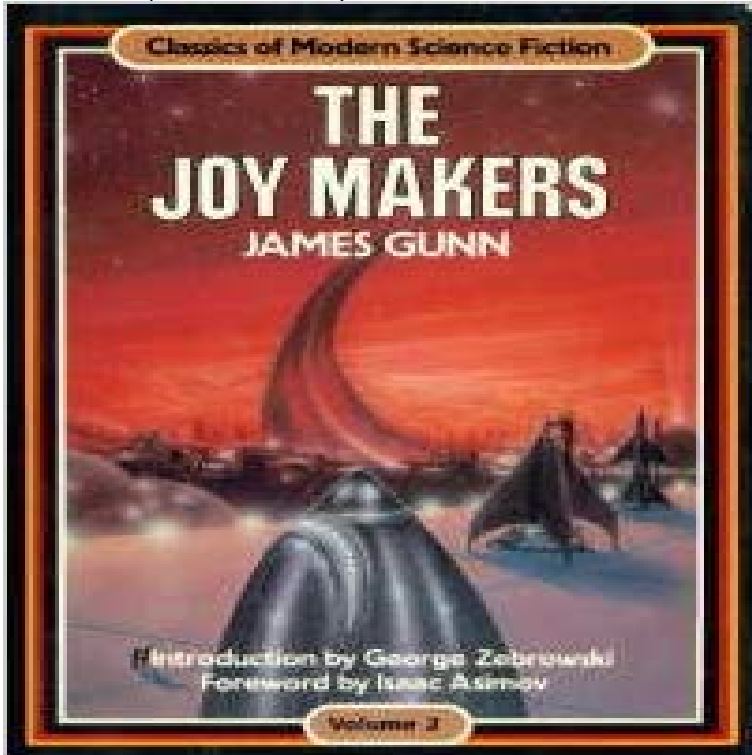


The Joy Makers (Classics of modern science fiction #2)



Imagine a world where you can have everything you want, or if you can't have it, you can be psychologically conditioned not to want it. Imagine a world so technologically advanced that happiness and contentment can be achieved without effort, a world where there is no sickness or hunger, no deprivation, no want, no striving, no disappointment. Imagine that any experience can be yours and any fantasy or desire reconstructed by machines and fed directly into your cerebral cortex. Imagine all this, and you have the world of James Gunn's *The Joy Makers*, a nightmare world of indolence, of lost purpose, of the death of civilization. *The Joy Makers* tells of a future society on Earth where the psychomedical science of Hedonics, concerned with the manipulation of human desire and the achievement of happiness, becomes the ruling philosophy. In a chilling climax, an Earthman returning from Venus, where life is still a rugged pioneering affair, attempts to smash the grotesque domination of the machine over a captive human population. Originally published as separate stories in 1954 and 1955 in the pulp magazines of the day and first published in book form in 1961, *The Joy Makers* is a brilliant exposition of a theme well known to science fiction fans -- that of a paradise gone wrong. Its author takes a jaundiced look at utopian societies and suggests that unhappiness and dissatisfaction may be necessary underpinnings of all human progress.

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