



Foundation and Chaos

Greg Bear

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Isaac Asimov's renowned Foundation Trilogy pioneered many of the familiar themes of modern science fiction and shaped many of its best writers. With the permission and blessing of the Asimov estate, the epic saga left unfinished by the Grand Master himself now continues with this second masterful volume. With Hari Seldon on trial for treason, the Galactic Empire's long-anticipated migration to Star's End is about to begin. But the mission's brilliant robot leader, R. Daneel Olivaw, has discovered a potential enemy far deadlier--and closer--than he ever imagined. *One of his own kind.*

A freak accident erases the basic commandments in humanoid robot Lodovik Trema's positronic brain. Now Lodovic's service to humankind is no longer bound by destiny, but by will. To ensure his loyalty, Daneel has Lodovic secretly reprogrammed. But can he be trusted? Now, other robots are beginning to question their mission--and Daneel's strategy. And stirrings of rebellion, too, are infecting their human counterparts. Among them is a young woman with awesome psychic abilities, a reluctant leader with the power to join man and robot in a quest for common freedom or mutual destruction.

The Foundation Saga Continues Read Gregory Benford's *Foundation's Fear*, the first novel in this bold new series and *Secret Foundation*, the concluding volume from David Brin.

Foundation and Chaos Details

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From Reader Review Foundation and Chaos for online ebook

Jeremiah Johnson says

I almost gave this two stars until I realized how utterly pointless the book was. Nothing in the story advances the plot of the Foundation Series until the last 10 pages or so.

The "sims" were (thankfully) largely downplayed after their disastrous introduction in Foundation's Fear. There was no VR immersion nonsense either. It also wasn't nearly as long (albeit still 350 pages or so too long in my opinion...). So in these regards, it was not as bad as Fear was.

But, there were robots. Tons and tons of robots for no reason other than to fight with each other for some reason. Daneel is back, and changed for the worse. In previous books, Asimov stated how it was very hard for Daneel to manipulate someone's mind even a small amount. In this book he is having entire conversations with people just to erase their memory of it when he is done. Why??

Asimov would be rolling over in his grave if he realized how his legacy was tainted by his greedy survivors.

Rob Markley says

I really had high hopes of what Bear could bring to Asimov. I like Bear the more but I regret that I feel instead of lifting Foundation Bear was dragged down from his lofty and brilliant science based fiction

manuti says

Siguiendo con la trilogía incluida en la lista de libros de 2008 – 2009. Después del anterior, este continúa las aventuras del matemático Hari Seldon. Si del anterior dije que era un poco space opera, este es algo más, y en general entra en una serie de historias con los robots (una constante de Asimov) que me ha gustado menos que el anterior, por lo que se queda con solo 2 estrellas.

Ash says

This is such a super rubbish book. I am actually very disappointed I read it. Some reviews of post-Asimov Foundation said that Fear was so rubbish that it's best just to skip to this one so I did. But it was a mistake to bother with this at all. If anything it has tainted my lasting images of Asimov's wonderful time-spanning saga. Daneel is much crueller in this than in any Asimov story, he's ruthless and really is laid out as a blight on humanity. Brain-fever to make mankind less innovative and thus less troublesome to control? Are you kidding me? This is all just so bad. So many pointless robots and other new useless constructs. Asimov would be gutted, I'm gutted. Once you've read Asimov's work on this series, consider it as over, that's it, let it go, don't be tempted to read this. Seriously.

Phil Giunta says

I completed Foundation and Chaos in a few weeks, reading mostly in the late evening or in stolen minutes during weekends. By contrast, I took months to finish the first entry in this trilogy, Foundation's Fear by Gregory Benford. Benford's plodding, tedious pacing and fragmented plot did not inspire confidence in the rest of the series but Greg Bear turned that around.

I was eager to return to Foundation and Chaos everyday and for as long as possible. Well conceived plot, excellent pacing, and strong character development. Bear tackled the robots of Asimov's Galactic Empire head on, while minimizing Benford's influence from the first entry. I'm eager to begin Foundation's Triumph by David Brin.

C. Conner says

This book is annoying on many levels:

Overall thoughts - this was not a journey where the reader is carried along by a quest and comes to a resolution by the end. This was a "glad it's over" story. A book should be a collection of words greater than the sum of the total. Foundation and Chaos was the opposite. Asimov gives the sensation of a rich and vast universe with his Foundation series. With this book the words are there but the meaning is lost and the reader is left looking through a small peephole with no understanding of what is happening.

The characters were one dimensional and there were no clear antagonists. Those who were seemed to vacillate between motives. What I found particularly disturbing was that everyone in this book seemed to know the purpose of robots and that robots were trying to steer humanity along a path. This premise does not conform with the way Asimov wrote his series. Robots had, by design, fallen out of the collective conscious of humanity. And at the climax of the story multiple characters were able to break into an Imperial government building with ease. I find this very implausible and believe the author either didn't care or ran out of time to be thorough.

With an author of this reputation one would think grammar, punctuation and word meaning would not be an issue. This was not the case. There were multiple minor annoyances that added up to make this a bad book:

The author had a penchant for ending paragraphs using ellipsis. The author should have reviewed the use of ellipsis and when to add an additional period. For some reason he liked to use the word "ceil" in place of "ceiling." Note to author - "ceil" is a verb. He also used "mathist" in place of "mathematician." And the names he came up with for ships: "Flower of Evil" and "Spear of Glory." Come on! It seems to me he spent maybe five minutes thinking of names or else put on a blindfold and threw darts at a board filled with random words. One of my favorite weird names he came up with was "Crib of the Accused." WTH? And there was also his use of parenthesis inside a quotation. The author should review the proper use of parenthesis. Which brings me to his phrase "keeping literally tens of millions of balls in the air at once..." That was another favorite. To author - please review the use of "literal" versus "figurative." One of the other words that left me shaking my head was "ignoramus." Who uses that word?

I would not recommend this book to anyone. I believe you should respect the original author if you are going to "go into his house." Don't go in and start moving around everything and changing the furniture. This book

does just that and fails miserably at continuing the universe that Asimov created.

Eoghann Irving says

Foundation and Chaos is book two of the Second Foundation Trilogy is rather different to book one. For a start Bear sticks more faithfully to the Foundation universe as described by Asimov. How important that is will vary depending on the reader. More importantly, the plot of this book feels more cohesive, resulting in a more entertaining read.

The Second Foundation Trilogy covers the life of Hari Seldon, his invention of psychohistory and his setting up of the two Foundations. This particular book concentrates on the period of his life when he was put on trial by the crumbling Empire. Although Hari Seldon is the main character of the trilogy (and thus this particular book) large parts of it are witnessed through the eyes of other characters. This is both interesting and frustrating at the same time.

On the one hand we get to explore Trantor from various perspectives. On the other, I found Seldon to be one of the most interesting characters and wanted to spend more time in his head. There is an overarching plot to this trilogy, the exact nature of which is not clear yet. In the first book, there were sections which seemed totally irrelevant to the main thrust of the book. During this book, the various strands become rather more entwined. Even so the significance is not at all clear. Plotwise, perhaps the most significant change from book one to book two is the portrayal of R Daneel Olivaw. In this book he seems less human. A not unnatural condition for a robot as old as he is by this point. His obsession with “protecting” the human race while still genuine goodwill on his part, seems less healthy now and maybe counterproductive. He also seems a little too free at manipulating people.

As I mentioned this book is more faithful to the Foundation Universe. No more wormholes, we’re back to hyperships again. This book reads and feels more like an Asimov Foundation story. The themes are very much those which Asimov used throughout his Foundation writing too. Unfortunately there is still something missing. The book is well written, the characters interesting and the setting well developed. Its good, its just not quite Foundation.

Craig says

3.5* Lots of interesting aspects of the story. For some reason, just couldn't connect with the characters. Maybe it was because there were too many interesting characters? I was just left with the feeling that I had watched something very interesting and was hoping for more?

Emma says

Starting in the middle of a series is a crazy idea but read the book. You in a world of low intelligent thanks to a disease that kills any child of high intelligent. One of the main character Klis suffered as a child. Lucky for the robots she and a boy called Brann survived this. The robots they to get these two to help the change of the world.

The story is deep and philosophy like. A bit too deep to read.

Liedzeit says

Liest sich ganz nett, aber ist doch ohne den Asimov drive. Tatsächlich könnte der Meister ihn selbst geschrieben haben, wenn sein Stil sich weiter verflacht hätte.

Es geht um einen Roboter, der gar nicht mehr an die Gesetze gebunden ist, und mit eigenem Gewissen erkennt, dass das Nullte Gesetz die Menschen entmündigt und böse ist. Das immerhin sehr gut. 5/10

Alex Shrugged says

I finished reading "Foundation and Chaos" by Greg Bear. This is an authorized part of the Asimov Foundation series . Once again we get into the details, filling out the story about how the Foundation got started. The original series started off rather abruptly with a new character, placed on trial and an older character that seems to know what is going on. The judgement is exile and suddenly you are on another planet, wondering how it all happened. Foundation and Chaos provides that information, outlining the trial and a lot of the back story of the characters who were only names in the book "Foundation".

I liked the book. This is a different author and I think he did an able job. Lots of excitement even though I know how it will turn out in the end. Getting there is half the fun and he provides that fun including tying up some of the sadder aspects of the story and smoothing them out. I was gratified. The book also suggested how the main "bad guy" in the original Foundation series might have come about.

There is one more novel in this particular set... Foundation's Triumph. Each of the novels stands alone, I am told. Certainly I could have read these first two in opposite order without too much of a problem.

Tim says

Now, I'm not going to say that this series is as ground-breaking as Asimov's (puhlease), but I do highly recommend that all the haters go back and read some of the originals and reassess how they feel about these authors matching (or not matching) Asimov's "voice." Having recently read the entire original series, I'm pretty amazed at how these books fall right in line.

Daniel McGill says

Does some damage control on what Benford did to the series in the first book before it gets going but I'd give this series a pass unless you're a fanatical completionist.

Roddy Williams says

'In 'Foundation and Chaos', one of science fiction's greatest storytellers takes one of its greatest stories into

new and fascinating territory. Isaac Asimov's classic Foundation series is back.

Hari Seldon, approaching the end of his life, is on trial for daring to predict the Empire's fall. At the same time, final preparations are under way for the long-anticipated migration to Star's End. But R Daneel Olivaw, the brilliant robot entrusted with this great mission, has discovered a potential enemy.

At a critical moment in the Empire's fall and the Foundation's rise, Hari Seldon is about to face the greatest challenge of his life.

Blurb to the 2001 Orbit Paperback Edition

The novel runs concurrently with Part I of Asimov's original novel, cleverly using Hari Seldon's trial – originally seen from the viewpoint of Gaal Dornick – as a central focus to examine events behind the scenes of which Gaal Dornick was unaware.

The trial dialogue is identical, but Asimov's rather dry 'transcript' version has been dramatised – if one may use that word in this context – brilliantly and, if anything, creates a tension and suspense where in Asimov's version of events there is merely his cosy sense of certainty and destiny. The reader was never in any doubt that the Seldon plan would succeed. It was just a matter of trying to work out how.

Behind the scenes, Hari's grand-daughter, Wanda, is gathering 'mentals' – human mutants capable of manipulating the thoughts of others – as the core of Seldon's 'Second' Foundation.

Bear's Foundation universe is a darker and more complex place than Benford's, and it is to his credit that he manages to capture some of Asimov's atmosphere whilst fully updating it for a contemporary readership.

Here, the robots take centre-stage and their millennia-spanning plans and behind-the-scenes manipulations are put into a different perspective.

Lodovic Trema, an ancient robot and long-time associate of Daneel R Olivaw's plans for humanity, has been altered by Voltaire (an AI personality first encountered in Foundation's Fear). He no longer is bound by Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics which forbid him to harm humans, and undergoes a form of robotic exegesis, coming to believe that Daneel's protective stance of humanity as a whole is a restrictive suffocating policy.

The robots' disparate philosophies and organisations are described using religious terminology with Humanity in the position of God/Creator. Originally united, the robot population was divided and subdivided by schisms, with some becoming Calvinist (after Susan Calvin from Asimov's original 'Robot' series) and others becoming Giskardists following the philosophy of the robot R Giskard Reventlov. To add support to the religious connection there is a conversation between Daneel and the sim personality construct of Joan of Arc in which it is implied that Daneel's God is Humanity, which in a sense is true if one applies the human religious hierarchical framework to Robots. Humans are the creators. They breathed life into the robots in a far more evidential way manner than God breathed life into Adam.

Oddly enough, the robot featured in Asimov's 'I, Robot' or at least in the twilight Zone adaptation, was indeed called 'Adam', thus endowing the whole of this robotic narrative thread with a kind of theological thematic consistency. This means that the evolved humans now having abandoned their Gods, it is time for the Robots to do the same.

Were this not a posthumous sequel with a solid body of work stretching back – with various degrees of quality – to the Nineteen Forties, the concept of a robot in the late Nineties novel would only work in some ironic post-modern sense, as it does in 'Roderick'.

The concept of a Galactic Empire is also one which modern writers approach at their peril, but here, given its cosy familiarity from the Asimov legacy seems – along with the robots – not out of place.

Bear, following on from Benford, fleshes out the power-structures and goes a long way toward making the Empire, and the complex power struggles which pervade it, a plausible entity. It's fascinating to see how Bear, noted for novels of solid scientific speculation and Big Ideas, copes with what is essentially Space Opera, but cope he does, and extraordinarily well.

One of the best scenes involves two of the robots travelling to the secret robot base at Eos, a small blue moon of a green gas giant, orbiting a double star. There, an ancient robot with four arms, three legs and seven vertical sensor strips on its face 'two of which glowed blue at any given time' performs necessary maintenance on those robots who come in for their MOTs. It's a poignant and evocative section, laced with a Golden Age sense of wonder.

Smaniam says

I read the Foundation Series as a teenager and with "Foundation and Earth" I thought there could be nothing more that could be achieved beyond that book. So, when I came across the books that were published ostensibly as an authorised extension to the foundation saga - It was something amounting to sacrilege!! I could barely control myself whenever I caught a glimpse of any of the pretenders. It was like Mammon had won the battle and Asimov's legacy would soon be muddled.

Well, time does mellow ones feelings and also introduces newer perspectives. Messrs Bear, Grin and Benford have done a commendable job in trying to add a bit of Science to what was essentially a 1950s plot to make it palatable for contemporary hard sci-fi readers.

I would recommend that this series should be read separately after completing a reading of the original series.
