



APPLICATION OF SCIENCE IN LITERATURE

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Introduction to Science Fiction

“Isn’t that what it means to be a scientist? To push the boundaries of the unknown? To bravely, actively explore the enormity of our universe ?”

— **Robyn Mundell, Brainwalker**

Science fiction allows us to understand and experience our past, present, and future in terms of an imagined future.

-Kathryn Cramer, *The Ascent of Wonder* (1994)

Definitions

- The science fiction genre, an exciting collection of intellectual and physical adventure, overlaps a great deal with all other genres. In general, science fiction is considered to be a genre that explores the question "what if?".
- It continually investigates moral, philosophical and technological possibilities by creating new and exciting realities. Science fiction deals with "scientific topics, space travel, aliens and recognizably Earth-variant worlds or life forms that have not been touched by magic". Time travel is also a common theme in many science fiction novels.

□ The following is a list of many of the themes that are covered within the genre of science fiction:

- Ecology
- Messianic/Religious
- Dystopia/Utopia
- Apocalypse
- Alternate and Parallel Worlds
- Immortality
- Social Criticism

Science Fiction as a Genre

- Though there is a great deal of diversity and variety within this genre, the following discussion includes the characteristics that are common to all science fiction works.
- This discussion shows how these characteristics relate to the four general appeal factors for fiction.

- Science fiction is widely recognized as speculative fiction.
- Works in this genre have storylines that explore moral, social, philosophical, technical and intellectual issues and/or questions.
- Authors utilize a setting that establishes otherness of time and/or place, a setting outside of everyday reality, to allow for the discussion of new, challenging and sometimes controversial ideas.

- One important part of the **frame** in science fiction works is the technical and scientific detail. As discussed above, one of the important traits of this genre is its focus on science and technology.
- The frame of the story, the special setting or particular atmosphere, is instrumental in setting the tone.

- **Characters** are usually secondary to the questions that are pursued through the action of the plot.
- Though the more literary end of the genre does focus more heavily on characters, in general the genre focuses on situations and events.
- Also, many of the science fiction characters are series characters, developed slowly over the course of the series.

- The **pacing** within the genre varies greatly with the particular work, but it is generally linked to the type and amount of action in the story.
- The action in science fiction works may be either psychological/philosophical (interior) or physical (exterior) or both.

- In the **final run**, the art behind science fiction story characteristics is about daring to dream and then crafting daring characters who take part in that dream.
- It's about setting the eye of your mind upon strange and new possibilities and then inviting the readers to participate in the journey.
- The key is participation, not observation. Great SF plot-lines transport readers into a place of new ideas saturated with a unique group of people facing captivating problems.