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The Routledge Companion To Science Fiction (Routledge Literature Companions)



Synopsis

The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction is a comprehensive overview of the history and study of science fiction. It outlines major writers, movements, and texts in the genre, established critical approaches and areas for future study. Fifty-six entries by a team of renowned international contributors are divided into four parts which look, in turn, at: history – an integrated chronological narrative of the genre’s development theory – detailed accounts of major theoretical approaches including feminism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, postcolonialism, posthumanism and utopian studies issues and challenges – anticipates future directions for study in areas as diverse as science studies, music, design, environmentalism, ethics and alterity subgenres – a prismatic view of the genre, tracing themes and developments within specific subgenres. Bringing into dialogue the many perspectives on the genre The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction is essential reading for anyone interested in the history and the future of science fiction and the way it is taught and studied.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Well designed for reference, for serendipitous browsing, or for systematic study, The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction will be welcomed by novice and veteran scholars alike.” – Carl Freedman, Louisiana State University, USA ‘This title should serve as a base for future updates that will continue to enrich knowledge and appreciation of

science fiction....Highly recommended.' *Choice* 'The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction will, one day soon, become an indispensable guide to sf's history, breadth, and depth for the genre's scholars, authors, and aficionados... The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction to a crucial addition to sf scholarship.' The book most directly appeals to the genre's academic surveyors, but non-scholars will find it fascinating, intelligent, and debatable information in its pages. This publication's comprehensive, incisive, and useful entries make me wish the Companion a long and prosperous (shelf) life.' *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*

Mark Bould is Reader in Film and Literature at the University of the West of England. Co-editor of Science Fiction Film and Television, his books include *Film Noir* (2005), *Parietal Games* (2005) and *The Cinema of John Sayles* (2008), *Neo-noir* (2009) and *Red Planets* (2009). Andrew M. Butler is Senior Lecturer in Media and Cultural Studies at Canterbury Christ Church University. The editor of *An Unofficial Companion to the Novels of Terry Pratchett* (2007) and *Christopher Priest: The Interaction* (2005), he has also written *Pocket Essentials on Philip K. Dick* (2000, 2007), *Cyberpunk* (2000), *Terry Pratchett* (2001), *Film Studies* (2002, 2005, 2008), and *Postmodernism* (2003). He co-edits *Extrapolation*. Adam Roberts is Professor of Nineteenth-Century Literature at Royal Holloway, University of London, and the author of *Science Fiction* (2000) and *The History of Science Fiction* (2006). His most recent sf novels are *Gradisil* (2006), *Land of the Headless* (2007), *Splinter* (2007) and *Swiftly* (2008). Sherryl Vint is Assistant Professor of English at Brock University. She is the author of *Bodies of Tomorrow* (2007) and is currently completing *Animal Alterity: Science Fiction and the Question of the Animal*. She co-edits *Extrapolation*, *Science Fiction Film and Television*, and *Humanimalia*.

The 550 pages and 250,000+ words of this formidable book are put to good use. In it you'll find a systematic, nearly all-encompassing presentation of the academic study of science fiction. The scope of the book is simply vast, covering a huge array of subjects within SF or related to the field (see the table of contents below). The only gaps I saw in the volume's broad-brush treatment were a consideration of non-anglophone SF literature, and perhaps a chronology of SF-related video and role-playing games in the "History" section. Granted, this breadth of coverage comes at some cost to depth. In its history of SF for example, the chapter on "Fiction, 1926 - 1949" takes up only 9 pages. In the "Theory" section, a mere 7 pages are allocated to the important subject of utopian studies. Given the limitations of space, a reader who's strictly interested in written SF may feel some annoyance at the number of pages given over to topics such as comic books and "SF tourism" (a

discussion of science-fictional elements found in theme parks, etc.). But I'd argue against that attitude, and against skipping any chapters. I found a lot of fascinating information and insights in some chapters that I was initially grumbling about as being a waste of space. It's worth noting that the book is somewhat heavy on theory, and a few chapters are rather densely written. Or to put this another way, the book seems to be directed more toward readers interested in science fiction studies than those straightforwardly interested in science fiction. Thus, for example, you'll find more mentions of SF scholar Darko Suvin in its pages than Isaac Asimov. But any negative points to be made are relative quibbles. Overall the book is a remarkable achievement in its field. Although it was written by a host of authors, the writing is uniformly very good, and the text is as neatly organized and even-handed in its coverage as one would expect from a single-author book. If you have any interest in SF studies, this book is a must-have. For those who are deeply involved in the field, it should be one of the foundation volumes of their library. And for those with a lesser interest, it's the best choice available as a one-and-only (or at least a first) book on the subject. You can see the book's table of contents via its "Look Inside" feature, but I'm going to copy it here anyway; reading through it is essential to appreciating the scope of the book.

Part I History

- 1: The Copernican Revolution
- 2: Nineteenth Century SF
- 3: Fiction, 1895 - 1926
- 4: SF Tourism
- 5: Film, 1895 - 1950
- 6: Fiction, 1926 - 1949
- 7: Golden Age Comics
- 8: Film and Television, the 1950s
- 9: Fiction, 1950 - 1963
- 10: Film and Television, 1960 - 1980
- 11: Fiction, 1964 - 1979
- 12: Manga and Anime
- 13: Silver Age Comics
- 14: Film Since 1980
- 15: Television Since 1980
- 16: Fiction, 1980 - 1992
- 17: Comics Since The Silver Age
- 18: Fiction Since 1992

Part II Theory

- 19: Critical Race Theory
- 20: Cultural history
- 21: Fan Studies
- 22: Feminisms
- 23: Language and Linguistics
- 24: Marxism
- 25: Nuclear Criticism
- 26: Postcolonialism
- 27: Posthumanism and Cyborg Theory
- 28: Postmodernism
- 29: Psychoanalysis
- 30: Queer Theory
- 31: Utopian Studies
- 32: Virtuality

Part III Issues and Challenges

- 33: Animal Studies
- 34: Design for Screen SF
- 35: Digital Games
- 36: Empire
- 37: Environmentalism
- 38: Ethics and Alterity
- 39: Music
- 40: Pseudoscience
- 41: Science Studies
- 42: Space
- 43: Time, Possible Worlds, and Counterfactuals

Part IV Subgenres

- 44: Young Adult SF
- 45: Alternate History
- 46: Apocalyptic SF
- 47: Arthouse SF
- 48: Blockbuster SF
- 49: Dystopia
- 50: Eutopia
- 51: Feminist SF
- 52: Future History
- 53: Hard SF
- 54: Slipstream
- 55: Space Opera
- 56: Weird Fiction

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