

What defines the science fiction genre?

Science Fiction film is a genre that incorporates hypothetical, science-based themes into the plot of the film. Often, this genre incorporates futuristic elements and technologies to explore social, political, and philosophical issues. The film itself is usually set in the future, either on earth or in space. Traditionally, a Science Fiction film will incorporate heroes, villains, unexplored locations, fantastical quests, and advanced technology.

Example ***The Matrix*** - The fight for the future begins when a computer hacker learns the world exists in an alternate reality and he is chosen as “The One” who can save mankind in the war against the computer agents who control it.

Science Fiction Films are usually visionary and imaginative, and usually visualized through fanciful, imaginative settings, expert film production design, advanced technology gadgets (i.e., robots and spaceships), scientific developments, or by fantastic special effects. Sci-fi films are complete with heroes, distant planets, impossible quests, improbable settings, fantastic places, great dark and shadowy villains, futuristic technology and gizmos, and unknown and inexplicable forces

The plot creates situations different from those of both the present day and the known past. Science fiction texts also include a human element, explaining what effect new discoveries; happenings and scientific developments will have on us in the future.

Science fiction texts are often set in the future, in space, on a different world, or in a different universe or dimension.

Many other SF films feature time travels or fantastic journeys, and are set either on Earth, into outer space, or (most often) into the future time. Quite a few examples of science-fiction cinema owe their origins to writers Jules Verne and H.G. Wells. See also [*AFI's 10 Top 10 - The Top 10 Science Fiction Films*](#).

What makes Blade Runner science fiction?

Well firstly the film is set in the ‘future’ (this was about 30 years into the future if you go from the 1982 release date). Both science and technology have advanced considerably, but society has gotten to a point in which they do not appear to play much of a positive role, but seems to be mostly used for the purposes of law enforcement and corporate profit. In this ‘high-tech’ environment we are forced to look at crowded streets filled with poor people, rubbish, burnt out cars, and abandoned buildings. Alongside this we see flying police cars, awe-inspiring advertising and media spectacles,

advanced weaponry and all sorts of other futuristic gadgets. But the costs of 'progress' have been heavy for the natural environment, the physical city, and for most of the humans who reside there. And of course the film deals with an aspect of 'speculative science' – the creation of genetically engineered human beings. We also get the typical mad scientist character in Eldon Tyrell, a very bright man that has been corrupted by an obsession with power and wealth. Blade Runner provides the viewer with a visually charged portrayal of a future society that has gone terribly wrong, because human greed and shortsightedness has combined with science and technology to create an urban dystopia that may be beyond redemption.



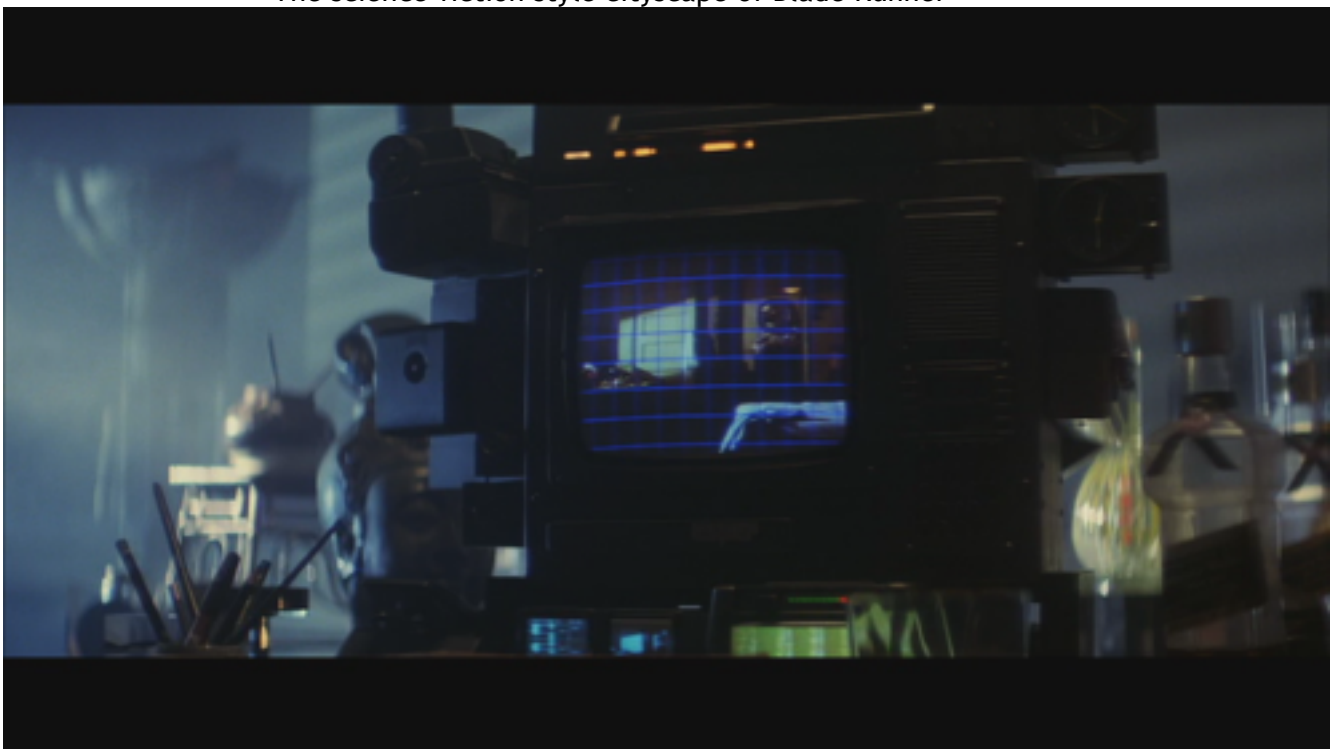
The 'Voight-Kampff' empathy-testing machine is one example of advanced technology in the film



Gaff gives Deckard a ride in the 'spinner', a flying police ship - a good example of speculative technology



The science-fiction style cityscape of Blade Runner



Another example of speculative technology - this one being a voice-controlled image-manipulating machine, with the ability to 'see' into photos



J.F. Sebastian and his artificially created 'friends' - an example of high-end science