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Sir Arthur C Clarke giving wings to the imagination [1]

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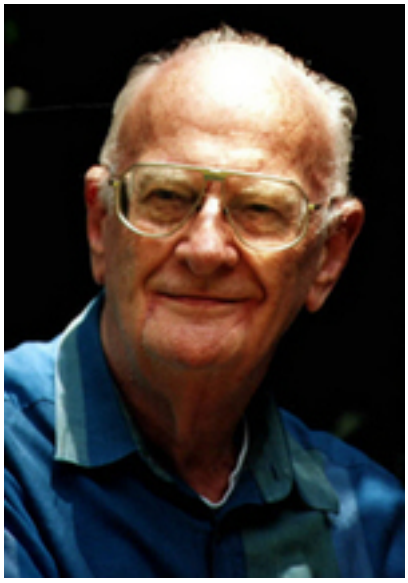

Of the three greats of post-war science fiction, Heinlein, Clarke and Asimov, I was fortunate to meet two of them ? Clarke and Asimov. The passing of Sir Arthur C Clarke, aged 90, marks the final end of that era. These were the writers who stretched the imagination and let it soar. They were the companions of my boyhood, radiating an optimism that planted itself deep.

The backdrop of their stories was that humans will always face danger and adversity, but can win through by force of character and ingenuity. They radiated the sense that humanity can solve its problems by a combination of creativity and effort; if people apply themselves they can overcome the difficulties that assail them.

Clarke himself was a futurist as much as a writer. He was more realistic than the others, in that the things he described seemed more possible and more immediate. From the geostationary TV satellite to the space elevator, his imagination created the technology of the future, and it spurred people on to help bring it about.

None of the three saw a limited future for humankind, or one where humanity learned to live within its means. On the contrary, they saw our descendents making the universe their canvas and painting an unlimited future upon it. They profoundly affected the psyche of their generation and its successors; we shared their dreams and couldn't wait for the opportunities and choices they would unfold.

Rest in peace, Sir Arthur, and thank you.

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