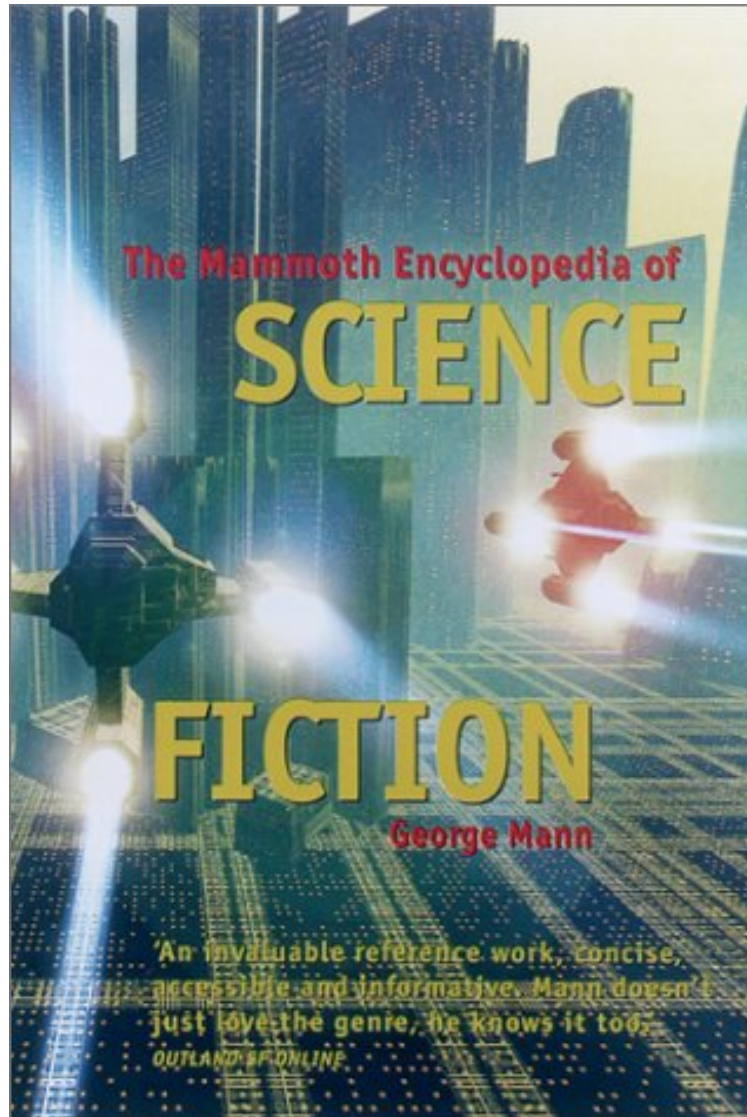


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The Mammoth Encyclopedia of Science Fiction (Mammoth Books)

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From Carroll Graf : The Mammoth Encyclopedia of Science Fiction (Mammoth Books) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Mammoth Encyclopedia of Science Fiction (Mammoth Books):

10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. scififan310By J.R. RichardsThere is so much wrong with this book its hard to put it in a short review. Let me keep it objective and give just a few of the many, many inaccuracies that fill its pages. First, this pompous tome refers to the movie "When Worlds Collide" as being based on the pulp fiction of the 1930's, when as everyone else knows it was based on the acclaimed novel of the same name by Philip

Wylie and Edwin Balmer (the book is not even mentioned in the description of this classic film). Another example of a clear disconnect with the material it claims as subject is the entry which describes the milieu of the film "Silent Running" as being in the "throes of a post-apocalyptic nightmare" ruled by an authoritarian government. This movie never makes reference to any such thing. In fact the society is described by some of the characters as being idyllic. But for me the last straw was the entry describing one of the greatest sci-fi films ever made, "The Thing from Another World". It states that the movie is set in Antarctica, when actually it is (again, as the rest of us know) set in the Arctic (North Pole). The entry then goes on to tell us that the researchers "thaw" the flying saucer when they accidentally blow it up, and that the Thing is found in the saucer (after it was thawed, of course), not in the ice. My advice is that if you have not bought this book, don't! If you have, throw it away. It is worse than no good. This book gives the term Encyclopedia a bad name.

26 of 26 people found the following review helpful. A British, fannish view of the field of SF

By JvstinI bought this book sight unseen or without even a description, since i do love things SF. Upon opening and beginning to read it, I realized that it wasn't quite what I expected. First of all, its from England, which is not a bad thing at all, but it does mean that British authors have a more prominent and highlighted presence in this work than Americans are accustomed to reading about. Iain Banks and Stephen Baxter have pretty big entries, for example, and George R.R. Martin has none at all. And second, it was written by a fan for a fan (admitted in the first paragraph of the preface). I had been expecting something like the big encyclopedias out there, done by an editor or a writer that I had simply not heard of. So, the viewpoint is different, and much more subjective than you might expect. You won't find cold and clinical analysis of the entries. This can be a good thing, if you don't mind the presence of the author bias. The Encyclopedia itself is broken up into several parts. After a preface, Mann discusses the origins and history of SF. The next section, the longest, discusses selected authors. The subsequent section looks at SF in movies and TV. Much like the Encyclopedia of SF, Mann has a goodly section on thematic entries, as well. Finally, he finishes the work with a look at SF societies and awards and such, and has a substantial section on internet resources. Although the hazards of the Internet make such sections perilously prone to being outdated, it was a pleasure to see one here. The book is cross-referenced quite well, too. Those looking for a large, exhaustive encyclopedia on the order of the John Clute Encyclopedia of Science Fiction (or his one for Fantasy) should look elsewhere. If you want a more idiosyncratic view, with a British slant on authors and SF in general, this may be more of your cup of tea. And it IS cheaper and more intimate than the other monster SF encyclopedias on the market. It was not what I expected, but I am well satisfied with the Mammoth Encyclopedia of SF.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A rather weak and biased offering, filled with glaring omissions and errors

By DarbyI had high hopes for this book, when I grabbed it (on a whim, off the discount rack). However, although it had some helpful information on some authors I'd never read before, I found it suffered from a number of major flaws:

SHORTCOMINGS: 1) AUTHORS: As luciusmichael mentioned on 22-Aug-2001, this book is almost as noteworthy for which authors it omits as it is for who it includes. 2) BIAS: This book is noticeably biased towards British SF, and against American SF, which I found unhelpful and, at times, both annoying and naive. 3) ERRORS: This book is chock full of them ... almost as if many of the entries were written off the cuff from half-remembered snippets, with little or no independant review/editing. Case in point: in his description of the movie "Forbidden Planet" (which he correctly identified as an adaptation of Shakespeare's play "The Tempest"), he gives a completely incorrect ending to film (note to author: they did NOT bombard the planet from orbit ... they rigged the planetary reactor to self-destruct before launching). Ditto for the movie "Predator" (note to author: "Dutch" did not kill the alien with a hand grenade ... the creature engaged a self-destruct 'baby-nuke' device on it's forearm after getting fatally pinned in a dead-fall). There are lots more egregious errors, but this is enough to give people a clue of what to expect. 4) QUALITY: Rather than being written by a professional editor or author with long experience in the field, it was written instead by a fan ... and it really shows, given the rampant omissions, personal bias, and inaccuracies that occur throughout. So, what's good ?

A) ORGANIZATION: I like how it's organized. It starts with a brief historical overview of SF, then provides an A-Z listing of authors and list of bibliographical highlights, followed by a listing of noteworthy science fiction movies, and lastly by glossary of terminology for the genre. The author could (and should) have written a lot more in the historical overview section up front ... but that's where we get into the differences between fan-authors and experienced professional writers/editors in the field. B) COMMENTARY: The commentary is mostly hit or miss, and it definitely has an unhelpful and distracting British bias (as already mentioned), and is filled with errors in places, but some of the career retrospective comments on some of the authors are moderately interesting and helpful. Overall, I recommend people save their money. I found this to be a weak offering that killed a lot of perfectly good trees.

From Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, and Arthur C. Clarke to Chelsea-Quinn Yarbro and Roger Zelazny, from science fiction authors worldwide to the directors of sci-fi films for movies like 2001: A Space Odyssey and television series like Star Trek, from the magazines that publish the writers in this exciting and extraordinarily inventive field to the Hugos, Nebulas, and other awards that annually honor them, this encyclopedia offers the most concise, clear, and comprehensive guide currently available to one of fiction's most popular and intriguing genres. In an A-to-Z format, augmented by an ample index and helpful cross-references, this richly informative volume presents science fiction as

it appears in film as well as in the print media, including entries on important illustrators, and covers both the modern developments in the field and the classic landmarks. Furthermore, each author entry ends with an "Also see" section that directs readers to related topics, and all entries provide full bibliographies. Equally invaluable is the opening chapter, which gives a brief history of the genre and traces its evolution from origins that long precede the twentieth century.

From Publishers Weekly
From steampunk to space opera to humanist sci-fi, from Arthur Conan Doyle to *The Six Million Dollar Man*, and from implants to teleportation, George Mann navigates genre-benders, numerous media, neologisms and common terms, thrills, disappointments and traditions in *The Mammoth Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*. Entries in this comprehensive reference guide include several descriptive and factual paragraphs, cross-references, suggested reading and bibliographic information. Mann, editor of *Ottakar's* science fiction magazine, defines his variegated, evolving subject (e.g., what differentiates SF from fantasy?) while remaining flexible and forward-thinking. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.
About the Author
George Mann works in the book retail industry and edits *Ottakar's* science fiction magazine. He has had poetry and short stories published and is currently working on a science fiction novel. His favourite author is Peter Hamilton.