

Science Fiction

Films in the Service



referred to as horror films but these films are unmistakably Science Fiction. For those who seek to develop their imagination but find Fantasy a bit too far-fetched, Science Fiction will be an enjoyable experience that will definitely stimulate.

Blade Runner / producer, Michael Deeley; director, Ridley Scott.

Blade Runner has become one of the all time great Science Fiction cult films - Harrison Ford stars as a blade runner, an android hunter, who is sent to kill five outlaw androids that have escaped from off-world (not on earth) colonies and have managed to find their way back to Los Angeles in the year 2019. Ford also happens to fall in love with another 'replicant', which causes problems with his case

along the way. Rutger Hauer is cast as Roy Batty, the leader of the band of lawless androids who directs them as they wreak havoc through the city while they search for a way to prolong their four-year life spans.

The time machine / producers, Walter F Parkes and David Valdes.

Alexander Hartdegen (Guy Pearce), an inventor living in New York at the end of the 19th century, is far ahead of his time when it comes to mathematics and science. When his fiancé is killed in an attempted robbery he directs all his efforts into creating a device that will allow him to travel back in time in order to save his love. After years of struggle he manages to build the device but when he uses it he discovers that he cannot alter history. Dejected and wanting to leave his past behind, Alexander decides to move into the future. Nearly a million years into the future he stops and finds that people have evolved into two species: the peaceful Eloi who live above ground and the violent Morlocks who dwell below ground. Alexander decides to help the peace-loving Eloi and tries to free them from the terror of the Morlocks.

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Science Fiction is a genre of film and literature in which a background of science or pseudo-science is an integral part of the story. Science Fiction and Fantasy often are mistaken for each other. The differences are, however, quite easy to identify. The main difference between the two genres is that Science Fiction stories

are based on events within the realm of future possibility, such as robots, space travel, interplanetary war, et cetera, whilst Fantasy is based on events and characters we know do not exist and never will exist, for example, dragons, orcs, trolls and elves.

One of the most famous Science Fiction authors is HG Wells and several of his works have been reproduced on film. **The time machine** and **War of the Worlds** are the most well known of his works and in many ways they set the tone for future Science Fiction material. Science Fiction films have become very popular and some of the most successful films fall in this

genre. The **Star Wars** epics, **Close encounters of the third kind** and **ET: the extra-terrestrial** were amongst the most financially successful motion pictures ever produced.

The Library Service's extensive film collection boasts some of the best Science Fiction titles around. Some of the Science Fiction films in our collection, such as the *Alien* series, are often



E.T.: the extra-terrestrial / producers, Steven Spielberg and Kathleen Kennedy; director, Steven Spielberg.

This film was the highest grossing film in America until **Star Wars** was re-released. It was coined the childhood version of **Close encounters of the third kind**. **E.T.** tells the tale of the friendship between a young boy and a little lost alien, who faces great odds in order to see the alien back home. While the boy and his siblings hatch a plan to see their friend from space home they introduce the alien visitor to life on earth and try to teach him their language. All the while they try to keep him hidden from the outside world in an effort to protect him which results in some humorous antics from the kids as well as the alien.

The abyss / producer, Gale Anne Hurd; director, James Cameron.

The abyss melds two genres into one: the disaster movie and Science Fiction. For a film produced in 1989, I think it set a high standard for films shot under water and the special effects are outstanding, even by today's standards. The story deals with a mission to investigate strange readings on radar and a group of Navy SEALs, along with oilrig workers, are dispatched to investigate and, if necessary, neutralise any threat.

A raging storm on the surface leads to equipment being damaged, a SEAL suffering from symptoms of the underwater pressure and a confrontation with underwater aliens make for a very entertaining, suspense-filled Science Fiction film.

War of the Worlds / producers, Kathleen Kennedy and Colin Wilson; director, Steven Spielberg.

Ray Ferrier is an average blue-collar worker living in a congested house working a job that only just allows him to make ends meet. He leaves work one morning to meet his children, a ten-year-old girl and a sixteen-year-old boy, who are being dropped off by his ex-wife and her husband for the weekend. The relationship between Ray and his children is tense to say the least and it becomes clear that he is not the best father.

A peculiar lightning storm develops rapidly and before you know it, huge tripods are erupting from the ground and incinerating people all over. Earth is under attack from aliens that have been waiting for the right moment for thousands of years.

War of the Worlds is full of suspense, great special effects and it also highlights the personal struggles individuals face during times of strife.

Galaxy quest / producers, Mark Johnson and Charles Newirth; director, Dean Parisot.

Galaxy quest is a combination of Comedy and Science Fiction. Tim Allen stars as Jason Nesmith, an actor who previously starred on a hit television show called **Galaxy quest**. Sigourney Weaver (Gwen) is one of the cast members who resents Jason because he gets all the attention from the fans.

None of the actors have had any significant work in a while and survive by doing store openings and signing autographs at **Galaxy quest** conventions. Real aliens come to earth in order to enlist the **Galaxy quest** crew's help in defending themselves against an evil enemy. Believing the 'aliens' are pitching him a new job, Nesmith invites the rest of the cast to join him only to come to the realisation that they actually have to do what they have pretended to do for years - save a species and possibly earth in the process.

The film is a Science Fiction comedy with merit and I found it very entertaining. It is a good example of the lighter side of the Science Fiction genre.

When most people watch a Sci-Fi film they focus on

the fast-paced action that is often a feature of this genre. In so doing they tend to forget about the creativity that goes into its production. Science Fiction by nature is a view of the future expressed by the creator of the picture and as such it should interest most, if not all of us. After all, the future most certainly will affect us all.

The covers of the titles discussed in this article are vibrant and I am sure that they will attract interest if displayed appropriately. Use Sci-Fi as a tool to stimulate the imaginations of your users and possibly introduce them to Sci-Fi novels, which, I am sure, will benefit them greatly in future.

Other titles on DVD

I robot

Close encounters of the third kind

A.I.: artificial intelligence

Minority report

Solaris

Twelve monkeys

Independence day.

Note: Reviews by Charl September.

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