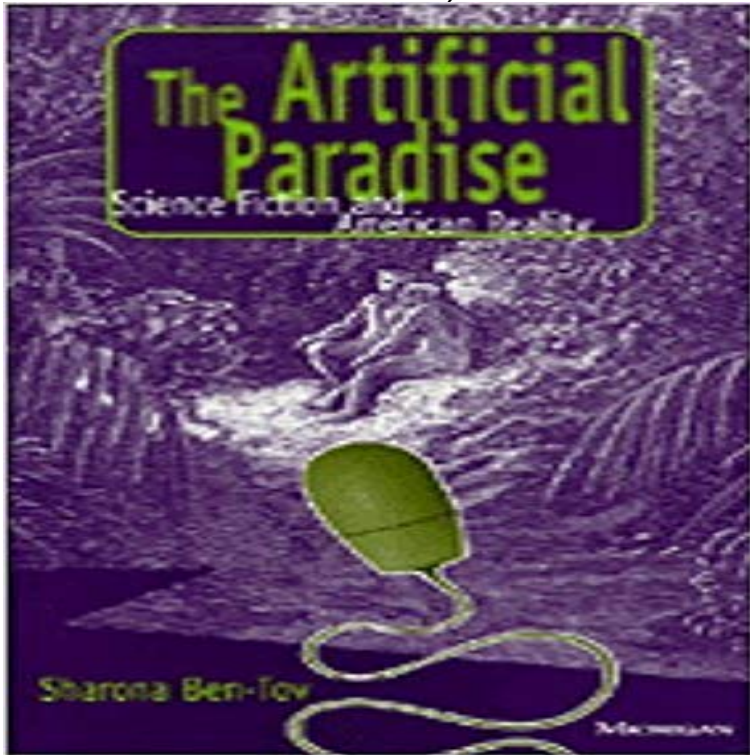


The Artificial Paradise: Science Fiction and American Reality (Studies in Literature and Science)



The Artificial Paradise shows how science fiction is a powerful purveyor of cultural myths rooted in the history of the West, myths that shape American attitudes toward nature, technology, and the pursuit of happiness. Sharona Ben-Tov posits the theory that science fiction is an American national mode of thinking which seeks to replace nature with technological worlds- paradoxically, in hope of regaining a mythic, magical American Eden. Science fiction imagery- from fifties sci-fi through womens sci-fi and cyberpunk- keeps alive the desires of and anxieties born during the Scientific Revolution, when the Western view of nature changed radically. Ben-Tov discusses sci-fi classics like Dune, The Dispossessed, Neuromancer, Vonneguts fiction, and the Aliens movie in relation to ancient and modern myths of nature, to scientific projects like the atom bomb, Strategic Defense Initiative, robotics, virtual reality, and to cultural psychology. The book will appeal to those interested in popular culture, literature, and feminist studies. It will also enchant general readers who are interested in science fiction, especially readers who want to understand more about the relationship between technology and society. The Artificial Paradise sets out to map the cultural anxieties that have beset Western thinking since the Scientific Revolution, and to investigate the ills that flow from the split in Western thinking between nature and culture and subject and object, and how the split is expressed and reinforced in popular culture and particularly in written science fiction... . [A] thought-provoking, wide-ranging book written in an admirably lucid style.--Sarah Lefanu, author of Feminism and Science Fiction The examination of Americas uneasy relationship with nature is an illuminating approach which draws together science fiction studies and American studies. The witty and readable

style should attract a wide readership.--Brian Attebery, Idaho State University
The Artificial Paradise is at once intellectually provocative, knowledgeable, and literate. As our lives become increasingly determined by technology, we will need to turn to such thinkers as Dr. Ben- Tov to guide us through its dangers and pleasures.--Alan Lightman, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Sharona Ben-Tov is Assistant Professor of Creative Writing and English, Bowling Green State University. She is author of *During Ceasefire* (Harper-Collins), a book of poems.

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