

# History of my obsession with science fiction and what do i enjoy in the genre

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As a kid, I don't exactly know my first encounter with science fiction as I did not know about such a term until much later. Back then, an animated children's television series exploring about science that I watched known as "The Magic School Bus" was considered science fiction to me, although my opinion of it would lean towards informational fiction at present. My dad liked to buy movie CDs and we would watch it at home as a family. I believe it was through movies such as "Harry Potter", "Wall. E", "Transformers", and "Jurassic Park" that exposed me to the genre of science fiction. I was enthralled by the endless possibilities that could happen in the fictitious worlds such as owning an invisible cloak, having a sentient robot as your companion, or being in the dinosaur era. These movies blurred the lines of fiction and reality for me.

In my childhood, I asked my parents lots of questions and wondered about a lot of things. One evening we were having dinner while watching a television show and when she started adjusting the volume, I asked her, "How did the TV become softer or louder? Is it because the people inside spoke softer or louder according to your command?" Another time I saw their old photos and wondered, "Why is everything in black and white? Is it because the world used to be only in black and white and there are no colours?" I came to realise the answers as I grew older. But I appreciated this phase in my life where I did not know the limits of the real world and tried providing a reason to my own questions, just as a science fiction story cleverly revealed the science behind the fiction.

There were several ideas explored in the realm of science fiction stories that I am very fond of. One of them is that of time travel as shown in the Japanese-animated movie “ The Girl Who Leapt Through Time”. I often wonder what if I could turn back time and learn about history and how the world was created before we existed. Who are my ancestors and my bloodline? And what if I can travel into the future as well to find out how the world has changed? Will time stop just for me or for everyone? I was also very fond of the idea of teleportation. In movies such as “ Howl’s Moving Castle” and “ Monster University”, a door acts as a portal that opens up a new place when you step through it. Growing up, I only ever travelled between Singapore and Malaysia to visit our relatives, and the journey was hours on end. I wished I could make use of teleportation to save on the hassle of travelling or to get myself out of embarrassing situations and sometimes, I dream about teleporting to exotic places I’ve never been to experience everything the world could offer. I wanted to see the northern lights, the Niagara Falls, the Great Barrier Reef, the Grand Canyon, the Seven Wonders of the World and many more. I also took pleasure in immersing myself in a parallel universe described in science fiction books and movies. Particularly, the movies “ Upside Down” and “ Patema Inverted” caught my attention for there exists two gravities in the world and, “ The Martian” and “ Passengers” with the characters struggling to survive while stranded away from Earth. I was mesmerised by the ingenious use and display of such advanced technology that went beyond my imagination.

Another aspect of science fiction that I love is about exploring the limits of the human brain and psychic abilities such as mind-control, telepathy, clairvoyance and telekinesis. There is a science fiction novel I read in my English Literature class called “ The Chrysalids” by John Wyndham about a post nuclear apocalyptic world rife with mutated living beings and a group of mutants trying to escape from being captured with the help of their telepathic abilities. And a recent movie I watched known as “ The Darkest Minds” was about the female lead who has the ability to control minds. She was also deemed as a dangerous existence enough to be eliminated, and hence she had to go on the run to save herself from being killed. I realise that most of the people who possesses extraordinary abilities in these science fiction worlds are deemed as a dangerous existence in society and had to be eliminated. What if there are people like these in our society who possess unique abilities? Will they be embraced or viewed as a threat? And what if we could enhance our abilities through medication? A sci-fi movie called “ Limitless” explored the possibility of gaining access and making use of our entire brain’s capacity with the ‘ limitless’ pills to go about accomplishing tasks in extraordinary ways and the consequences of consuming them. What then would that mean for society? If it is available, should everyone have access to it?

I enjoy science fiction very much as it can make me reflect on the ethical and philosophical issues raised as well as the human ingenuity shown in the midst of it all. To me, science fiction is a genre that encapsulates futuristic technology and science. Besides providing entertainment value, I think a

deeper purpose they serve is for us to reflect on our use of technology and the consequences of it on us and the environment. It is a useful means for us to consider what kind of future we want and how we can work towards achieving it, and it makes me appreciate the present world and our imperfections.