

Science Fiction and Utopia: The Superiority of Intersecting "Spaces"

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Session

- [Session 2M: Philosophy, Ethics and Literature](#)
- 288 MGH
- 3:30 PM to 5:00 PM

Within the literary world, science fiction has been assigned an illogically negative reputation, often considered to be poor-quality and low-value literature. Yet, even those who do not enjoy science fiction cannot deny its intrinsic value as a way to imagine worlds and possibilities beyond our own. More than that, science fiction provides an entirely unique experiential mode of examination, creating a network of removed analytical "spaces" that we can use as lenses through which to examine reality. Thus, science fiction not only allows us to imagine what might be, but it in many ways surpasses the effectiveness of other genres in investigating what is. Curiously, the overlapping but not equivalent genre, utopia, performs its critical work using similar "spaces," but is generally accepted as a valid, useful form of literature. While utilizing these critical "spaces," works of utopia are able to provide additional levels of analysis that other genre forms are not necessarily able to address. This is possible because each utopic work provides the opportunity for a double-edged mode of critical investigation: the question of subjective versus general utopia, which allows readers to explore multiple conditions of the present as they shape the content of the text. My research examines the stigma of science fiction, navigates the complicated yet fascinating relationship between science fiction and utopia, and then examines the kind of critiques and commentaries made possible when science fiction and utopia are blended. Ultimately, the intersecting "spaces" of utopic science fiction produce an incredibly rich, multi-faceted form of literature and a superior vessel of social critique.