



## Decoding Gender in Science Fiction

By Brian Atterbery



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**Decoding Gender in Science Fiction** By Brian Atterbery

From *Frankenstein* to futuristic feminist utopias, *Decoding Gender in Science Fiction* examines the ways science fiction writers have incorporated, explored, and revised conventional notions of sexual difference. Attebery traces a fascinating history of men's and women's writing that covertly or overtly investigates conceptions of gender, suggesting new perspectives on the genre.



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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Brian Attebery is wonderfully fitted by nature, training, and experience to take on the complex subject of this book. Fair-minded and vastly tolerant, knowledgeable in every field of science fiction and fantasy, writing with vitality, clarity, and humor--he has given us a work that will engage and reward both the scholar and the interested lay reader." *Ursula K. Le Guin*

"*Decoding Gender* addresses [Science Fiction] issues in powerful ways through its nuanced exploration of both masculine and feminine SF writing traditions. Attebery's wide-ranging but judicious use of feminist theory balances especially nicely with his detailed analyses of individual SF texts; both, in turn, provide fresh perspectives on SF history--or, more accurately, on SF's multiple histories. The concluding chapters convincingly demonstrate why these multiple histories matter...he has given us a way to see them more clearly. Highly recommended." *Lisa Yaszek, Extrapolation*

"*Decoding Gender's* greatest strength is its methodology. Attebery uses cultural theory to play the kind of "what if" game so near and dear to the collective heart of the SF community. This framing technique is more than just a useful device for decoding gender and genre; it's also quite fun. The "what if" game also enables Attebery to tell dynamic SF histories that complicate their smooth evolutionary predecessors. Elsewhere, feminist theory provides Attebery with the means to generate new histories across conventional SF periodization. Rather than giving readers a Darwinian tale of the triumph of a single literary species, Attebery depicts the development of SF as a series of complex and sometimes contradictory processes." *Lisa Yaszek, Extrapolation*

"This is a thorough examination of the good, the bad, and the ugly in the history of gender representations in science fiction." *Regina Cross, Journal of the Fantastic of the Arts*

"*Decoding Gender in Science Fiction* is a commendable work, a pleasure to read and a source of new insights into the political minefield that gender studies have become over the years." *Donna Spalding Andreolle, Utopian Studies*

"Brian Atterby's *Decoding Gender in Science Fiction* is a welcome addition tot he list of key texts...that address science fiction's problematic relationship with gender. [I]t is vital precisely because it theorizes gender as a dual system rather than conflating the study of gender with the study of the female." *Science Fiction Studies*

"Attebury approaches science fiction as a literary scholar; his book reads like a series of lectures, and it would make an excellent course book." *Robin Roberts, Modern Fiction Studies*

"I heartily recommend the entire book both to experienced sf readers and to those for whom fantasy and science fiction are a huge, hostile terra incognital." *Susanna J. Sturgis, Women Review of Books*

"Overall, *Decoding Gender* is a pleasure to read, not least because of Attebery's wide-ranging samplings of sf. One of the book's greatest virtues is its exploration of the fringes of sf without neglecting the center." *Joe Milicia, The New York Review of Science Fiction*

"*Decoding Gender in Science Fiction* is vital precisely because it theorizes gender as a dual system

**rather than conflating the study of gender with the study of the female."** *Sherryl Vint, St. Francis Xavier University, Science Fiction Studies*

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From the Publisher

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About the Author

**Brian Attebery** is Professor of English and Director of American Studies at Idaho State University. He is author of *Strategies of Fantasy* and *The Fantasy Tradition in American Literature*, and co-editor, with Ursula K. Le Guin, of *The Norton Book of Science Fiction*.

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