foundation's agents have to go through, to manipulate people, events, and happenings, to be happening as a pre-determined event, reflected to me at least three things: 1) that sometimes one has to give away some good, for a far greater 'good' of events to happen, 2) all that comes-to-be (becomes, happens) is (probably) a result of some pre-determined plan, which reminds me of the Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. 3) It also made me question Intuition, if it ever is made as a mind-controlling method? Or are we controlled already ... by something which we have always liked to refer to as Divine (as defined by language and meaning) or perhaps by some Extra-terrestrial life-form??!

The third book deals the story in a way which can be very confusing to an un-focusing reader, and eventually may not understand its intricacy of the plot.

Overall, if I contemplate on the three books individually, none of them have really 'amazed' me by their contents and storyline, but the whole, I can now certainly say, was spell-binding enough!

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## Stephen says

Love...is...Forever...

## CHAPTER ONE

### *The Foundation Trilogy*

By Isaac Asimov

## INTRODUCTION:

In my life, there have been **three** science fiction books/series that will always hold **special** shelf space in my **heart's library**. The first, and the subject of this review, is *The Foundation Trilogy* by Isaac Asimov. Yet, before I begin my history with this extraordinary story, let me briefly mention my other two great loves.

### A. Dune:

The second of these pivotal SF relationships was with Dune, who I first met while in college during my “wilder” days. Dune, being born in 1965, was 5 years my senior when we first “hooked up.” I was so immediately and powerfully smitten with this ~~tail~~ tale that I actually became fearful that I had so completely spun out of control. But now is not the time to discuss that relationship as there may be children present. I’ll just say that Dune, that saucy, talented cougar, took me to heights of ecstasy that I’d never before experienced with its richly exotic and poetically descriptive prose, its nuanced characters and its plot as complex as anything I’d encountered before.

Give me just a minute...\*wipes brow\*

Where was I?

Oh yeah...anyway, being less than a literary Casanova at the time, I was only able to read a few pages at a time due to **premature**...fatigue. Later, as my endurance improved, I was able to last for hours before reaching the point of satiation.

I’ll always be grateful to Dune for being my Mrs. Robinson and so eloquently teaching me that *science fiction = literature*.

### B. Hyperion:

My third great SF love was Hyperion. I first encountered this alluring novel several years after having graduated law school and become established in what is now my life. Prior to first laying eyes on this beauty, I honestly thought I was beyond the age of going “gaga” or experiencing the kind of sweaty-palmed, stutter-causing, bladder-control-losing nervousness that I used to feel when I was chasing comic books around the grade school schoolyard.

Well, I was WRONG!!

When Hyperion showed up on my doorstep with its bodaciously brainy concepts, its gorgeously sensual prose and a plot so stacked and loaded with curves that you could actually hear “*BOOM CHICKA WAH WAH*” when its pages turned, all I remember was my **sweaty** hands slipping off the doorknob as I wet myself while falling and gasping “H...H...He....Helllllloo” just as my head hit the floor.

Again, since this is not a review of Hyperion, I will save the details of that affair for another time. However, I can say that Hyperion currently represents to me the “ideal of perfection” within the science fiction genre. I have never read better and it is the book against which all other science fiction experiences are judged.

### C. Foundation Trilogy:

Finally, we get to my very first SF love: *The Foundation Trilogy*. They say you never forget your first. They are right.



It was “The Trilogy” that began my life-long affair with science fiction. Without Asimov’s epic space opera, I might never have met Dune or Hyperion and my life would have been the poorer for it. Therefore, this series will always hold a special, sentimental place with me.

Of course, I was very inexperienced when I first “awkwardly” touched this book and clumsily fingered the first few pages. I had no idea what to expect, I only know I was excited. I mean there were 3 of them, 3 stories, and only one of me. I was petrified that I would be inadequate to the task. Later, when I was older and had “been with” many, many other books (don’t judge me), I looked back on my initial nervousness and chuckled.

Heck, this is the kind of experience people write letters about in magazines.

Anyway, as it turns out, I could not have wished for a better “first” in the world of science fiction. Asimov’s tight, straight-forward prose took me “in hand” and gently guided me through the amazing world of the two Foundations. Each of the stories that make up The Trilogy are special in their own way and so I’ve decided to review each of them separately at a later date. Here, I will just summarize the series as a whole.

### **SERIES OVERVIEW:**

The Galactic Empire spans **25 million worlds** and has a population of over a **quadrillion** people...*FYI, that is 1,000,000,000,000,000 or over 166,000 times the population of Earth.* It’s huge...TWSS.

The empire is in decline. However, only a handful of brilliant scientists can see the collapse coming, thanks to the science of “psychohistory” created by their leader, Hari Seldon. Hari and his group have determined that the empire’s demise will lead to 30,000 years of barbarism and have formulated a plan (named after Seldon) to reduce that “dark period” to only 1000 years.

The 3 books in The Trilogy chronicle the formulation and the initial implementation of the Seldon Plan.

This series is such an amazing way to be introduced to the science fiction genre. The prose is uber readable, the pace is lickity split and the stories themselves are full of larger-than-life characters doing larger-than-life things. It’s just highly entertaining, with a “feel good” vibe that will whet the appetite for more.

Now I would not argue with those that find this work less than compelling when viewed against the complete body of science fiction work out there. This does not hold up under scrutiny with subsequent works (including both Dune and Hyperion). Still, this a terrific starting point for someone new to science fiction and embodies the essence of what grand old space opera is supposed to be. Big ideas, larger than life characters and a story packed with smiles.

### **FINAL THOUGHTS:**

In conclusion, I’d like to say a few words to those who may doubt the depths of my feelings for this book given my literary promiscuity. Those who’ve seen my “currently reading” shelf and know that I go through books like the U.S. spends money. You might think me a bit disingenuous for writing so “glowingly” about these books in light of my behavior. To those who would judge me, let me just say, with all due respect:

I’ll grant that I enjoy a bit of experimentation when it comes to literature, and frequently hook up with other genres, sometimes several at a time. However, this practice in no way diminishes my love for science fiction. Therefore, please stop your moralizing. What Science Fiction and I have is very special and I’ll thank you not to point your judgments in our direction.

6.0 stars. HIGHEST POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATION!!!

Winner: Hugo Award for Best All Time Series (The Foundation Trilogy) (1966)

Voted onto the Locus List of All Time Best Science Fiction Novel (4th)

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## Ralph says

La verdad es que es un libro bastante extenso (900 páginas de nada) y hay que empezarlo con ganas porque de lo contrario es muy posible que dejes la historia. Lo que sí os digo es que el osado lector que se atreva con el tocho de libro no desmerecerá su esfuerzo ya que, a medida que avanzas en la trama, te vas enganchando y solo deseas saber cómo acaba la historia.

En cuanto al autor, lo considero un genio, solo hay que ver lo que escribió y cómo lo escribió. Esta saga es de los años 50 y le da mil vueltas a muchos libros y autores de hoy en día.

Del libro me ha gustado el tema: una ciencia que puede predecir estadísticamente el devenir de una humanidad extendida por millones de planetas de la Galaxia y que ha creado un gran Imperio Galáctico.

Ante un futuro descorazonador se decide crear una Fundación que proteja para la posteridad el conocimiento desarrollado por la humanidad durante millones de años. Esta es la causa, el motivo de toda la historia pero, al ir avanzando descubres otra realidad, subyacente, y sería la capacidad de controlar mentalmente el avance de miles de millones de personas siguiendo un Plan preestablecido y marcado y solo conocido por una élite que se oculta al resto de la Humanidad para que no se altere dicho Plan. Una idea muy interesante y original sobre la manipulación. Una obra que deberían leer los seguidores de la teoría de la Conspiración.

Hay mucha información en la red sobre este autor y la saga de la Fundación. Yo destaco aquí las citas del libro:

- En boca de Salvor Hardin, en su libro Fundación:
  - o "La violencia es el último recurso del incompetente".
  - o "Nunca permitas que el sentido de la moral te impida hacer lo que está bien".
  - o "Vale la pena ser obvio, especialmente si eres famoso por tu sutileza."
  - o "Para tener éxito, la planificación sola es insuficiente. Uno debe improvisar también."
  - o "Solamente una mentira que no esté avergonzada de sí misma puede tener posibilidades de éxito."
  - o "Una pistola atómica puede disparar en dos direcciones".

Y os dejo una pequeña muestra de lo que se puede encontrar en la red de este genio de la ciencia ficción que, desgraciadamente, se está convirtiendo en todo un extraño para las nuevas generaciones.

<http://frikicaos.wordpress.com/2010/0...>

<http://www.ciencia-ficcion.com/autore...>

[http://es.wikiquote.org/wiki/Isaac\\_As...](http://es.wikiquote.org/wiki/Isaac_As...)

<http://www.laflecha.net/perfiles/cien...>

[http://www.asimovonline.com/asimov\\_ho...](http://www.asimovonline.com/asimov_ho...) en inglés

<http://www.asimovs.com/info/links.shtml> interesantes links de ciencia ficción

<http://mimundo-nerea.blogspot.com.es/...>

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## Jeraviz says

Volver a leer la trilogía de la Fundación 15 años después y esta vez del tirón (un tirón que me ha llevado 6 meses), me ha permitido entender mejor la idea general que planteó Asimov.

Ahora tengo más experiencia como lector y he visto alguno de los fallos en los que cae (la trilogía entera es un infodump continuo). Pero a pesar de los fallos me he vuelto a sumergir durante casi mil páginas en las mismas sensaciones que tuve de pequeño y me he asombrado aún más del enorme proyecto en que se metió Asimov.

Podrá gustarte más o menos su estilo pero es uno de los trabajos indispensables de la Ciencia Ficción del último siglo.

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## Andreas says

The series consists of seven books. In order of internal chronology:

- \* Prelude to Foundation
- \* Forward the Foundation
- \* Foundation
- \* Foundation and Empire
- \* Second Foundation
- \* Foundation's Edge
- \* Foundation and Earth

This is truly one of SciFi's classics. The original trilogy (starting with Foundation) is widely considered to be one of the finest SciFi series ever written. The rest of the books are of equally high quality, except (in my opinion) for Forward the Foundation, which seems more like an attempt to tie up loose ends, something of an obsession with Asimov towards the end of his career. Interestingly enough, the man who is arguably the main character, psychohistorian Hari Seldon, is long dead in most of the books. Few series convey a sense of evolving history as this one does, and at least the original three should be a must read for any Science Fiction fan.

So why not a higher score? Well, I feel that although it is a classic and very good, it did not quite capture my imagination as much as some other books have.

<http://www.books.rosboch.net/?p=360>

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## Davide Nole says

Non dico niente che non abbia già detto su questo libro. Leggete Asimov e capirete.

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## Carmen says

**Non avevo mai letto Asimov prima d'ora.**

**Non avevo mai letto fantascienza prima d'ora.**

Il mio battesimo di fuoco mi ha trovata impreparata storicamente al genere, eppure ha visto in me un'appassionata lettrice. Mi pento di aver nutrito tanti pregiudizi verso lo stesso, in passato, ma abbiate pietà: la filmografia fantascientifica esula dal correlato genere letterario, fatta eccezione per qualche pellicola.

Dunque, sfatato il mito della fantascienza tutta *umanoidi-e-razzi-orbitanti-ultrametallicamente-moderni* posso dire di aver ampliato il mio portfolio di letture in maniera più che soddisfacente, e di voler continuare in questa direzione.

Fatta questa premessa, ho trovato Asimov un uomo fantasioso.

Dei tre libri ho preferito il secondo, "Fondazione e Impero", sull'interregno del Mule negli anni trascorsi alla ricerca della Seconda Fondazione. Credo di averlo preferito per un semplice e ragionevole motivo: mi sono innamorata di **Magnifico**.

Non è il solito romanticismo femminile, l'istinto da madre-crocerossina che genera sentimenti di tenerezza verso individui brutti, dinoccolati, il registro ottocentesco e gli occhietti tristi. Me ne sono innamorata alla fine, verso le ultime pagine, per motivi che non posso ben delineare, pena lo spoiler su uno degli avvenimenti più travolgenti e intriganti del libro [personalmente, dell'intera trilogia]. Sono sincera, mi aspettavo una "Seconda Fondazione" in cui fosse impiegato in maniera differente, ma va bene così. Mi trovo ancora troppo legata ai singoli personaggi, più che alle masse.

Sarei, in una vita futura, una pessima psicostoriografa: lontana anni-luce dal poter divenire Oratrice. Se non in tempo di crisi.

N.B.: Sconsiglio altamente di leggere la trilogia nella stessa edizione che ho letto io. Errori -voglio sperare- di battitura a iosa: punteggiatura dilaniata e, molto spesso, letterine mancate o mostruosamente aggiunte [vedi "province"]. Ripongo la mia fiducia nella infinita distrazione di colui o coloro che hanno provveduto alla stampa -e alla revisione, soprattutto- e vi consiglio di sceglierne un'altra, di edizione. Il libro si legge comunque tutto d'un fiato, ma per un grammafanatico come me sono inevitabili certe fitte allo stomaco e al cervello.

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## Sedy says

Ok, let's begin with the fact that I tackled this trilogy when I was 12. I'm sure that, were I to pick it up once more, my appreciation would grow exponentially... HOWEVER, as wonderful as Asimov is, he writes like an engineer. He's careful and methodical, and the plot that weaves through the *Foundation* series is unbelievably complex. If you've got the time, and you enjoy Sci-fi, go ahead and pick up Prelude and follow Hari's awesome adventure.

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## Penny says

A great premise and a good read, but I think Asimov makes a wrong turn half-way through the Trilogy. Here's the set up: it is many thousands of years in the future, humanity has colonized the universe, and for 12,000 years, the Galactic Empire has reigned. A man called Hari Seldon, however, develops the science of psychohistory, and with it comes to predict the fall of the Empire and the coming of 30,000 years of chaos. He establishes the Foundation, a colony on the edge of the Empire, in such a way that historical forces will likely push it to become the new Empire in only a thousand years. The Foundation stories tell the tale of that 1000 years.

The first couple of books are good -- the Foundation is faced with huge challenges, the challenges are overcome, and then the holograph of Seldon turns up to tell everyone that it all had to work this way to lead on to Empire. Fun to read the lessons and then think to the experiences of ancient Rome, etc, and how they relate to Asimov's vision of history. However, I think Asimov makes two mistakes. First, the introduction of

the Second Foundation -- I won't talk about it for those who haven't read the books, but it takes all the risk out of the stories I think. Second -- and this I think this is really the more serious problem -- the author runs out of material on the creation of Empire in about year 300 of the 1000 year spread. The Foundation is not as big as the Galactic Empire had been, but otherwise it seems to be running along smoothly. Asimov should have doled out the challenges a bit more carefully. And gathered even more lessons from Rome.

Oh by the way -- the worlds of the future appear to be very male-centric. No female characters at all for many chapters: Asimov then introduces some heroines but they are fulfilling very traditional female roles. If that is the kind of thing that makes you grind your teeth, then these are not the books for you.

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### **George Jankovic says**

What can I say except THE BEST scifi books. I've read the Foundation books several times and, each time, I felt the same way. I got my son hooked on them too. He read the whole series at the age of 11 and loved them. I recommend it to people of all ages.

P.S. I always hoped (and still do) that I will make psychohistory a reality.

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### **Leslie says**

3½ stars. Sadly this BBC audiobook adaptation of Asimov's classic trilogy suffered from some sound quality issues (variable volume ranging from almost inaudible to too loud; annoying sound effects). It is also much abridged.

An acceptable way to recall the books but I wouldn't recommend it as a replacement for reading them (or listening to an unabridged audiobook).

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### **Lashaan Balasingam (Bookidote) says**

**You can find my review on my blog by clicking [here](#).**

Mind games at their finest! In The Foundation Trilogy, comprised of Foundation (Book 1), Foundation and Empire (Book 2), and Second Foundation (Book 3), you'll quickly find yourself in front of an author whose grasp on science-fiction is beyond belief. Far more idea-driven than character-driven, Isaac Asimov crafts the rise and fall of civilization in an intricate and astonishing prose. Tackling subjects ranging from religion to politics, this story will challenge your comprehension of individuals, but especially of collectives. Spanning over centuries, the Foundation series is nothing like you've ever seen before. Foundation propels us in a time period where the Galactic Empire has thrived for over 12000 years. Psychohistorian Hari Seldon however shocks the world by announcing an impending Dark Age where the Empire will fall and dwell in barbarism for almost thirty millennia unless the Empire's Commission of Public Safety permits him to establish a back-up plan that will guarantee a much more shorter age of barbarism and the promise of rebirth. It is on this premise that resides the adventures to come and thus leaves us with the torturous question: Will Hari Seldon's plan bear fruit?

In Foundation, Isaac Asimov introduces readers to psychohistory. The idea behind this field of study is that

the behavior of masses, in billions, can be predicted thanks to complex mathematical algorithms, while an individual's behavior remains almost impossible to anticipate. The originality behind this concept is beyond reproach and will drive this universe from the very beginning. It's in Hari Seldon's comprehension of masses that the faith of humanity resides on and it's in Isaac Asimov's creativity that this series wonders will shine in success. Of all three books, *Foundation* will undoubtedly go down as my favourite of the trilogy because of not only how magnificent and grandiose the ideas were, but because Isaac Asimov manages to fit what seemed like a gargantuan amount of content into just 250 pages. To put the cherry on top of the cake, the major plot twist in the first book—one that merits praise and definitely secured the first book's spot as my favourite book of the trilogy—changes the game in unimaginable ways and remains one of the most important moments in the *Foundation* series.

What I also loved a lot about *Foundation* is its themes. Isaac Asimov serves us with countless questions to ponder on as events unfold on galactic scales. For instance, the idea of free will is greatly challenged as Hari Seldon's plan basically strips individuals of their ability to control their destiny on a societal level. It just makes you wonder how people feel when their actions as individuals won't matter in the bigger picture. I also love how violence is depicted and how the author represents true power. Throughout this series you'll quickly come to realize that there's often only one type of behavior that will win the war, while the other will only win battles. The writing style also helps in delivering the prose fluidly without ever feeling jaded or overwhelmed. In fact, I found that the structure, composed of short stories, packed a lot of punch and kept the intrigue at a high level. In all honesty, this one series felt extremely accessible and easy to follow. Everything was straight-forward, even the countless twists to come. While characters come and go, their dialogues remain pertinent and striking whenever they do appear.

*Foundation and Empire* takes place a couple years later and introduces us to new characters. The story presents us with a much more powerful *Foundation* that easily takes care of the menace that represents the *Empire* until an unexpected force enters the stage. This individual, who goes by the name of *The Mule*, is known by countless to be a mutant with powers that no one has ever seen before. He is also the one factor that Hari Seldon's plan had never accounted for. It's the inclusion of such a character that threatens to put an end to a future that seemed sealed that brings new life to a story that seemed to know only one end. This second book in the series also presents us with our first female character when you would've thought that this whole series would only have had men doing the impossible and changing the world individually. This was definitely interesting since the introduction of a woman also brought into play the one thing that never seemed to be in the way of men in this story: emotions. *Foundation and Empire* also changes its structure by splitting the book into two parts rather than having multiple short stories. The change was sort of unfortunate as the short stories seemed much more poignant, but it definitely didn't take away the astonishing historical scope of this story.

The third book in the series, *Second Foundation*, focuses on a second *Foundation* that was hidden away in a secret remote location that no one knows about in order to remain unaffected by the actions and events that the *Empire* and the *Foundation* will come face to face with. Similar to the second book, this one is also split in two as the first part neatly ties things up regarding *The Mule* and the second part weaves us through the hunt for the second *Foundation*. One of the elements that was regrettable is the level of predictability. In these last two books, I found myself foreseeing the ruses and the twists that were integrated. Even if I saw a couple moves ahead, I still thought that the ideas conveyed were brilliant. In *Second Foundation*, I also loved the introduction of a second female character—a little girl this time—who glowed with a radiant Sherlock Holmes vibe in whatever she did. If Isaac Asimov ever wrote a book just for her, I'd read it now (please let me know). The finale in this book was also brilliant and kept you at the edge of your seat without you realizing. Just when you think things were done, expect the unexpected.

The *Foundation* trilogy isn't an adventure where you'll find yourself connecting with characters. It's a universe where you'll be mesmerized by the ideas and Isaac Asimov's foray into the human psyche and the evolution of civilization. As you acquaint yourself to key players in a plan to save humanity from falling into

barbarism, you'll find yourself in awe at the countless twists and turns that are thrown into this giant game of chess. Science, religion, economy, history, philosophy and politics will all be explored in their rawest forms and everything will always feel complementary to one another. While the trilogy remains the three most important books of the series and must-reads for any science-fiction fan, Isaac Asimov expands the universe with sequels and prequels, as well as separate short stories for starving devotees. Published in 1951, this trilogy remains a colossal piece of art in this day and age. There is honestly no excuses out there that could justify putting this classic aside.

Yours truly,

Lashaan | Blogger and Book Reviewer  
Official blog: <https://bookidote.com/>

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Mind games at their finest! In The Foundation Trilogy, comprised of Foundation, Foundation and Empire, and Second Foundation, you'll quickly find yourself in front of an author whose grasp on science-fiction is beyond belief. Far more idea-driven than character-driven, Isaac Asimov crafts the rise and fall of civilization in an intricate and astonishing prose. Tackling subjects ranging from religion to politics, this story will challenge your comprehension of individuals, but also of collectives.

P.S. Full review to come soon.

Yours truly,

Lashaan | Blogger and Book Reviewer  
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## Kyle says

The Foundation Trilogy is widely considered one of the most influential science fiction series ever written - it even won a Hugo award for the best all-time series back in the 60's.

And I get it. I can see why it's so influential, mostly because I've read and seen the books and movies and television shows that have been influenced by it (I'm mostly talking about The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy and *Futurama*, but there are countless others). Isaac Asimov has so many fantastic, interesting ideas - he's tracing the fall and rise of a civilization, using past history to guide him. In the span of three novels we've seen this history play out over 400 years, and seen how people originally seen as minor players were revered down in history later on.

It's just that it's so dry. Seriously. I realize that the ideas are more important than the writing, but this is a book. I need more than interesting ideas to keep me motivated to read.

The books do get better, however, I will admit that. But *Foundation*, the first book in the series, is hard to get over. I took a four month hiatus in between that and the second book because I couldn't get over how dry it was. Seriously, *Foundation* consists of people sitting around talking about ideas. All the action happens off the stage, and we're left to hear people discuss ideas. I get that Asimov is telling a broad history, and that history is more influenced by backroom politicking than different battles, but I wish he had given us something. And since the novel takes place over quite a long period, I never really felt like I had the time to devote much attention or interest in any particular character.

Asimov definitely picks up the pace in *Foundation and Empire*. While the first half is reminiscent of *Foundation*, he at least seems aware of this fact, and has one of his characters comment on the absurd amount of talking everybody does. But it's the second half, about the Mule, where things really get interesting. This is the story that deviates from intended purpose of the series, where one man with abnormal capabilities disrupts the plan and a small band of people have to join together to defeat him. There was still quite a bit of talking, but it was spliced in between action and characters having to make important decisions in order to save the whole galaxy while on the run from a great evil. Bayta Darrell and The Mule are interesting, flawed characters who grow and change. Bayta especially is one of the most clever people in the series, and I wish that she had appeared in more than just this book - she's clever enough to match wits with any science fiction hero, and she's able to use her inherent goodness against the most manipulative of foes.

*Second Foundation* was my favorite book of the series. Asimov still reverted to talking, but there was far less of it. Besides, this book also introduces us to the first truly funny character in the series: Arkady Darrell, who is mostly funny by the virtue of her being 14 and who gains all of her knowledge from books and television stories about spies and other romance stories. This is not a new character archetype - Don Quixote is the most famous, but there are many others. And it's a lot of fun to see Arkady go from a naive 14-year old girl, obsessed with living out the roles in her books and movies like any true hero to a 14-year old girl who understands that the world is an incredibly dangerous place and that her actions can cause great harm to a lot of the people she holds near and dear. It's the most true journey of any character presented in this series (so far), and it's incredibly rewarding. I'd go back and read about Arkady any day, though I'd probably skip the last chapter.

I get what Asimov was trying to do with the Foundation series. And there are times, when he moves away from the archetypical science fiction hero who is right and doesn't really have any sort of interesting journey to characters who learn and grow and change, that he really succeeds. And while the last half of *Foundation and Empire* and almost all of *Second Foundation* are worth it, I just can't get over the first book and a half.

I'm glad I read it, because now I get so many of the references that I see in other science fiction series, but I don't know that I'd ever reread it; I certainly wouldn't reread all of it. But when I inevitably reread *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and its sequels, at least I'll have a better understanding of the jokes.

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## Jan-Maat says

The Foundation trilogy is made up from a series of short stories published between 1942 and 1953. At the dawn of American dominance, Asimov as a fiction writer was inspired to write about decline and fall, rather like Edward Gibbon turned his attention to the end of Rome no sooner had victory in the Seven Years War set the seal on British ascendancy, but with science-fiction as his medium.

Asimov was fond of locked door murder mysteries and this technique of creating a seemingly impossible situation and resolving it cleverly is one that he used in the Foundation series. The resolutions are clever. The series is enjoyable for its interest in big questions rather than big battles in spaces with loads of exploding things.

But back to locked door mysteries. First Asimov locks the door by inventing a concept that he calls psychohistory. This is a super-science that allows the reasonably precise prediction of the future and this is the basis of the whole set of stories. Super scientist Harri Seldon using his ~~magic powers~~ meguffin technique of psychohistory realises that the Galactic Empire in which he lives is going to decline and collapse into a horrible galactic dark age in the very near future. However he has also calculated that by planting a colony of scientists in a safe spot this dark age can be minimised. This Foundation will undergo various ups and downs



and existential threats as it grows to create a future galactic republic, all of which ups and downs are predicted by psychohistory and by means of a fancy nuclear powered hologram thingamajig, he, Harri Seldon, can broadcast suitably condescending messages to impress the people of the future. The door is closed - how can the stories be interesting if the results are known and predictable in advance - and the key turns in the lock.

The first solution is that the people of Foundation don't have access to the predictions and so fulfil them unwittingly. Then random events do occur (particularly in Foundation and Empire), but don't turn out to have a long term impact. Finally it turns out that a super secret cabal of psycho-historians had been hidden away to keep the plan on course. In the last of these early stories the Foundation becomes aware of this Second Foundation and embarks on a McCarthite witch-hunt for them.

Very much of its time with its fear of infiltration by people with mysterious mental powers (think of The Manchurian Candidate), its interest in technology as the under pinning of power, and its concern with Imperial rise and fall. Since apparently this series went on to influence Newt Gingrich I can only recommend it to careful readers.

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