The (Ir)Relevance of Science Fiction to Non-Binary and Genderqueer Readers

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Abstract

As an example of Jean Baudrillard's third order of simulacra, contemporary science fiction represents a convenient literary platform for the exploration of our current and future understanding of gender, gender variants and gender fluidity. The genre should, in theory, have the advantage of being able to avoid the limitations posed by cultural conventions and transcend them in new and original ways. In practice, however, literary works of science fiction that are not subject to the dictates of the binary understanding of gender are few and far between, as authors overwhelmingly use the binary gender division as a binding element between the fictional world and that of the reader. The reversal of gender roles, merging of gender traits, androgynous characters and genderless societies nevertheless began to appear in the 1960s and 1970s. This paper briefly examines the history of attempts at transcending the gender binary in science fiction, and explores the possibility of such writing empowering non-binary/genderqueer individuals.
The article also touches upon the relevance of questioning the gender binary in general: The existence of nonbinary people testifies that there are myriad, complex ways of conceiving of oneself. But it does something else, too, by inviting broader conversations about how everyone understands gender. I asked my readers "What articles, information, or resources would you like someone to create?" Here is the content you’d like to read more of about non-binary identities. In “Disinformation”. In 2014: Blog. A series of articles profiling genderqueer and non-binary individuals recently came out on many media outlets. What did the articles get right? How can journalists do better?