What's Your Favorite Sci-Fi Sub-Genre?

By Jessica Haak

Science fiction has some commonalities across sub-genres. But, upon close analysis of today's sci-fi films, video games, and virtual reality experiences, there is incredible diversity. As digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and machine learning become industry standards, rather than distant hypothetical queries, it's no wonder this genre and its many art forms are booming.

Science fiction allows us to grapple with deep philosophical questions about:

· What it means to be human,

· If we are alone in the universe,

· How humans and machines interact, and

· Ethical quandaries related to our species' mortality.

 (picture)

In this post, we look at **8 sub-genres of Science Fiction**.

#1: First Contact: When humans meet aliens.

Is there life beyond the cosmos? Will humans ever have contact with other life forms? In this sub-genre, that critical first meeting is woven into a rich narrative of friend or foe, suspicion, or trust.

>>**Examples:** *Arrival, Contact*

#2 Galactic Empire: The glorious empires of our alien neighbours.

If life, if the cosmos is possible, what do our neighbours' empires look like? Are they thriving utopias, or horrible dystopian realities that make us question our humanity? Marvel has created a vast and expansive rendition of characters and places in a modern take on this sub-genre.

>>**Examples:** *Anything Marvel*

#3 Cyberpunk: A dark, stormy, and strangely sexy future dystopia.

One only has to look at the influence of Blade Runner to see how this sub-genre has infiltrated pop culture and our visions of a dark and stormy future infiltrated by Artificial Intelligence. Film Noir meets space; these films are dark, moody, and intriguing.

>>**Examples:** *Blade Runner*

#4 Dystopia: A fully de-humanized imagined reality.

Technology gone mad, humanity on the brink of collapse with no end in sight, a bleak world, that reminds us of what matters in the here and now of our current reality.

>>**Examples:** *The Matrix*

#5 A.I.: Robots with the likeness of humans.

The last two decades have seen incredible growth in the field of Artificial Intelligence. As this growth continues, this genre asks, what is our relationship to machines? Do machines have rights and what is the tipping point to protecting them as we do humans? Will machines ever experience feeling as we do?

>>**Examples:** *Ex Machina*

#6 Alternate History: An alternate historical thread asks how things could be different.

We've all asked, how could things be different in our lives? In this sub-genre, that question becomes a global meta-narrative. It examines the world with a historical twist embedded, sometimes, with time travel.

>>***Examples:*** *Back to the Future*

#7 Colonization: Human colonization of other worlds.

Will Elon Musk succeed? Will we one day have humans on Mars or beyond? Will we inhabit other worlds? Sometimes, out of a desire for exploration and adventure, and at other times, out of need and necessity, the characters look to create a human civilisation on another planet.

>>***Examples:*** *The Martian*

#8 Alien Invasion: Aliens conquer the world.

Will aliens conquer the world? Are they already here? Have they visited the earth before? This art form looks at the question, 'are we alone in the universe,' and extends it to its bleakest possibility: Humans vs. Aliens.

>>***Examples:*** *Independence Day*

To the uninitiated, Science Fiction can appear bleak and jaded. Yet, from a pathological perspective, Sci-Fi allows some of the deepest expressions of humanity's fear, potential, and hope in the face of adversity in the modern narrative form. These 8 sub-genres are not the only Sci-Fi sub-genres. There are many more we can work with you to explore.

To learn how our designers can help you to build a custom Sci-Fi experience, get in touch for a free virtual consultation.