



## Reflecting on Science Fiction

For this issue of *MOSF Journal of Science Fiction*, our editorial team reached out to some of the guests who will be at *Escape Velocity* this July and invited them to tell us about what makes science fiction fun to them. Here's what some of them said.

### “What makes science fiction fun?”

Science fiction has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. Having a father who is a science fiction TV producer is a big part of that—I grew up surrounded by VHS tapes of *Thunderbirds*, *Space: 1999*, *UFO*, *Captain Scarlet* and *Terrahawks*—but as a young child, I also naturally gravitated towards shows like *Doctor Who*.

For me, science fiction has always served two crucial functions—to provide an escape and to connect me more to the world in which I live. This may sound paradoxical, but I think those aspects of science fiction are the two essential features which make it so popular.

Many fans of science fiction will report that one of their favorite things to do at the end of a long day at work is to escape into a science fiction universe. Immersing oneself in a world so different from our day-to-day experience is a truly liberating experience. The added suspension of disbelief that's involved when watching science fiction serves only to deepen the level of the escape.

Science fiction stories and their settings are, by their very nature, often very different from

contemporary life. Part of this difference aids our escape, allowing us sufficient distance from everyday life that we have a chance to gain insight and perspective.

So much science fiction writing, television, and film is inspired by, and often mirrors, contemporary events and troubles. But put into a new and different world, these familiar scenarios take on a new perspective—giving us the space to reflect on them in a different way.

This strange mixture of connection to, and disconnection from, everyday life is (for me at least) one of the magical appeals of science fiction.

That all sounds a bit “serious”, doesn't it? Is this really what make science fiction fun? I'd argue that yes, it is. The magical mixture of disconnection and connection, of fantasy escape and real-world thought-provocation that makes it such an exciting way to tell stories. When you add amazing technology, aliens, space travel and great stories over this base layer, how could science fiction not be fun?

— **Jamie Anderson**

*Managing Director of Anderson Entertainment  
Son of Thunderbirds creator Gerry Anderson*



Reflecting on Science Fiction, *continued*

### “What makes science fiction fun?”

Science fiction explores the world of “what if.” Science fiction stories are built upon prevailing knowledge and speculating about what can happen if the human imagination stretches that knowledge and its unexpected consequences. Science fiction also challenges the complacency of conventional wisdom. What if the great minds of the day got it wrong? What would happen then?

Great science fiction stories are built around engaging, relatable characters. The more different from everyday reality the setting of the story is, the more important it is for audiences to experience that world through characters with which they can identify. Everyone imagines what they would do if placed in the same situation as the characters, and we delight in the surprises, shocks, spectacle, and emotional intensity that transport us into realms far from the world in which we live. When the world is at last set right, we also share triumph with the characters in science fiction.

Our species has always been fascinated by speculative fiction, and some of the world’s oldest and most enduring literature and myths qualify as

science fiction. Humans seem to experience a need to consider things beyond our immediate reality and limitations. It is no surprise that most of the biggest box office films and enduring television franchises are science fiction-based.

There is a wonderful symbiotic relationship between real science and science fiction because each informs and inspires the other. New discoveries in science provide leaping off points for science fiction storytellers: now that we know this, what if that? The explorations of the imaginations of if science fiction inspire real scientists to push further: If we can imagine that, let’s make it real. It’s no mystery why the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) named the first space shuttle “Enterprise.”

Science fiction is fun because it transports audiences away from daily frustrations into worlds and situations beyond what is possible in real life. It inspires the imagination, offers visceral adventures into the unknown, and explores the human condition, ultimately reminding us what it means to be human.

— Dan Curry

*Visual Effects Supervisor for Star Trek: The Next Generation*  
*Visual Effects Producer for Star Trek: Enterprise, Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, & Star Trek: Voyager*