

**SCIENCE FICTION IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY:
ESSENCE AND SELECTION**

by

WILLIAM LOFTIE-EATON BREWIS

submitted in fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

in the

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION SCIENCE

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

PROMOTER: PROF J A KRUGER

JOINT PROMOTER: MRS E M GERICKE

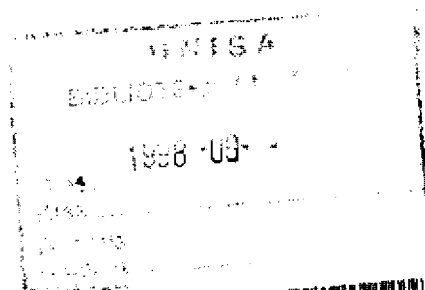
JUNE 1997

FOREWORD

I wish to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to Professor Dr. J.A. Kruger and Mrs E.M. Gericke, respectively my promoter and joint promoter, for their ever-present guidance, patience and encouragement in the completion of this research.

A special word of appreciation to my spouse Marina for her unfailing assistance and technical support.

025.2780883 BREW



0001707012

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page	
Foreword	ii	
List of Tables	xv	
List of Figures	xvii	
Summary	xviii	
CHAPTER 1	INTRODUCTION	
1.1	Background to the problem	1
1.2	Statement of the problem	9
1.3	Research methodology	9
1.3.1	Literature study	10
1.3.2	Survey research	10
1.3.3	Sampling method	11
1.4	Definition of concepts	12
1.4.1	Literature	12
1.4.2	Fiction	13
1.4.3	Mainstream fiction	13
1.4.4	Popular fiction	15
1.4.5	Science fiction	18
1.4.6	Narratives of fantasy	19
1.4.7	Collection development	19
1.4.8	Selection	19
1.4.9	Culture	20
1.4.10	Civilization	21
1.4.11	High culture	22
1.4.12	Popular culture	22
1.5	Research programme	23

**CHAPTER 2 CONTEMPORARY POPULAR CULTURE
AS SOCIETAL PHENOMENON**

		Page
2.1	Introduction	26
2.2	High culture	26
2.3	Discrete taste cultures	27
2.4	Popular culture	28
2.5	Origins of popular culture	32
2.6	Critique of popular culture	35
2.6.1	Origins of the negative perception of popular culture	35
2.6.2	Substance of the critique	37
2.6.3	Popular culture vindicated	42
2.7	Contemporary popular culture	49
2.8	Conclusion	52

**CHAPTER 3 THE VALUE OF POPULAR FICTION AND
SCIENCE FICTION FOR SOCIETY AND READER**

3.1	Introduction	54
3.2	Advent of popular fiction	54
3.3	Critique of popular fiction	57
3.4	Significance and value of popular fiction within society and culture	58
3.5	Significance of popular fiction for individual readers	61
3.5.1	Ludic reading	61
3.5.2	Relief of tension	62
3.5.3	Communication	64
3.5.4	Societal consciousness	65
3.5.5	Reinforcement of personal values	66
3.5.6	Education about and for life	66
3.5.7	Escape	68

	Page	
3.5.8	Resolving personal problems	69
3.6	Science fiction as popular fiction	69
3.7	Motives and values involved in the reading of science fiction	72
3.7.1	<i>Gedankenexperiment</i>	73
3.7.2	Perspective on society	74
3.7.3	Reflecting crucial contemporary and future societal issues	74
3.7.4	Perspective on scientific advances	75
3.7.5	Utilization as teaching instrument	76
3.7.6	Modern-day mythology	77
3.8	Conclusion	77
CHAPTER 4	LITERARY HISTORY AND PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENCE FICTION UP TO 1950	
4.1	Introduction	79
4.2	Societal and cultural climate prevailing during the origin of science fiction as a genre	80
4.3	Nineteenth-century literary influences on science fiction	82
4.4	Cultural-literary determinants of science fiction in the course of the twentieth century	84
4.4.1	Modernism and modernist fiction	84
4.4.2	Dominant characteristics of modernist and post-modernist fiction: epistemological versus ontological strategies	87
4.4.3	Post-modernism and post-modernist fiction	89
4.5	Post-modernist science fiction and the divide between high culture and popular culture	92
4.6	The cyberpunk movement as post-modernist science fiction	94
4.7	Origins of science fiction	95

	Page
4.7.1	Narratives of exotic and fantastic journeys 97
4.7.2	Classical utopias 98
4.7.3	Religious literature 98
4.8	Science fiction of the nineteenth century 99
4.9	Close of the nineteenth century: first flowering of the genre 102
4.10	Early twentieth-century science fiction 107
4.11	Magazine science fiction of the nineteen twenties and thirties 109
4.12	Other significant science fiction of the nineteen thirties and forties 111
4.13	The Golden Age: 1938 - 1950 113
4.13.1	Magazine science fiction 113
4.13.2	Science fiction in book form 117
4.14	Conclusion 118

**CHAPTER 5 AGE OF ACCEPTANCE AND THE NEW WAVE:
SCIENCE FICTION FROM 1950 UP TO 1973**

5.1	Introduction 120
5.2	Literary development of science fiction up to the early nineteen sixties 121
5.3	Age of Acceptance of science fiction: 1950 - 1961 121
5.3.1	Prominent authors 122
5.3.2	Mainstream authors participate in viewing humanity's future in a totalitarian society 126
5.4	The New Wave: 1962 - 1973 129
5.4.1	Origins 129
5.4.2	New stylistic approach 131
5.4.3	Important authors of the New Wave 134
5.4.4	Literary characteristics 139

		Page
5.5	Individualistic authors of the nineteen sixties	140
5.6	Conclusion	146

CHAPTER 6 SCIENCE FICTION SINCE 1973

6.1	Introduction	147
6.2	Nineteen seventies: a period of maturation	148
6.2.1	Important authors	149
6.2.2	More women authors enter the field	155
6.2.3	Science fiction continues to define humanity's destiny	156
6.3	Nineteen eighties: a sophisticated genre	157
6.3.1	Important authors	159
6.3.2	Further noteworthy authors	162
6.3.3	Advent of cyberpunk	163
6.4	Nineteen nineties: new challenges	167
6.5	Conclusion	170

CHAPTER 7 LITERARY ESSENCE OF SCIENCE FICTION AND THE EVALUATION OF INDIVIDUAL WORKS

7.1	Introduction	174
7.2	Generic tradition of science fiction	175
7.3	Salient characteristics of science fiction	178
7.3.1	Conventions of science fiction	178
7.3.2	Thematic core of science fiction	179
7.3.3	Mythical aspect of science fiction	181
7.3.4	Formulae of science fiction	182
7.3.5	Megatextual quality of science fiction	184
7.3.6	Literary paradigm of science fiction	187

	Page	
7.4	Relationship between mainstream fiction and science fiction	189
7.5	Conventional literary criteria as utilized in the evaluation of mainstream fiction	192
7.5.1	Plot	194
7.5.2	Characterization	195
7.5.3	Setting	195
7.5.4	Narrative method	196
7.5.5	Myth, symbolism and significance	196
7.5.6	Style	197
7.5.7	Entertainment	198
7.5.8	Language and dialogue	199
7.6	Unconventional criteria for the evaluation of science fiction	200
7.6.1	Reasons for the use of unconventional criteria	201
7.6.2	Critics' proposals	204
7.7	Choice of criteria to evaluate science fiction	207
7.7.1	Theme	207
7.7.2	Characterization	208
7.7.3	Myth and symbolism	208
7.7.4	Formula	209
7.7.5	Megatextual quality and fabulata	209
7.7.6	Sense of wonder	210
7.7.7	Grounding in scientific knowledge	210
7.7.8	Setting	210
7.7.9	Abstraction and universality	211
7.7.10	New awareness	211
7.7.11	Plot	211
7.7.12	Entertainment	212
7.7.13	Language and dialogue	212

		Page
7.7.14	Style	212
7.7.15	Narrative method	213
7.8	Comparison between conventional mainstream literary criteria and those specifically suited to science fiction	213
7.9	Primary and secondary criteria	216
7.10	Conclusion	218

**CHAPTER 8 TWENTIETH-CENTURY THEORY RELATING
TO THE SELECTION OF FICTION IN THE PUBLIC
LIBRARY**

8.1	Introduction	220
8.2	Historical perspective on the problem of fiction selection in the public library: nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century	220
8.3	Contemporary perspective on fiction selection in the public library: second half of the twentieth century	224
8.4	Twentieth-century theory regarding fiction selection in the public library	227
8.4.1	Objectives of the public library	228
8.4.2	Determining the inherent value of fiction	239
8.4.3	The enduring debate: quality versus demand	243
8.4.4	Community studies to determine user needs	255
8.5	Conclusion	258

**CHAPTER 9 MODELS PERTAINING TO THE FICTION
SELECTION PROCESS**

		Page
9.1	Introduction	261
9.2	Models relating to the collection development and selection processes in the public library	262
9.2.1	Evans's model of collection development as a cyclical process	262
9.2.2	Collection development as a hierarchy of three related functions	263
9.2.3	Collection development as an interaction between user behaviour/characteristics, the literature and the library as institution	264
9.2.4	McGrath's model for the evaluation of collections	265
9.2.5	Atkinsons's model of the selection context	269
9.2.6	Rutledge and Swindler's model of selection criteria and the prioritization of items in the selection process	276
9.2.7	Oosthuizen's model of the decision-making process	284
9.2.7.1	The reading act and the three levels of fiction	286
9.2.7.2	Evaluating works of fiction	288
9.2.7.3	The mission of the public library	290
9.2.7.4	Reader demands and reader needs	290
9.2.7.5	Phases of decision-making and contextual factors	291
9.3	Conclusion	297

**CHAPTER 10 THE SELECTION OF SCIENCE FICTION IN PUBLIC
LIBRARIES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

10.1	Introduction	299
10.2	Research methodology	300
10.3	Construction of the questionnaire	302

	Page	
10.4	Sampling method	303
10.5	Covering letters and response rate	306
10.6	Analysis of data gathered	306
10.6.1	Importance of different levels of fiction	306
10.6.2	Fiction and non-fiction as percentages of the total collection and of loans	308
10.6.3	Ratio of loans of science fiction to total loans of fiction	309
10.6.4	General principles for fiction selection	310
10.6.5	Selection policy statements	312
10.6.6	Policy statements on science fiction	313
10.6.7	Quality-demand continuum as viewed by respondents	313
10.6.8	Relationships between book, reader and collection	314
10.6.9	Theoretical frameworks as a basis for major selection principles	314
10.6.10	Criteria for the evaluation of different levels of fiction	315
10.6.11	Scorecards or other standardized formats for the evaluation of works of popular fiction	316
10.6.12	Most important factors in the selection of science fiction	316
10.6.13	Selection aids utilized in the selection of science fiction	319
10.6.14	Trend in the demand for science fiction	320
10.6.15	Public library budget for the purchasing of science fiction	320
10.6.16	Guides to science fiction	321
10.6.17	Quality of selection practices	322
10.6.18	User studies	322
10.6.19	Training of public librarians in the appreciation and comprehension of popular (genre) fiction	323
10.6.20	Most important authors of science fiction	324
10.7	Conclusion	327

**CHAPTER 11 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE SELECTION OF
SCIENCE FICTION IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

		Page
11.1	Introduction	329
11.2	Circulation	330
11.3	Increasing demand for science fiction	331
11.4	Profile of the average reader of science fiction	332
11.5	Policy statement on the selection of science fiction	333
11.6	Sub-genres of science fiction	336
11.6.1	Assorted sub-genres	337
11.6.2	Suggested categorization of science fiction into major thematic fields	342
11.7	Identifying poor-quality science fiction	343
11.8	Use of selection aids	347
11.9	Reference works	350
11.10	Collections of shorter works of science fiction	352
11.11	Awards for acclaimed works of science fiction	353
11.12	Reading science fiction magazines	356
11.13	Regular user needs studies	358
11.14	Development and maintenance of a balanced core collection	358
11.15	Knowledge of science fiction as a genre	359
11.16	Authoritative and current selection aids	359
11.17	Separate shelving for the science fiction collection	359
11.18	Evaluation of individual works	360
11.19	A scorecard or other standardized format with set criteria for evaluation	360
11.20	Community involvement in determining user needs	360
11.21	Separate budget allocation for science fiction	361
11.22	Training of public librarians/selectors in science fiction	361
11.23	Solving the quality versus demand dilemma	361
11.24	Conclusion	362

CHAPTER 12 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

	Page	
12.1	Introduction	363
12.2	Findings	364
12.2.1	Cultural, societal and literary origins of science fiction	364
12.2.2	Phases of development of science fiction	364
12.2.3	Characteristic essence of science fiction and evaluative criteria	365
12.2.4	Theory and models pertaining to fiction selection	366
12.2.5	Current practice in science fiction selection: an empirical study	366
12.2.6	Guiding principles for science fiction selection	367
12.3	Recommendations	367
12.3.1	A model for the selection of science fiction	367
12.3.1.1	Objectives of the contemporary South African public library	369
12.3.1.2	Evaluation of individual works of science fiction by the selector in order to determine its inherent value	373
12.3.1.3	Utilization of the scorecard: testing and applicability	374
12.3.1.3.1	Testing the scorecard	376
12.3.1.3.2	Applicability of the scorecard	389
12.3.1.4	Budget	390
12.3.1.5	User needs	391
12.3.1.6	Existing fiction collection and existing science fiction collection	391
12.3.1.7	Selection decision	391
12.3.2	Recommended core collection for medium-sized public libraries	393
12.4	Conclusion	394

APPENDICES

	Page
1. Covering letter for questionnaire	396
2. Mail questionnaire	397
3. Reminder to respondents not having returned initial questionnaire	409
4. List of public library services to whom questionnaires were sent	410
5. Recommended core collection for medium-sized public libraries	412
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 427

025.2780883 BREW

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
7.1 : Juxtaposition of conventional and unconventional criteria for the evaluation of mainstream fiction and science fiction	214
7.2 : Primary and secondary criteria for science fiction evaluation	218
9.1 : Use of subject areas by user groups	268
9.2 : Selection criteria according to Rutledge and Swindler	282
9.3 : Categories of texts	287
9.4 : Quantification of text evaluation (Oosthuizen's model)	295
10.1 : Importance attached to the various levels of fiction	307
10.2 : Fiction and non-fiction as percentages of total stock and of total loans	308
10.3 : Comparison of ratio of fiction/non-fiction to total stock: South Africa (1992) and North America (1995)	309
10.4 : Most important factors in science fiction selection	317
10.5 : Selection of science fiction by means of specific selection aids	319

	Page
10.6 : Most popular science fiction authors	324
11.1 : The profile of the purchaser of science fiction	332
11.2 : Suggested categorization of the science fiction sub-genres	343
12.1 : Scorecard for the evaluation of individual works of science fiction	375

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
7.1 : The literary paradigm of science fiction	188
9.1 : The collection development process	262
9.2 : Collection development as a hierarchy of functions	263
9.3 : Collection development as interaction between user, literature and the library as institution	264
9.4 : Atkinson's model of the selection context	270
9.5 : Oosthuizen's model of the decision-making process in fiction selection	284
10.1 : Respondents' views on the relative importance of the different levels of fiction	307
10.2 : Public library budget reserved for science fiction	320
10.3 : Studies of user needs	322
10.4 : The training of public librarians in popular fiction	323
12.1 : A model for the selection of science fiction	368

SUMMARY

The selection of science fiction was researched to determine how science fiction should be evaluated and selected in the context of the public library.

The first sub-problem to be researched concerned the cultural, societal and literary origins of this genre, after which its distinct phases of development were studied as well as the characteristic essence of science fiction which would affect its selection *per se*, specifically whether conventional literary criteria are suitable for the evaluation of items of science fiction during selection.

The next sub-problem focused on, was whether theory can explain the process of fiction selection. The succeeding sub-problem was to empirically study current practice in science fiction selection. Survey research was conducted amongst selected major urban/regional public library services in the USA.

Final research results indicated that science fiction is a sophisticated, multi-textured genre which differs significantly from fellow popular genres. Science fiction is viewed by some critics as being on the cusp of post-modernism, a significant body of work in contemporary literature, and a supreme expression of late capitalism. Research further showed that no satisfactory evaluative criteria exist. It was also established that theory of fiction selection is not always capable of explaining or guiding the process of fiction selection. There is no model for the selection of science fiction. Firm guiding principles for science fiction selection could be formulated by the end of this study.

The study concluded with a specially-designed model for the selection of science fiction (including a scorecard with specially-compiled criteria for evaluating items), as well as a suggested core collection. A structured approach should be followed by the science fiction selector. The guiding principles and core collection which were formulated in this study, the set of special criteria as well as the model, together demonstrate that the selection of science fiction can be structured, controlled and guided within established parameters.

Key terms

Science fiction; Fiction selection; Fiction evaluation; Selection theory; Selection model(s); Selection criteria; Popular fiction; Genre fiction; Public libraries; Popular culture; Selection aids.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the problem

Research in the field of fiction reading has demonstrated that the majority of books borrowed from public libraries fall within the category of fiction. Dixon (1986e:5-6) reports that selected British statistics from the early twentieth century, 1903 - 1939, show that between 1903 and 1910 fiction represented between 84% and 89,5% of public library issues, with figures from 1925 - 1939 averaging between 82% and 86,4%. Corresponding figures and statistics in the United States between 1900 to 1950 showed averages of up to 85% (Carrier 1985:185-187). Dixon (1986e:2) documents that the average percentage of fiction to non-fiction issues in British public libraries between the period 1970 to 1984 was 72,8%. Corresponding statistics were found in South Africa where a survey of the major independent public libraries and provincial public library services during 1992 showed that fiction loans accounted for 73,8% of total issues (Brewis 1992:134).

Empirical research into the use of fiction in public libraries has clearly established that the greater majority of fiction users prefer to read on the popular side of the fiction spectrum. Recent empirical research in South Africa found only 12,8% of public library patrons preferring serious and classical fiction (Schirmer 1988:209), whilst a further recent survey established that popular fiction comprises 78,6% of the total fiction stock of the major independent and provincial public libraries (Brewis 1992:135).

The greater majority of fiction users in public libraries thus prefer those works commonly typified as popular (also referred to as 'genre') fiction of which the best known categories are the romance, the detective novel, the espionage novel, the novel of the American West, and the social melodrama. Science fiction is prominent among these popular categories of fiction.

Science fiction has, since the middle of this century, transformed itself from a minor popular genre with consistent low sales, into a major field of commercial publishing (Spinrad 1990:192). Delany (1984:166) has established that 15 science fiction novels were published in the United States in the year 1951, in contrast to 1291 works of science fiction published in the USA during the year 1979. Spinrad (1990:55) reports that on average 20% of all fiction published in the United States is science fiction. Many science fiction novels have become best-sellers. Pohl (1974:36) estimated science fiction to be more popular with readers than romances, detective stories, novels of the American West or war novels. Research by Christensen (1984:76-77) found science fiction to be amongst the most popular genres with the highest circulation in public libraries.

Contemporary science fiction is one of the major literary success stories of the twentieth century, its rise having coincided with the time of great technological evolution and the emergence of the United States of America as a superpower. Science fiction has thus far largely manifested itself as an American art form, in emphasis and in fact (Aldiss 1986:13-14), although many British authors and some European writers have provided substantial contributions.

Science fiction has become a popular, powerful and prolific popular fiction genre which has steadily achieved a strong corpus of academic criticism and formal study. Delany (1984:99) reports that some 500 science fiction courses are taught at American universities, with Williamson (1974:310) recording estimates of up to 1000 formal university courses being offered at colleges and universities across the United States. The science fiction genre has thus proved to be both commercially popular and academically worthy of study.

Popular fiction is also often referred to as formulaic fiction. Formula used in the literary sense is a combination (or synthesis) of a number of specific cultural conventions with a more universal narrative form or archetype (Cawelti 1976:6-7). This concept is similar in many ways to the traditional, centuries-old literary conception of a genre as a distinct type

or class, the classical genres being the epic, the tragedy, the comedy, the lyric poem and the satire.

Formulaic literature is literary art which can be analyzed and evaluated like any other kind of literature. Two central aspects of formulaic literature have been generally criticized by upholders of mainstream (serious) literature: the general standardization found in literary formulae, as well as the fact that the use of such formulaic literature is generally related to relaxation, enjoyment and escape (Cawelti 1976:10-16).

Research in this field, *inter alia* by experts such as Cawelti (1976), Kaye (1980) and Wagers (1981), has further indicated that such literary formulae are usually specifically related to a particular period and culture, and fulfil the need for relaxation, enjoyment and escape, if these narrative archetypes are embodied in literary figures, plot settings and narrative situations which have appropriate meaning for the cultural consciousness of the user (Brewis 1992:43-47).

Cawelti (1976:299-305), generally viewed as a foremost authority on formula fiction, finds that the most significant formulaic artists are those who effectively revitalize stereotypes, and introduce as much originality and plausibility as the delimitations of the literary formula itself will permit. He freely acknowledges that upon first commencing his study of popular fiction, he automatically assumed that popular fiction was simply an inferior form of high culture. Intensive study convinced him that the formulae of popular fiction genres have a wide range of artistic potential, and that there are different forms of artistry rather than a single standard in terms of which all fictional creation can be judged. It is therefore incorrect to relegate a work to inferior status purely because it is science fiction, a detective story or a novel of the American West. Cawelti (1976:296) states that he, regrettably, did not directly touch upon science fiction in his study, limiting his analysis to detective novels, crime novels, Westerns and social melodrama, but not "... that large and complex area of literature that goes under the label of science fiction ...".

There is reason to believe that, although science fiction is generally judged to be formulaic, like most popular literature, it could differ significantly from other formulaic forms of fiction. Rose (1981:2-3), points out that whereas for example the detective novel can be capable of marvellous variation and ingenuity, the factors of crime, perpetrator and investigator remain constant. It is possible that there is no comparably explicit formula to which one can readily point as characteristic of science fiction. Science fiction, it would seem, has a fairly large array of simultaneously-available formulae: the alien-encounter story (malevolent or benevolent alien or otherwise), the time-travel narrative, the fable of the questioning scientist, the dystopian satire, the post-apocalypse history or the evolutionary fable; to name but a few possibilities. Each of these variations represents a recognizable science fiction formulaic category with possibly uniquely own formulaic characteristics.

Aldiss (1986:14-15), both a widely-acknowledged critic and author in this field, is of the opinion that the difficulty and infinitude of science fiction lies in the obdurate fact that it is both formulaic and yet more than just literature, a literary mode which is flexible and changes with the times, constantly producing new designs yet remaining in some ways conventional in spite of its innovative characteristics. These salient characteristics of modern-day science fiction are therefore worthy of further investigation in order to optimally evaluate and select works of science fiction.

Science fiction has a high intellectual content, as it considers humankind's relationship to science and the universe. Delany (1977:131-138) finds that science fiction is the only genre in popular literature, of which the basic entertainment value is intellectual - technical or sociological - causing it to be a socially-valuable and socially-functional genre *per se*. Science fiction is a form of literature with a complex feedback relationship with the real world: it deals with the future evolution of society and simultaneously influences society's evolution and vision of its future (Spinrad 1990:37).

Science fiction has become a complex and unique genre, expressing faith in the human intelligence, ingenuity and spirit. The reader is called upon to conjure up and confront a blend of abstract philosophical, scientific and societal concepts and manifestations. Carl Sagan (1979:140), eminent astronomer and science writer states that "... science fiction has led me to science". Science fiction is the genre of the open mind and its intellectual and visionary content has proved increasingly popular, as it provides a means of exploring and testing political and socio-economic alternatives, societal models and behavioural actions which are too dangerous to test in actuality. Much of the best science fiction addresses questions of social morality. Critics of science fiction view this genre as the most philosophical, poetical, intellectual and religious of popular fiction genres. Much of science fiction is thesis fiction: bearing a statement about science fact, humanity in relation to nature or the universe, mankind in conflict with the universe or speculating on humanity's future in the universe (Rosenberg 1982:173).

Asimov (1981:87-90) lists 27 separate crucial present and future societal issues found in science fiction ranging from population control, genetic engineering, mass transfer and computerized education to other problematical issues such as weather control and permanent energy resources.

Since the nineteen sixties a sizeable and respectable corpus of academic and literary criticism has accumulated in the field of science fiction. Many serious studies of high quality have appeared regarding science fiction as a literary genre, as clearly demonstrated in the studies by Scholes and Rabkin (1977), Delany (1977, 1984), Suvin (1979) Rose (1981), Tymn (1981), Cioffi (1982), Aldiss (1986), Malmgren (1991a), Ketterer (1992), Broderick (1995) and Clute (1995); to name but a few prominent critics and researchers. Science fiction considered during the nineteen twenties and thirties as pulp fiction, fit only for lurid magazines, is now respectable in the literary sense. Respected authors of serious (mainstream) fiction such as Anthony Burgess, William Golding, Norman Mailer, Doris Lessing and Walter Tevis have written fine science fiction novels. The film industry, an excellent barometer of middle-class cultural taste, is increasingly turning to science fiction,

and excellent films such as 2001: A Space Odyssey and Blade Runner have been produced.

Numerous doctoral dissertations have also been written on science fiction, especially in the United States of America. These studies are mainly purely literary in nature such as the dissertations by Peacock (1988) and Barlow (1989) on the works of celebrated science fiction author Philip K. Dick, or Bukatman's (1992) dissertation on the virtual subject in post-modern science fiction. Other dissertations concentrate on specific social, political or philosophical aspects of science fiction such as Benison's (1989) dissertation on the social relevance of the novels by science fiction author J.G. Ballard, or the dissertations by Wiemer (1987) and Clarke (1992) on feminist science fiction. The same tendency is noticeable in South Africa, e.g. Byrne's (1995) doctoral dissertation on the novels of an acclaimed science fiction author, Selves and others: the politics of difference in the writings of Ursula K. Le Guin. No specialized dissertations or theses on the selection of science fiction *per se* could be found although numerous works and articles on popular culture and popular fiction have appeared, such as those by Nye (1970), Browne (1972a, 1972b, 1973, 1983), Cordesse (1975), Bigsby (1976), Rosenberg (1982), Pawling (1984), Yanarella and Sigelman (1988), Ross (1989), and Hamilton (1993), to name but a few. Many of the collections containing articles by several contributors, furnish a separate article on science fiction such as those by Jordin (1984), Mellor (1984), Everman (1986) and Yanarella (1988). None of these focus specifically on the selection of science fiction. Guides to popular fiction such as Rosenberg's (1982) Genreflecting and Dixon's (1986) Fiction in libraries discuss science fiction, its promotion, sub-genres and most prominent novels and anthologies in a superficial manner, but furnish no discussion of the factors involved in the selection of science fiction.

In contrast with the United States of America, very few studies and articles have appeared in South Africa on popular culture and popular fiction. Fourie (1985), Hugo (1985) and Nell (1985, 1988a) have published articles on this, and in the case of Nell (1988b) also a lengthy study in book form. Schirmer (1988) and Brewis (1992) both wrote masters'

theses on the subject of fiction provision within public libraries. Oosthuizen (1991) studied the selection of fiction intensively in her doctoral dissertation, *inter alia* also producing a model for the selection of fiction in the public library (cf. Oosthuizen 1994). All these studies regard popular fiction in general, and there are no in-depth studies of science fiction itself, such as for instance the studies by Van Vuren (1988), and Van Vuren and Oosthuizen (1990) of the popular romance in public libraries and the development of criteria for the evaluation of popular romances within the context of public libraries.

A further problematic aspect is that of evaluative criteria for science fiction. Some critics such as Scholes (1975:47) and Warrick (1980:xiv) are of the opinion that science fiction as a unique type of fiction, should not and cannot be judged by the usual literary criteria.

Much has been written in the course of the twentieth century on the subject of fiction evaluation and selection in public libraries by British and American researchers. The works of McColvin (1925), Wellard (1937), Haines (1950), Bonk and Magrill (1979), Katz (1980), Broadus (1981), Spiller (1986) and Evans (1987) all discuss fiction selection even if few, like Broadus (1981), specifically mention science fiction. Some researchers such as Atkinson (1984), McGrath (1985) and Rutledge and Swindler (1987) have formulated specific theoretical contributions in the form of models of selection in libraries in general, or specifically academic libraries, which could apply to fiction selection. Not much has been done in this field in South Africa, Van Vuren (1988), Van Vuren and Oosthuizen (1990) and Oosthuizen (1991, 1994) being notable exceptions.

Delany (1984), a respected intellectual, author and critic in this field, has evolved serious doubts regarding the applicability of some mainstream literary criteria to works of science fiction due to the very different literary tradition and audience of science fiction. The French literary scholar Foucault is cited by Delany (1984:91-95) as having formulated a quartet of literary values (unity of value, theoretical unity, stylistic unity and historical unity) which can be applied to mainstream fiction. Delany (1984:106) demonstrates effectively that these criteria cannot be applied to science fiction, due to the fact that

science fiction is not the mimesis of the real world, as is the case with mainstream literature: science fiction has a certain perceived dialectic freedom. Warrick (1980:xiv) finds general agreement that the criteria used to evaluate mainstream, i.e. serious fiction, are not entirely appropriate to science fiction, but that no consensus has been reached about which criteria for science fiction should be utilized. Respected researchers and critics such as Scholes (1975) and McCaffery (1990) concur with Warrick (1980), that different criteria are needed for science fiction, McCaffery (1990:5) cautioning that science fiction can be misunderstood by those who bring the assumptions of mainstream fiction to science fiction.

Other critics such as Spinrad (1990:33-35) disagree, reasoning that science fiction should be held to standards as old as Plato, Aristotle, Shakespeare and Tolstoi, which in effect are still as contemporary as any heartfelt narrative truly and courageously told according to the uncompromising demands of the story itself. In Spinrad's view (1990:33), absolute literary standards should be consistently and pitilessly applied in order that science fiction may take up its rightful place in the literature of mankind.

In sum, science fiction has become a prolific and commercially-successful genre which enjoys high circulation in public libraries. Much serious academic research has been carried out regarding the literary nature of science fiction and related social, political, philosophic or economic aspects in works of science fiction; but unfortunately no specialized studies of the selection of science fiction have appeared. This dearth of specialized knowledge regarding science fiction selection also extends to the question of precise criteria for the evaluation of science fiction, as there is no consensus regarding criteria to be utilized.

Rigorous study of these aspects is therefore called for.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The problem in this study is to establish how science fiction should be evaluated and selected within the context of the public library.

From this overall problem statement the following sub-problems can be formulated:

- (1) What are the cultural, societal and literary origins of science fiction as a popular fiction genre?
- (2) What are the distinct phases of development of science fiction as a popular fiction genre?
- ((3) What is the characteristic essence of science fiction as a genre which would affect its evaluation? Are conventional literary criteria suitable for evaluation, or should alternative criteria be developed in this study?
- (4) Is there satisfactory theory at hand to illustrate the science fiction selection process. If not, can a model be designed for greater clarity regarding the selection process?
- (5) What is current practice as regards the selection of science fiction in the public library?
- (6) What practical guidelines can be formulated for science fiction selection in public libraries?

1.3 Research methodology

The research methodology followed in this study was dichotomous, consisting of a literature study as well as empirical research by means of the descriptive survey method.

1.3.1 Literature study

A literature study was carried through in order to investigate the antecedents of contemporary science fiction as cultural societal and literary phenomenon, viewed in the context of the rise of popular culture, popular fiction and democracy during the Industrial Revolution, and the American and French Revolutions wherein lie the roots of the vigorous new genre which would, in time, receive the literary appellation “science fiction”. The origins and distinct phases of development of science fiction was examined and detailed. The literature study further investigated the characteristic essence of science fiction as a genre, and whether conventional literary criteria can be utilized to effectively evaluate works of science fiction.

The insights gained into literary characteristics of popular formulaic genre fiction, and specifically the literary, symbolic and formulaic essence and core characteristics of science fiction were used to formulate a set of criteria for evaluating the genre.

Conceptual frameworks relating to the selection of fiction, in the form of theories and models, were also researched in the course of the literature study, and insights gained into these aspects were utilized in the design of a model illustrating the selection of science fiction at micro-level.

The current state of research regarding all the above-mentioned aspects were detailed in paragraph 1.1.

1.3.2 Survey research

A survey was conducted among forty major metropolitan and regional public libraries in the United States of America and three in Canada, to elicit information regarding their actual institutional policies, practices and views regarding the selection of science fiction (cf. paragraphs 10.1, 10.3 and 10.4)

It was decided to effect a descriptive survey to gather empirical data on science fiction in the public library, as this method is the most practical available for collecting data in a population group too large to observe directly. Descriptive surveys are judged to be excellent vehicles for measuring attitudes and opinions in large populations (Babbie 1992:26), a feature useful where the professional opinions of public librarians are being sought (Busha & Harter 1980:55).

Consideration was given to the three major methods used in descriptive survey research: the face-to-face interview, the telephone survey and the mail questionnaire. The mail questionnaire presented itself as the logical, most practical choice due to the considerable distance between the members of the sample group and the researcher, resulting in considerable savings on time and money. Respondents could complete the questionnaire at their convenience, remain anonymous and have the opportunity to consult own records or colleagues for statistical and budgeting data. Mail questionnaires also obviate bias resulting from the personal characteristics or competence of the interviewer (Nachmias & Nachmias 1976:180).

The utilization of empirical research by means of a mail questionnaire serves a twofold purpose as it will provide insight into actual policies, methods and practices of public libraries regarding the science fiction selection, as well as affording the opportunity to counterbalance and juxtapose theory of selection and actual public library practice (cf. chapter 11).

1.3.3 Sampling method

After careful consideration of the two major types of sampling methods, i.e. probability and non-probability sampling, it was deemed best to utilize non-probability sampling. Precise representativity in the sample was not specifically called for as the intention was to sample a broad cross-section of major public library services in the United States and Canada in regard of their science fiction selection practices. Purposive (judgmental)

sampling was resorted to and forty major metropolitan or large regional public library services were chosen, one per state in the United States, with the exception of California and Texas where the physical size of these two states and their populations warranted the choice of two services in each. The public library services of the three largest cities in Canada (Toronto, Vancouver and Ottawa) were chosen in Canada (cf. paragraph 10.4 for full details).

1.4 Definition of concepts

Certain key concepts need to be defined at the outset of this study.

1.4.1 Literature

The term 'literature' itself is derived from the Latin word *littera* (letter of the alphabet) and *litterae* (letters). Literature is a form of human expression contained in a body of writing by people using the same language. Normally writings which are primarily informative - technical, scholarly, journalistic - would be excluded from the rank of literature, although certain writings possessing artistic merit would be universally recognized as belonging to literature, therefore viewed as an artistic form of literature (Fadiman 1992:77-78).

Literature can be divided into genres, a genre being a literary kind (Wellek & Warren 1956:226). The traditional or classical genres are the epic, comedy, lyric poetry, satire, drama and prose fiction; extended prose fiction being the latest of literary forms to develop (Fadiman 1992:84).

The subsequent development of new literary forms such as the novel (a product of modern culture) and the concurrent shifts in the bases of critical theory effected a drastic alteration in the conception and ranking of genres. Since the Romantic period (*circa* 1789 to 1832),

genres have been regarded as convenient, arbitrary ways of classifying literature (Abrams 1971:68).

Genre which has over the centuries been based on the conventional grouping of literary works based on outer form (specific metre or structure) and inner form (attitude, tone, purpose, even subject and audience), had by the nineteenth century undergone a literary mutation due to the vast widening of audience and rapid diffusion through printing. Genres henceforth became shorter lived or passed through more rapid transitions (Wellek & Warren 1973:231-232).

Examples of nineteenth century genres which could be mentioned are the historical novel, the political novel, the scientific romance and the Gothic novel. Typically popular genres of the twentieth century are science fiction, fantasy, historical novels, crime/detective/mystery narratives, romances, war stories, Westerns, social melodramas and novels of adventure and espionage.

1.4.2 Fiction

Fiction may be defined as the art or craft of contriving, through the written word, in prose narrative, representations of human life that instruct or divert, or both. When a piece of fiction is extensive enough to constitute a book it is said to be a novel, a relatively brief novel being termed a novella. The short story is also a brief work of prose fiction, more compact and intense than the novel and novella. (Mimetic or realistic fiction, mostly referred to by science fiction critics as mainstream literature, depicts fictional persons, events and societies in different form from the real past or present).

1.4.3 Mainstream fiction

Critics and researchers in the field of science fiction generally refer to serious fiction as 'mainstream' fiction. Serious fiction is generally acknowledged to be of literary excellence

as regards theme, sensibilities and poise, and is read by a small group of intellectual readers suited by education and inclination to in-depth literary interpretation and aesthetic interpretation, and studied at universities. Authors of serious fiction to be found in contemporary public libraries would include W.M. Thackeray, Jane Austin, Sir Walter Scott, Thomas Hardy, James Joyce, Thomas Mann, John Steinbeck, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, John Updike, Anthony Burgess, William Golding, Saul Bellow and Melvyn Bragg. Most researchers in the fields of culture and literature refer to 'canonical' and 'serious' fiction (Roberts 1990:1-3), 'classic' fiction (Yanarella & Sigelman 1988:7) or 'complex text' fiction (Oosthuizen 1991:300-302), when distinguishing between this level of fiction and the more popular side of the fiction spectrum. Critics and researchers in the field of science fiction, almost without exception, refer to serious fiction as 'mainstream' fiction, e.g. when Luckhurst (1994:37) sees post-modern science fiction breaching the ghetto walls of popular fiction to rejoin the mainstream or when McCaffery (1990:5), cautions that science fiction is frequently misunderstood by readers "... who bring to SF [science fiction] the assumptions of mainstream fiction". Other expressions sometimes used by science fiction critics and researchers when referring to serious fiction are 'mimetic' (from the Greek *mimetikos* meaning 'imitation' or 'realistic'), 'realistic', or 'mundane'. Mainstream fiction depicts fictional people, events, and societies which are based on the real world past or present, thus a fiction narrative in which the experiential, realistic, quotidian world of the writer is evoked (cf. paragraph 7.4).

The rigid barrier between science fiction and mainstream fiction has increasingly been breached over the past two decades and science fiction works have been lauded as exemplars of post-modern literature by respected critics and researchers such as McCaffery (1990:3) and Csicsery-Ronay (1992:405). There is much interaction between mainstream fiction and science fiction, the latter being viewed in the works of McCaffery (1990:3), as "... the art form that most directly reflects back to us the cultural logic that has produced postmodernism". With post-modernism the boundary between mainstream fiction and science fiction has in the view of many critics disappeared, and science fiction

could therefore rejoin the mainstream of fiction and discard the degrading label of popular fiction (Luckhurst 1994:37).

1.4.4 Popular fiction

Researchers have in the past adopted a tiered classification of fiction levels, such as Coetzee (1983:10) who distinguished between literature (high artistic merit written for an educated, elite group of readers), 'para-literary' works (good literary standard but no literary depth, aimed at reasonably-intelligent readers), and 'mass' literature for readers of below-average literary perception. Another South African researcher, Schirmer (1988:159) used the levels 'classical' fiction (critically acclaimed), 'lighter' fiction (stereotyped such as romances) and 'best-seller' fiction (between 'classical' and 'lighter' fiction).

The American researcher Roberts (1990:1-3) divided fiction into four levels, 'canonical' fiction (taught at universities), 'serious' fiction (written for highly-educated readers in and around universities). His lowest two categories are that of 'plain or best-seller' fiction (midway between 'serious' fiction readers and 'junk' fiction readers), and 'junk' or 'genre' fiction which includes mysteries, romances, Western novels, science fiction and fantasy.

Oosthuizen (1991:300-302), a South African academic, adopted a trichotomic division consisting of 'complex text' (challenges beliefs and attitudes, experimental approach towards language and structure, analysis of ideas and situations receiving priority above narrative and action) and 'accessible text' (mostly read for recreation, satisfying reading needs for intellectual and emotional pleasure, aesthetic appreciation, gripping narrative, vicarious participation and escape). Oosthuizen's (1990) third category is 'genre fiction' which includes narratives with recognizable formulaic characteristics such as popular romances, novels of the American West and detective novels. Readers who wish to obviate any intellectual challenge because they do not wish to become cognitively involved choose this category of fiction (Oosthuizen 1990:300-302).

There is good reason to believe that science fiction differs from other popular genres as far as the formulaic is concerned (cf. paragraph 1.1). Science fiction moreover contains a strong cognitive element (cf. paragraph 1.4.5).

Brewis (1992:163-164), in the course of an investigation into the provision of fiction to adult users in South African public libraries, defined three levels of fiction: 'classical/serious' fiction (works of literary excellence, written for a small elite), 'medium-level' fiction (competent literary workmanship, fair or good content and style aimed at middle-class readers), and 'light' fiction (a lesser literary level as far as style is concerned, consisting of formulaic narratives such as detective stories, romances and novels of the American West. Brewis (1992:163) pointed out that formulaic literature need not necessarily be inferior fiction. For the purpose of this study a distinction will only be made between serious fiction and popular fiction as the conceptual distinctions drawn in this study will be between mainstream fiction and science fiction, and popular fiction and serious fiction. Any three- or four-tiered divisions will thus be unnecessary (cf. paragraph 1.4.3).

The broad popular fiction category therefore includes works of fiction showing generally competent literary workmanship style and descriptive qualities aimed at the intelligent middle-class reader who enjoys pleasant leisure reading without overly intellectual content. Many such novels are so-called 'bestsellers' such as thrillers or social melodramas of authors such as John Masters, Jeffrey Archer, Frederick Forsyth, John Jakes and Wilbur Smith.

The broad category popular fiction would also include so-called 'formula' or 'genre' fiction. 'Formula' in the literary sense is a combination or synthesis of a number of specific cultural conventions or archetypal story patterns, useful as a means of making historical or cultural inferences about the collective fantasies shared by large groups (Cawelti 1976:78). This concept is similar in many ways to the traditional centuries-old literary conception of a genre as a distinct type or class, the classical genres having been the epic, the tragedy,

the comedy, the lyric poem and the satire. Popular fiction is not always formulaic, and the two terms 'formula' and 'popular' are not necessarily to be seen as synonymic, although a large proportion of popular fiction utilizes formulae as narrative structure (Van Vuren 1988:31).

Popular fiction genres generally reckoned to be formulaic include, *inter alia*, science fiction, novels of the American West, detective/crime novels, romances, fantasy, horror/Gothic novels and novels of espionage. Such distinctly-recognizable formulaic works are often referred to as 'genre' fiction. It has been found that literary formulae possess a wide range of artistic potential, with the ultimate test of a truly artistic and revitalized formula being the degree to which it transcends its own cultural moment and maintains an ongoing interest for later generations and their cultures (Cawelti 1976:11). It is predicted for instance that certain writers of detective/crime stories such as Georges Simenon, Dashiell Hammett, Ross Macdonald and possibly also Raymond Chandler will be viewed as major artists by future generations due to these authors' high level of artistry in formulaic fiction (Cawelti 1976:299-300). The same can be said of certain science fiction authors such as Robert A. Heinlein, Ursula K. Le Guin, Frank Herbert, Harlan Ellison, Roger Zelazny and William Gibson .

The word 'genre' has over the past two or three decades become synonymous with certain categories of popular fiction, perceived to form a group of genres, some of which, for instance science fiction, are far from negligible in the literary sense. McCaffery (1990:1) finds that science fiction authors are producing "... some of the most significant art of our times." Some researchers use the term 'genre fiction' for popular fiction (Dixon 1986f:22), others referring to 'popular genres'. The description 'sub-genres' is also used on occasion to designate categories of popular fiction (Birch 1987:80).

1.4.5 Science fiction

The literary and societal roots of science fiction as a genre can be traced to the Industrial Revolution. Science fiction has risen to be the most representative literature of the scientifically based and technology-dominated culture of the twentieth century. The first recognizable work of science fiction was Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's novel Frankenstein or, The Modern Prometheus, first published in 1818. The earliest recorded use of the appellation 'science fiction' dates back to the year 1851 (Broderick 1995:6), although the term 'science fiction' was first used in the generic sense during the nineteen twenties (Aldiss 1986:27). The terms 'scientific fantasy' and 'scientific romance' have also been used in the past. The description 'speculative fiction' was also suggested but never widely accepted. Science fiction has endured as literary and popular designation, and will be utilized consistently in the course of this dissertation. An abbreviation often encountered is that of 'SF'.

Science fiction has long been notorious in popular genre discussions, as a literary phenomenon which has no generally-accepted definition. Asimov (1981:17) views this lack of literary consensus as a measure of the genre's literary riches. Science fiction is also often confused with the fantasy genre. (The latter genre will be defined in paragraph 1.4.6.)

For the purpose of this investigation science fiction can be broadly defined as a literature of ideas, a genre or branch of speculative fiction which deals with human responses to changes in the level of science and technology, and is a modern genre in the sense that, as emphasized by Asimov (1981:17-22), this speculative body of fiction can scarcely have come into existence before that moment when the concept of visible social change through rapid alterations in the level of science and technology had evolved. Science fiction is more precisely, as established by Suvin (1972:375):

... a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the authors empirical environment. The estrangement differentiates it from the “realistic” literary mainstream of the 18th to 20th century.

1.4.6 Narratives of fantasy

Fantasy (including ghost, horror or Gothic narratives) portrays surreal backgrounds which cannot reasonably be derived from our existing society by any possible scientific or technological changes, i.e. by introducing anti-cognitive laws into the empirical environment. Tales of fantasy can therefore be said to be inimical to the empirical world and its laws, and do not necessarily have continuous existing cognitions or a basis of cognitive logic (Suvin 1976:62).

1.4.7 Collection development

Collection development is the overall process of ensuring that collections (including all types of reading material, media and information sources) of libraries and information centres continually evolve to meet the needs of users. This process includes community analysis, selection for various user groups, evaluation of individual items on the grounds of fixed criteria, acquisition, and the continual evaluation and weeding of the collection as a whole according to general standards.

1.4.8 Selection

Selection is a subsidiary decision-making function of the library's overall collection development process, focused on deciding on the most suitable material available to add to the collection through the evaluation of individual works. This process as Spiller (1986:82) finds, will entail the use of the selector's own judgement in examining and

evaluating the book or other material in question, as well as identifying various sources of information regarding each item and using own judgement in interpreting each source.

1.4.9 Culture

The word 'culture' comes from the Latin word *colere*, to cultivate or till the soil, hence the term 'agriculture' as the art of farming (Smelser 1984:17). Social scientists, social historians and anthropologists have in the course of several centuries offered varying definitions of culture, as many as 164 have been counted, with Edward Burnett Tylor (Fox 1992:874) having advanced what is generally acknowledged as the classic definition in 1871:

Culture ... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

It is worth noting that Tylor made it clear that culture so defined, can only be possessed by humankind.

Culture is a multidimensional phenomenon, of which Eagleton (1978:304) identifies the following elements:

- (i) A body of artistic, intellectual and symbolic work of agreed value, as well as the process of sharing in this work.
- (ii) Extending from culture is the structure of how society perceives itself: a shifting intangible complex of its lived manners, habits, morals, values, behaviour and belief as this registers in the social consciousness and the invisible colour of daily life.

- (iii) A society's whole way of life in an institutional sense; the totality of interacting artistic, economic, political and ideological elements which constitutes its total lived experience.

Swingewood (1977:96-97) complements Eagleton's (1978) definition by observing that culture enables mankind to aspire to and achieve a real sense of individual selfhood; culture determines the material mode as well: a definite lifestyle at work in human communities. Swingewood (1977) is pointing out a very important element in modern society, namely the need of human beings to achieve an individual knowledge of selfhood which, as will be noted, plays a major role both in popular culture and related phenomena such as the reading of popular fiction genres.

Culture is therefore an all-pervading sense of ideals and values present in the tangible and spiritual realms of the human condition. It determines societal perceptions of individual and collective identity in all spheres of life including and encompassing that which is viewed by the individual as acceptable and meaningful reading material (Brewis 1992:25).

1.4.10 Civilization

The word 'civilization' has generally been used by historians, to describe what anthropologists would refer to as culture (Bottomore 1987:123). An example worthy of mention is the search by the eminent Dutch historian Johan Huizinga for a term to describe the totality of cultural phenomena. He rejected the Dutch *beschaving* due to its original meaning of intellectual polishing, knowledge of the humanities and erudition. The French and English words *culture* were seen as similarly narrow, and the German *Kultur* was rejected due to its historically perceived connotations with *Staat* and *Religion*. Eventually Huizinga settled for Dutch *cultuur* and the English and French for the descriptive term *civilization* (Weintraub 1966:214-215).

Bottomore (1987:124) defines civilization as:

A cultural complex formed by the identical major cultural features of a number of particular societies. We might, for example, describe Western capitalism as a civilization in which specific forms of science, technology, religion, art and so on are to be found in a number of distinct societies.

Civilization should be viewed as a commonly-perceived conglomerate of specific forms of cultural activity and forms which could simultaneously exist in discrete societies, e.g. the popular genres of literature, such as science fiction, read and understood in different languages and societies within the same encompassing cultural conglomerate.

1.4.11 High culture

The high or ideal cultural life is the historical evolution, the finest and most noble expression of the human spirit. High culture is produced by known artists within a consciously aesthetic context and an accepted set of rules with its success or failure judged by reference to a normalistic body of recognized classics. High culture is exclusive, particular and individualistic, its aim being to discover new ways of recording and interpreting experiences (Nye 1970:3).

1.4.12 Popular culture

Popular culture, in contrast to high culture, confirms the experience of the majority and needs no specialized or professional knowledge in order to interpret it (Nye 1970:4). It must be commonly approved and popular in the sense that most people appreciate it. Van Vuren (1988:18-20) finds that the non-acknowledgement of popular culture in a contemporary technological society is not justified and can only lead to eventual impoverishment of our cultural heritage. Popular art is an unusually sensitive and accurate mirror of the attitudes and values of the society it derives from (Nye 1970:4).

1.5 Research programme

The research is subdivided into the following chapters:

In chapter 2 contemporary popular culture is viewed in the context of the ascendancy of popular culture in the Industrial Revolution and in the light of its historical, societal and cultural antecedents. This chapter depicts and illuminates the roots of mass society and popular culture caused by technological advances and socio-economic changes. The sternly-debated issue of high culture versus popular culture, as well as the intrinsic merit of popular culture are examined, as both these questions are still relevant in the context of the contemporary public library and its selection policies and practices.

Chapter 3 views popular fiction as a manifestation of popular culture and examines its rise due to technological and socio-economic developments enabling popular fiction to reach a mass readership. The societal value of popular fiction is demonstrated as it contains a deep lode of images, symbols and myths. This chapter will also detail the general positive value of science fiction in societal context as well as in the life of its readers. It is demonstrated that science fiction with its prodromic, predictive, didactic, political, sociological and philosophic qualities, is of immense value to the enquiring mind.

Chapter 4 traces, delineates and illuminates the origins, development and distinct phases of the development of this genre up to the end of the nineteen forties. This chapter discusses the progenitorial works of the nineteenth century, the first flowering of genre in the works H.G. Wells; as well as the advent of magazine science fiction in the nineteen twenties and thirties. The chapter concludes with an exposition of the phase known as the Golden Age of science fiction when the acknowledged masters of the genre such as Heinlein, Clarke, Asimov, Anderson and Simak first made their appearance. This chapter also contains a discussion of the major cultural-literary determinants of the twentieth century which would influence all fiction, including science fiction. The most important authors and works up to 1950 are listed.

Chapter 5 discusses the phase known as the Age of Acceptance (1950-1961), where the genre, due to the great advances made by science and technology, no longer seemed so unrealistic. The chapter continues with a clarification of the stylistic revolution known in the science fiction genre as the New Wave (1962-1973). The thematic ground swells and stylistic trends of these phases of the nineteen fifties and sixties are discussed together with the most important authors and their works.

Chapter 6 treats the development of the genre from the nineteen seventies up to the present day. The dominant themes of the nineteen seventies, eighties and nineties are discussed including the advent of the post-modernist movement known as cyberpunk. The most prominent authors and works in these phases are elucidated.

Chapter 7 utilizes the insights of respected scholars in this field to determine and elucidates the characteristic essence of science fiction which would influence its evaluation: the literary and symbolic nature of the genre, its dominant and recurring themes and its prevalent and unique literary characteristics and formulae. This section of the study provides a profile of this complex and progressive genre, which in turn serves as basis for the design of criteria for the evaluation of individual works of science fiction. Consideration is given to use of both conventional and unconventional literary criteria. The chapter concludes with the formulation of a specially-designed set of criteria for the evaluation of individual works in the genre. This set of criteria will be utilized in a model for the selection of science fiction which is presented in chapter 12.

Chapter 8 investigates twentieth century theory relating to the selection of fiction in the public library and identifies key concepts and factors involved in the fiction selection process, including the enduring conundrum of the quality versus demand debate.

Chapter 9 examines models relating to the fiction selection process, commencing with an overview of the contemporary state of the theory of selection in general and fiction

selection in particular. Several models are examined in order to gain insight into the possible design of a model for the selection of science fiction at the micro-level.

Chapter 10 investigates the practical evaluation and selection of science fiction in the American public library context as contemporary science fiction is an American literary phenomenon in emphasis and in fact. This chapter contains the analysis of the data gathered by means of a mail questionnaire to forty major metropolitan and regional public library services in the United States of America and three in Canada. This chapter quantifies and elucidates the data by means of figures and tables, and certain conclusions are presented regarding the quality of and practices in North American science fiction selection.

Chapter 11 presents guiding principles for the selection of science fiction including such aspects as a suggested policy statement, guidance for selectors regarding the various sub-genres, and the identifying of poor quality, imitative science fiction. The use of authoritative selection aids are discussed, including reference works and prestigious awards for science fiction as well as the utilization of set criteria in a standardized format and the role of regular user need studies.

Chapter 12 concludes and summarizes this dissertation with recommendations regarding science fiction selection including the presentation of a model for the selection of science fiction and a specially-designed scorecard for the evaluation of works of science fiction.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEMPORARY POPULAR CULTURE AS SOCIETAL PHENOMENON

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to define and examine contemporary anglophone culture in the light of its historical, societal and cultural antecedents. The focus of this study is the selection of the popular fiction genre known as science fiction within the context of the public library. Science fiction, like other genres of popular fiction, is a manifestation of popular culture, the advent of which led to what Gans (1974:3) describes as “the largest and perhaps most important cultural struggle” in America and other Western societies. Public libraries, as social and cultural institutions, would inevitably be drawn into this cultural conflict which “pitted the educated practitioners of high culture against most of the rest of society, rich and poor, which prefers the mass or popular culture provided by the mass media and the consumer good industries” (Gans 1974:3). This acrimonious cultural controversy will be examined in this chapter, as it is in essence similar to the quality versus demand debate which influenced the selection of popular fiction in public libraries. This chapter will furthermore serve as background for the succeeding chapter which will examine the value of popular fiction and science fiction for the reader.

2.2 High culture

High or elite culture has been seen as the finest and noblest artistic expression of the human spirit with aesthetic standards and qualities considered to be universal (Brewis 1992:25-26).

High culture is produced by known artists within a consciously aesthetic context and according to an accepted set of artistic rules: its successful attainment of high cultural status (or failure) is judged by reference to a normative body of recognized classic works.

High or elite culture is exclusive, particular, individualistic, aiming to discover new ways of recording and interpreting experience, with technical and thematic complexity being of greater value than in popular culture (Nye 1970:3-4). Gans (1974:62-63) identifies a further vital facet of high culture: it is creator-oriented, its aesthetics and principles of criticism based on the belief that the artists' intentions are crucial and the values of the audience almost irrelevant, unlike popular culture which is user-oriented.

The standards of high culture are explicit and, to some extent, codified: they are constantly applied in elite academic journals, discussed by scholars and critics and taught in the most prestigious universities.

Shils (1960:292) describes high or elite culture as the great works of poetry, novels, philosophy, scientific theory and research, paintings, musical compositions, plays, history, architecture, social, economic and political analyses.

2.3 Discrete taste cultures

Before proceeding to define and discuss popular culture, it should be mentioned that traditionally several levels of cultures or taste cultures have been utilized by researchers and commentators. Shils (1960:291) distinguishes between three cultural levels: 'superior' or 'refined culture', 'mediocre culture' and 'brutal culture'. The first level comprises the classical works of literature, painting, musical compositions, architecture and intellectual theorizing. The second level includes those works which in Shils's opinion do not measure up to the standards of the 'superior' level although utilizing the same genres as 'superior' culture, as well as new ones such as musical comedy. The lowest level utilizes some of the genres of superior and mediocre culture (music, poems, novels and stories), but also includes activities such as boxing and horse racing.

The three-tiered approach utilized by Shils (1960) corresponds with the often-used divisions of 'highbrow', 'middlebrow' and 'lowbrow' cultures.

Gans (1974), who is an acknowledged authority in this field, views taste cultures as values and cultural forms which express these values in literature, music, art, drama, criticism, news and the media in which these are expressed such as books, films, audio and video recordings, magazines, architecture, clothing fashions, and motor vehicles. Taste cultures also include values, forms and media of the natural and social sciences, and display political values even if not often explicitly expressed (Gans 1974:10-11).

Gans (1974:77-103) identified five main taste cultures in the USA, the highest being 'high culture', the domain of 'serious' writers, artists and critics. High culture fiction for instance emphasizes character development over plot, and the exploration of psychological, philosophical and social issues. The second-highest level is 'upper-middle culture', the culture of professionals, executives and managers. Upper-middle fiction emphasizes plot more than character development, and heroes/heroines are more important here than in high culture. The third level is lower-middle, the taste culture of middle-class and lower-middle class people in the lesser-regarded professions such as teaching. At this level fictional versions of world events and fictional portraits of politicians, show-business stars and executives are read which uphold lower-middle class morality. The fourth level is that of 'low culture', the taste culture of skilled and semi-skilled workers. Low culture fiction is often melodramatic with heroes and villains. The lowest level identified by Gans (1974) is that of quasi-folk low culture, a blend of folk culture and commercial low culture of the pre-nineteen forties era which catered for audiences emerging from ethnic or rural folk cultures at that time. This is the taste culture of poor and unskilled people. Their fiction reading consists of tabloids and comic books (Gans 1974:75-94).

2.4 Popular culture

The term 'mass culture' is often seen in works by opponents of popular culture during the nineteen forties and fifties, and was supposedly coined by Macdonald (1957), a well-

known opponent of popular culture during this period (Ross 1989:43). The term 'mass culture' is a combination of two German concepts: *Masse* and *Kultur*, the first term having the connotation of the non-elite, uneducated population in European society and thus not capable of associating with high culture. The word *Kultur* previously translated as high culture for the elite and educated class (Gans 1974:9). 'Mass culture', therefore had a pejorative accusatory connotation. The modern term 'popular culture' is more balanced as a description and will be used throughout the rest of this chapter to denote all culture except high culture.

As an area of study popular culture has a reasonably long if fragmented history. Bigsby (1976:3) finds that a persistently suspicious academic tradition, wary of material so generally available, has created an air of defensiveness which has not entirely dissipated. A contemporary, Stevenson (1977:196), concurs that popular culture has been so strongly criticized for so long and from so many different sources that it could seem to be beyond redemption. Browne (1983:13), one of the earliest and most important scholars in the study of popular culture, states that concentrated academic studies are now increasing in this field.

Researchers such as Berger (1973:8) and Browne (1973:14) concur that popular culture is an indistinct term, and that there is no general consensus on what the definition should be. Most critics do not attempt to define it.

Stevenson (1977:186) draws attention to the various parameters which exponents of popular culture have attempted to set for this concept:

Popular culture has been defined in terms of its audience (the common man, the masses, the working class, the bourgeoisie). It has been defined in terms of its structure (it uses standardized forms, stereotypes, formulas), and in terms of genres (the gothic novel, the pulp Western, detective and crime stories). It has been defined in terms of aesthetic and information content (its information is

trivial, the aesthetic content is negligible, and its gratifications are spurious). It has been defined in terms of its use (it is used to provide “escape”, to entertain rather than to enlighten), and in terms of its life span (it is ephemeral and is quickly displaced). Finally, it has been defined in terms of the motives of its creators (their aims are mercenary rather than altruistic, they are less interested in communicating than they are in producing a product that will sell).

Stevenson (1977:186) proceeds to point out that popular culture would also include such activities as attending sporting contests, taking lessons in karate or collecting old automobile license plates.

The definition of popular culture proposed by Nye (1970:3-8) is the most applicable. Nye (1970) defines the field of popular culture as the “popular arts” which includes popular fiction such as science fiction, detective stories, Westerns, popular poetry and theatre, popular music and popular films, as well as radio programmes and television programmes and films. Nye (1970:4) explains that

Popular art, aimed at the majority, is neither abstruse, complicated or profound. To understand and appreciate it should require neither specialized, technical, nor professional knowledge. It is relatively free of corrective influences derived from minority sources; its standards of comprehension and achievement are received from consensus; it must be commonly approved, pervasive in the population, “popular” in the sense that the majority of people like and endorse it and will not accept marked deviations from its standards and conventions. More individualized than folk art, but less so than elite art, popular art tends to be more dependent than either on the skill of the performer.

To this general artistic definition by Nye (1970) one should add Ross’s (1989) view that popular culture should also be viewed within the socio-economic context as a vast range

of technologically-advanced cultural projects, industrially produced for profit and consumed and used for a variety of purposes by a broad range of audiences.

Popular art confirms the experience of the majority in contrast to elite art which tends to explore the new. For this reasons popular art (such as popular fiction) has been an unusually sensitive and accurate reflector of the attitudes and concerns of the society for which it is produced. Popular art must also be adaptable to mass production and mass diffusion in order to reach the widest possible audience in the most efficient way. Popular art therefore has its own unique audience which is huge, heterogeneous, diverse in its life styles, tastes and economic and educational levels. The audience is more flexible and less self-conscious than any high culture audience, as the latter possesses commonly-held aesthetic and intellectual standards with its own specialized idiom of appreciation (Nye 1970:4-5).

The artist in the context of high culture is governed by traditional conventions and techniques and will be judged by them. The popular artist is primarily subject to the law of supply and demand, and strives to win the largest possible audience (or readership) in the market place. The popular audience expects entertainment and instruction or both, whereas the audience for high culture is set on an aesthetic experience (Nye 1970:5-6).

A salient aspect of popular culture and art which Nye (1970:6-7) emphasizes, is the *caveat* that works of popular art need not be automatically prejudged as artistically or aesthetically inferior. This view is shared by Cawelti (1976), then a professor of English and Humanities at the University of Chicago who carried out an influential study on popular fiction entitled *Adventure, mystery and romance: formula stories as art and popular culture* (1976). Cawelti (1976:299) confesses to having viewed popular fiction as an inferior and immature form of high art at the commencement of his study. His investigation of popular fiction eventually convinced him that the formulae of popular fiction have a wide range of artistic potential. Cawelti (1976:299) finds that:

... an examination of formulaic art also suggests that there is an artistry based on convention and standardization whose significance is not simply a reflection of the inferior training and lower imaginative capacity of a mass audience. Each conventional formula has a wide range of artistic potential, and it has come to seem mistaken to automatically relegate a work to an inferior artistic status on the ground that it is a detective story or a western. It seems not unlikely to me that future generations may well view certain writers of detective stories - my own predictions would be Dashiell Hammett, Ross Macdonald, Georges Simenon, and possibly Raymond Chandler - as among the major artists of our age, yet each of these writers chose to work within the narrow limits and conventional structures of the detective story formula. To effectively interpret and evaluate their work requires a clear conception of the set of conventions they chose to observe, for it is from the interplay between the detective formula and their own personal concerns that their artistry arises.

2.5 **Origins of popular culture**

There have always been two distinct artistic traditions. As far back as Antiquity, high and low comedy existed in Greece, drama and circuses were to be found in Rome, medieval cathedral plays and street fairs in Western Europe; as well as later Renaissance court drama and tavern farces (Nye 1970:1). Popular culture in the form of ancient romances existed in the second century AD, religious and hagiographic literature in seventeenth century France, as well as didactic literature in the seventeenth century (Barbu 1976:40). The concept of a high culture as opposed to popular culture has therefore been in existence since the dawn of Western civilization.

During the pre-industrial era, European societies were divided culturally into high and folk cultured. The latter was sparse and home-made and largely unnoticed due to peasants living in isolated villages. High culture was more visible and supported by elites such as the court, the aristocracy, the clergy and affluent merchants: these circles had the

education, time and financial means to sponsor and understand a few artists' works, indeed upon occasion especially commissioning such works. Artists and intellectuals were in close proximity to the royalty and nobility and shared the prestige and privileges of their elitist patrons. Because of their lack of prominence, folk artists were invisible and high culture artists, poets and musicians had a monopoly on visible and public culture.

The historical origins of popular culture are to be found in the rise of political democracy and public education which broke down the old elite and upper-class monopoly of culture. Business enterprises, notably printers, found a profitable market in the cultural demands of the educated middle class and the newly-literate. It was not until the emergence of mass society in the eighteenth century - the incorporation of the majority of the population into society - that popular culture or popular art could be said to exist (Nye 1970:1).

Economic changes brought about an increase in the middle class and the spreading of literacy created a genuinely mass public which was a necessary pre-condition for popular culture. It must be borne in mind that by the year 1000 A.D. the literacy rate in Europe was only one or two percent, and as late as 1850 the literacy rate had reached only fifty percent. Literacy increased dramatically hereafter in Europe (Rabinovitz 1975:367). According to Bigsby (1976) there is some disagreement amongst social historians as to the precise date of this development, Raymond Williams (1985) perceiving this development by 1740 and others nominating the mid-nineteenth century. All researchers however identify the audience as the crucial factor which made the professional writers existence possible (Bigsby 1976:18-19).

It is interesting to note that several terms related to modern society in its socio-economic, political and cultural essence such as 'industry' and 'democracy' appeared in 1776, 'class' in 1740, with 'higher classes' and 'middle classes' first being used around 1790. 'Working classes' and 'upper classes' would follow in 1815 and 1820 respectively. 'Upper middle classes' would first be heard in the eighteen nineties and 'lower middle class' would follow in the twentieth century (Williams 1963:14-15).

The coming of modern industrial society would bring far-reaching political, technological and socio-economic changes which would also determine the character of popular culture. In this context Madden (1973:3) lists five main forces which produced changes in popular culture: increased population, mass production, urbanization, universal education and eventually the electronic revolution.

Nye (1970:3) summarizes the rise of popular culture as follows:

The appearance of a *popular* artistic tradition, therefore, derives from a shift - initiated in the eighteenth century and completed during the nineteenth - from the patronage of the arts by the restricted upper classes to the support offered by a huge, virtually unlimited, middle-class audience, within the context of great technological, social, and political change. Modern mass society was fully formed by the middle of the nineteenth century; the modern mass media, in various stages of development, already provided the dominant forms of communication. Popular culture developed with it. The twentieth century established both more securely.

Gans (1974:53-54) highlights the fact that some creators of high culture conveniently forgot the humiliation they had often suffered at the hands of the arrogant court nobility and failed to appreciate their new-found freedom and dignity. These artists convinced themselves that they created only for themselves and their peers and consequently had only contempt for their new audiences on whom they depended for support. These artists' resentment, feeling of lost prestige and lamenting over the passing of the old order would later figure in the severe critique of popular culture (Gans 1974:54).

These sentiments and attitudes of artistic resentment would later lead to virulent attacks against popular culture by high culture proponents such as T.S. Eliot, José Ortega y Gasset, Leo Lowenthal, Ernst van den Haag and Dwight Macdonald. Gans (1974:55)

states that these historical developments would lead to what he terms a "historical fallacy": a regressive and pessimistic view that life has declined since the displacement of elite and folk art within post-medieval and feudal communities by urban-industrial society and its popular culture.

Some of these cultural facets descended into the realm of the barbarism. In England bear-baiting and other public tormenting of animals existed for seven hundred years in tandem with what is now regarded as classical literature, painting and architecture (White 1957:14).

By 1850 A.D. modern mass society had emerged with the literary market becoming inundated with products designed to attract the broadest possible public. A great flood of novels, short stories, plays and popular biographies were made available. Print became pervasive in nineteenth-century society as machines widened and deepened the public's access to the printed page. The twentieth century would draw even larger audiences by means of the phonograph, radio, cinema and television (Nye 1970:2).

2.6 Critique of popular culture

2.6.1 Origins of the negative perception of popular culture

Popular culture has been vociferously attacked by European and North American proponents of high culture since its inception. The critique itself originated in the eighteenth century with the beginnings of popular literature (Gans 1974:6).

These adversaries of popular culture subscribed to a romantic view of pre-industrial history in which a happy and robust peasantry enjoyed folk culture under decent conditions, whilst the educated elite, creators and aristocracy alike, were free to practise high culture without the intrusion or influence of mass culture (Gans 1974:56-57). In truth this picture is false as demonstrated by Shils (1957:605) who lists cultural pastimes of the

common people as cock-fighting, tales of witches, gossip of sexual malpractices of priests, monks and nuns, and gory stories of murders and mutilation.

White (1957:14-15) documents that the European peasantry practised a brutal, demeaning culture which included chained bears being savaged by dogs, apes tied onto ponies and both torn apart by savage dogs. Gans (1974:56) concurs, pointing out that folk culture became even more brutal and violent and included other pastimes such as visits to lunatic asylums to taunt the mentally ill, mass and voyeuristic attendance of public executions and widespread public drunkenness.

The anti-utopian views of the pre-industrial and early-industrial ages of White (1957) and Gans (1974), are shared by Shils (1957:604), who states that up to the nineteenth century ordinary folk eked out an existence under harsh and difficult conditions:

... up to the nineteenth century when a great change was brought about by the confluence of economic progress, a new sentiment of the value of a human life, and the efforts of liberal and humanitarian reformers, the mass of the human race lived a degraded life. It is sheer romanticism when Professor van den Haag [an opponent of popular culture] says 'industry has impoverished life'. The contrary is true. Hunger and imminence of death, work such as we in the West would now regard as too burdensome even for beasts, over very long hours, prevented the development of individuality, of sensitivity or refinement in any except those very few in the lower classes who were either extremely strong personalities, or extremely talented or extremely fortunate in forming a connection with the aristocratic or mercantile classes, or all three together.

Shils (1957:605) further illustrates that modern critics of their own age, are impelled, by their own prejudice and revulsion against popular culture, to believe that the European aristocracy and gentry of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries lived an elevated cultural life, or that the peasantry lived a dignified existence, when only a small minority of

the upper classes could read, and mostly read worthless albeit harmless material of no aesthetic or intellectual consequence.

2.6.2 Substance of the critique

Popular culture has been so strongly criticized for so long and from so many different sources that it would seem beyond redemption (Stevenson 1977:196). The origin of this critique goes back to the transition from medieval culture into what is now known as the Industrial Revolution.

Lowenthal (1957:48) correctly finds it significant that concepts generally regarded as belonging to the modern world emerged as early as the sixteenth century: escape, entertainment, distraction and vicarious living. After the breakdown of medieval culture, the French philosopher Montaigne suggested entertainment as a spiritual support in a post-feudal world without faith. A century later commercial, popular culture had developed and religion had waned, necessitating another French intellectual, Pascal, to speak harshly of man's hollow search for diversion, amusement and distraction (Lowenthal 1957:48). It is to be remarked upon that Montaigne and Pascal both prefigure a debate which would become topical in the nineteenth century.

The noted French social commentator Alexis Count de Tocqueville visited the United States during the eighteen thirties and recorded his view that Americans had no literature as such. In his view superior art in the European sense could not find favourable soil in this capitalist democracy, as people engaging in politics or a profession had neither time nor inclination to partake of the delicate art of true literature. De Tocqueville believed that people of this age needed literary excitement, strong emotions and startling passages to offset the boredom of their humdrum quotidian occupations (De Tocqueville 1957:30-34).

The celebrated American poet Walt Whitman writing shortly after the American Civil War echoed De Tocqueville's sentiments, finding no literature or other form of artistic

expression worthy of high European standards (Whitman 1957:35-40). Whitman, like Karl Jaspers after him feared that imagination might collapse confronted with the rationalism of the first machine age and the vacuous mind produced by deadening labour (Biggsby 1976:8).

Biggsby (1976:4) aptly summarizes the philosophical and cultural roots of this vehement opposition to popular culture during the nineteenth century:

Since art and technology are assumed to be in opposite camps, popular culture, the child of technology, has frequently been seen as a symbol of a new brutalism. To those convinced of the vital centrality of traditional culture, popular culture is, by analogy, granted an equal though opposite potency. It becomes evidence of a collapse of values and, by casual extension, the cause of that collapse. Thus, in the nineteenth century, the novel, itself both a symbol of the emergence of a new middle class and a mirror of its activities, was despised as a frivolous and immoral distraction - indeed, in true puritan form, immoral because frivolous. ... This view of popular culture as a form of barbarism derives partially from the changing perception of human history. The Hegelian system could regard everything as forming an essential part of a larger plan, but commitment to the idea of progress began to crumble at precisely the moment that conditions seemed to favour an emerging popular culture. Urbanization and industrialization were both the proof and in part the cause of a shift of view which saw human autonomy reduced and the ladder of existence plunge downwards towards anarchy and dissolution rather than soar upwards towards an unshakeable and pattern-forming divinity.

Defenders of high culture saw popular culture as a collapse of values, a form of barbarism, and by extension the cause of that collapse itself. Nineteenth century critics of popular culture such as Matthew Arnold associated culture with authority, order and established

institutions, and the defence of civilized values was therefore inextricably entangled with the protection of high cultural values (Bigsby 1976:4).

The concept of popular culture as a threat to civilization became particularly widespread. The historian most responsible for demonizing popular culture in the despairing time after the First World War, which was characterized by immense social and political upheaval and revolution, was Oswald Spengler (1926) who published his massive and influential work The decline of the West in 1918. In his view the growth of cities, constant warfare amongst the civilized nations and the intermingling of elite and popular culture were all portents of imminent collapse (Rabinovitz 1975:367-368). Spengler warned in The decline of the West that the era of high culture would be followed by a period of mere technical efficiency (Bigsby 1976:11).

With each new advance in the diffusion of popular culture, new waves of criticism have appeared which Stevenson (1977:191) finds as having varied in type and intensity from generation to generation.

The extreme view of popular culture has been that the fall of Western civilization was nigh unless the pernicious tide of popular culture could be turned back. The classic version of Spengler's doomsday scenario was expressed by the noted Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset who foresaw the West sinking into barbarism because of the patronage of the masses which dehumanized standards and destroyed art. Ortega published his influential work The revolt of the masses in 1930 which further strengthened opposition to popular culture, in which he launched a virulent attack on man, society and popular art.

The earlier twentieth century critics of popular culture were aristocratic and aesthetic in their outlook and typified by the renowned poet T.S. Eliot (1949:17) who emphasized the role of the aristocracy and the church in presenting elite culture in the face of a declining Western civilization. Eliot (1949:17) feared that the decay of culture would continue into "... a period of some duration, of which it is possible to say that it will have no culture".

It was perhaps F.R. Leavis who was really the last great defender of the high cultural faith. For him culture could never be accessible to the masses, for only a small elite was mentally fit to appreciate Dante, Shakespeare and Hardy, and thus secure the standards that “order the finer living of an age, the sense that this is worth more than that” (Landesman 1993:11).

Ross (1989:52) describes the critique of popular culture by intellectuals such as Gasset (1930) and Eliot (1949) as a *neo-aristocratic* critique which viewed popular culture as an extension of hyperdemocracy: the political domination by the masses from below. This school of thought would gradually lose its political validity (Ross 1989:52).

It is ironic that a further school of thought which also bitterly opposed popular culture stemmed not from the conservative side of the neo-aristocratic critique, but from the left of the political spectrum. The critique of mass society and popular culture was advanced by left-wingers and Marxists as an explanation for the growing successes of fascism and the failure of socialism (Ross 1989:50). The influence of cultural theories of totalitarianism imported by left-wing German intellectuals in exile such as Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno and Hannah Arendt was influential among other left-leaning intellectuals, Marxists and socialists. Horkheimer, Adorno *et al.* would come to be known as the Frankfurt School, known for its combination of “a trenchant critique of capitalism with the traditionally mandarin prejudices of high Germanic culture”, and presented a picture of popular culture as a profitable opiate, synthetically prepared for consumption by a society of automatons (Ross 1989:50).

In the view of Shils (1957:588-591), the common left-wing and Marxist political factor left among such critics a formative imprint on their collective thought on popular culture, with their earlier economic criticism of capitalist society becoming transformed into a moral and cultural criticism of large-scale industrial society. These critics can no longer criticize modern society for the invidious life which it imposes on the majority of its

citizens now opting for criticism of the aesthetic qualities of a society which has, unlike Marxist systems, overcome poverty and long arduous labour and has artfully duped the average citizen into indulging in popular culture, thus cleverly preventing him or her from striving to achieve the socialist ideal (Shils 1957:589-592). Lowenthal (1984:10) concurs that there is a literature on popular culture which is thoroughly critical and which contains some criticisms directed against the product, but most of it is aimed against the system on which it depends.

Some of the German critics of popular culture from Marxist-oriented backgrounds even went as far as seeking to prove that the working classes had been untrue to their Marxist ideals because mass man had become alienated and uprooted, and had been so confused as to accept Hitler's National Socialism. Rosenberg (1957:9) stated flatly that "... mass culture threatens not merely to cretinize our taste but to brutalize our senses while paving the way to totalitarianism". Shils (1957:601) convincingly refutes this spurious argument by pointing out that fascism triumphed in Spain, Italy and Germany before the masses in these and other countries could begin to enjoy the benefits of commercialized popular culture.

Other directions of thought in regard of popular culture also became evident during the nineteen fifties, as described by Ross (1989:53-54):

...two liberal positions had begun to dominate the debate about mass culture. There was the frustrated, or disappointed, aesthetic-liberal position, much in evidence in the widespread complaint that the popular classes, relatively free from the nineteenth-century yoke of thankless labor and production, spent their newly won leisure time with second- and third-rate aesthetic gratifications, preferring the standardized products of the entertainment industries to the more enlightened liberal values of high culture. Increasingly favored among sociologists, however, was the corporate-liberal or progressive evolutionist position, which emphasized the benign function of popular

culture in teaching individuals how to adjust, cope with, and enjoy the fruits of consumer society ... From this perspective, popular culture was a socializer or “group-adjuster,” and not a manipulator; it strengthened rather than weakened civil society. Rather than a form of social control, it was seen as an efficient servant of the new social psychology, tied to liberal-therapeutic values like diversity, personal fulfillment, and group loyalty.

In essence the critique of mass culture (or ‘popular culture’ as it is now described at the close of the twentieth century), has lasted two centuries. This cultural-philosophic attack has been marshalled and led by some of the most respected intellectuals in Western society and academia, including José Ortega y Gasset, Friedrich Nietzsche, T.S. Eliot, Oswald Spengler, F.R. Leavis and Wyndham Lewis. Shils (1957:596) is justifiably of the opinion that the negative interpretation of popular culture rests on a distinct image of modern man, modern society, and man in past ages which has little factual basis, “... a produce of disappointed political prejudices, vague aspirations for an unrealizable ideal ... at bottom romanticism dressed up in the language of sociology, psychoanalysis and existentialism”. During the latter half of the twentieth century a more positive view of popular culture began to develop, and the vindication of popular culture commenced in the nineteen sixties with the onset of a more pluralistic picture of cultural politics.

2.6.3 Popular culture vindicated

Intellectually the cultural struggle between the protagonists of high culture against most of the rest of society has not been a balanced contest, as advocates of high culture criticize popular culture which, in their view, has harmful effects on individuals partaking thereof, as well as society as a whole. The users of popular culture blithely ignore this critique and continue to patronize popular culture and popular arts.

The high culture versus popular culture controversy is of great importance, because, as Gans (1974:3-5) reminds us, there is more involved than just media fare and consumer

goods. The debate touches on the essence of the good life outside the work role, as well as which culture shall dominate society. This debate is no less than an intellectual attack by one (smaller) sector of society on another (the majority) for not adhering to the former's elite cultural standards (Gans 1974:3-4). Carey (1992:8-9) documents the fact that at one stage leading high culture champions even sought to exclude "the masses" from reading their work, their loathing gradually assuming extremely intolerant tones, with Nietzsche's distaste for popular culture being prefigured or shared by elite authors and poets of high culture including W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Thomas Hardy and D.H. Lawrence. There has long been and still is, an unlikely consensus among certain voices from the right and the left about the intrinsic evils of new technologies and the perceived mass cultures to which they give birth. For the right this demonology takes the form of "a brutally mechanical possession of the last cultural outposts of high civilization". For the left "the specter of hypercapitalism is omnipresent, looming up behind the cretinizing, stupor-inducing cultural forms" produced by a dying system in the last desperate throes of economic and ideological reorganization, (Ross 1989:209).

The protagonists of high culture thus aver that popular culture is most harmful to the individual and the society from which it stems. Fourie (1985:23) finds that the essence of critique against popular culture is that it influences people to such an extent that it inhibits or blocks individual thought, the development of aesthetic values, criteria and taste. Macdonald (1957:59-61) views popular culture as a parasitic, cancerous growth on high culture which extracts riches from high culture without putting anything back. It threatens high culture by its brutal, overwhelming quantity. Fabricated by businessmen for an audience of passive consumers, popular culture is at best only a debased reflection of high culture (Macdonald 1957:59-61).

An adversary of popular culture describes the difference between popular and high culture as being the distinction between spurious gratification, and that of a genuine experience as a step to greater individual fulfilment. In popular culture men supposedly discard everything including reverence for the beautiful (Lowenthal 1957:51).

Gans (1974:19), in an incisive sociological study, summarizes the virulent critique of popular culture over the past two centuries into four major accusatory themes:

The negative character of popular culture creation. Popular culture is undesirable because, unlike high culture, it is mass-produced by profit-minded entrepreneurs solely for the gratification of a paying audience.

The negative effects on high culture. Popular culture borrows from high culture, thus debasing it, and also lures away many potential creators of high culture, thus depleting its reservoir of talent.

The negative effects on the popular culture audience. The consumption of popular culture content at best produces spurious gratification, and at worst is emotionally harmful to the audience.

The negative effects on the society. The wide distribution of popular culture not only reduces the level of cultural quality - or civilization - of the society, but also encourages totalitarianism by creating a passive audience peculiarly responsive to the techniques of mass persuasion used by demagogues bent on dictatorship.

This in-depth analysis deserves further examination, and careful attention, as Gans (1974) dissects and refutes these four accusations by pointing out that even the books and other artefacts of high culture are often mass productions, as few high culture users can afford original paintings. Popular culture is more standardized and makes use of formulas, stereotypical characters and plots, although high culture is not free of standardization. Gans (1974:22-27) finds that popular culture creators and authors fight as intensely for their own ideas as high culture creators, and thinking of the former as opportunistic

imitators is an unfair charge. Brewis *et al.* (1996b:68-80) provides a detailed discussion of these and related aspects.

Regarding the accusation that mass culture borrows from high culture with the intent of debasing it and luring away high culture creators, Gans (1974:27-29) finds that the reverse is also true, and concludes that there is no evidence that such borrowing has led to a debasement of high culture.

Turning to the accusation that popular culture is harmful to its audience, Gans (1974:31-34) mentions studies showing that people use popular culture for diversion and do not think of applying its content to their own lives. The prime effect of popular culture is to reinforce already existing behaviour and attitudes, rather than creating new ones (cf. Brewis 1992:43-47). Fact and fiction, as presented in popular culture, have provided much information to people about their own society by describing different lifestyles, aspirations and attitudes; in effect strengthening middle-class culture and lifestyles. Gans (1974:42) makes the telling point that the possibility that popular culture and mass media could be harmful to its audience or not, is almost irrelevant as it is inconceivable for a large modern society to exist without them.

The users of popular culture are not simply a mass audience which mindlessly consumes every product it is offered. Fiske (1992:2-11) illustrates that popular culture can be made from within and below, and is not always imposed from without or above as mass cultural theorists would have it. Fiske (1992) agrees with Gans (1974) that popular culture improves the lives of its users, helping them to take control over the meaning of their lives. Such gains enlarge the capability of users to exert shifts in their relations with their environments and their families (cf. Brewis 1992:48).

The critique that popular culture is detrimental to society, emphasizes that it lowers the taste level of society and causes its audience to become vulnerable to totalitarianism. Gans (1974:44-45) shows that there is no evidence to suggest that cultural taste levels would be

higher if popular culture did not exist, commenting that the erstwhile totalitarian communist governments of Eastern Europe could not suppress or prevent popular Western culture being emulated, or smuggled into countries behind the Iron Curtain.

Popular culture has played a positive role in enabling ordinary people to develop individual identities, self-expression and creativity. Popular culture has helped persons predisposed to achieving this by providing aspirations and suggesting ideas. Popular works like Westerns have treated and delivered judgement on an immense variety of moral and ethical questions (Gans 1974:58). Nye (1970:67) comments that the fact that the mass audience exists, and that popular authors or artists must create for it cannot be wished away, and lucidly observes that satisfying a large audience involves no less skill than pleasing a small elite one. A bestselling paperback novel is not *ipso facto* detrimental, as popular art has become symbolic and multi-layered in the course of the twentieth century. Nye (1970:418) cites Toffler arguing that popularity should not necessarily be dangerous or degrading to any artist. The dissemination of the artist's work to ever wider audiences could well influence the level of popular taste.

Gans (1974) concludes that the findings of all present studies of the effects of popular culture show that popular culture is not a social problem, neither for the majority of its audience, nor for high culture. Lewis (1978:8) supports Gans' empirical investigation which show the charges against popular culture to be greatly exaggerated. They are not based on empirical evidence and seem designed to protect high culture by conjuring up false dangers and spurious social problems.

Nye (1970:419) states that research has found that the penetration of popular culture was accompanied by increased participation in, and possible appreciation of the arts at all levels. Kando (1975:52-53) observes that many defenders of popular culture are of the opinion that modern cultural consumption has not only increased quantitatively, but qualitatively as well, showing statistics to the effect that no other society in history has even enabled so many of its members to enjoy good music, good art and good culture.

These defenders of popular culture maintain that the culturally-rich past which critics of modern popular culture still long for, was never in existence. Langan (1992:5) concurs with this view, stating that the high culture of classical music, art and literature has only appealed to a minority. The Renaissance was never a popular movement but was fostered by an aristocratic few.

A great deal of research has been done of late, in the United States, in the field of popular culture as American popular culture has a tremendously strong global influence especially in the field of popular art forms such as popular fiction, film and television. A noteworthy example is the popular literary genre known as science fiction which has, in the words of Aldiss (1986:13) become an American art form, both in emphasis and in fact. This study has therefore of necessity drawn heavily upon American sources and scholarship in this field. Popular culture has not been researched nearly as extensively in South Africa as in the USA. A few South African researchers have, however, studied aspects of popular culture, notably popular fiction. Incisive research into the psychology of ludic reading (from the Latin *luderis*: 'play') has been done by Nell (1985, 1988a, 1988b). Nell (1988b:4-5) found in a large group of fiction readers, 42,6% read light fiction with even a doctoral candidate in English literature stating that 90% of his leisure reading was popular fiction. Nell (1988a:44-45) did extended research on ludic reading (five studies over a six-year period). The value that popular fiction can have is strikingly illustrated by one of Nell's subjects (1988b:240) who had the following to say regarding his reading of popular fiction:

Reading removes me for a considerable time from the petty and seemingly unrewarding irritations of living - I did not choose to be born, and cannot say (in all honesty) that I get 100% enjoyment from life. So, for the few hours a day I read 'trash' I escape the cares of those around me, as well as escaping my own cares and dissatisfactions. This is a selfish attitude, which I can justify only by saying that it contributes in no small measure to preserving what sanity I have.

Nell (1985:167-168) stresses that the great entertainers of popular fiction, the Alex Haileys, John le Carrés and Wilbur Smiths share an important goal with informers and educators, which is to broaden and deepen their readers' understanding of the world. In his view an explanation as to why the popular culture industry flourishes and popular culture is so eagerly sought after, would be the next step towards a deeper understanding of the forces that energize popular culture.

The one-sided debate between the respective virtues of high versus popular culture which was for centuries been weighted in favour of the former, has over the past two to three decades achieved a measure of equilibrium. The research carried out, *inter alia*, by Nye (1970), Gans (1974), Kando (1975), Lewis (1978), Nye (1983), Nell (1985, 1988a, 1988b) and Ross (1989) have largely negated the accusations by the protagonists of high culture that popular culture is pernicious and debasing both to society and the individual (cf. Brewis 1992:31-35).

Mass society, despite internal conflicts, creates in the individual a greater sense of belonging and attachment to society and fellow members of society, than ever before in recorded history. Large aggregations of people spread over extended territories were now for the first time enabled to enter into reasonably free association as a result of mass society. In pre-modern times a substantial proportion of the population had always remained outsiders, whereas now most of the population is incorporated into society (Shils 1960:288-290). Mass society has popular culture as an inextricable element, and the popular arts have the power to communicate directly with everyone, not only the highly educated as is the case with high culture.

The advantage of mass society for the individual is that individuality is greatly enhanced and according to Shils (1960:290) is

... characterized by an openness to experience, an efflorescence of sensation and sensibility, a sensitivity to other minds and personalities. It ... grows from the expansion of the emphatic capacities of the human being. Mass society has liberated the cognitive, appreciative and moral capacities of individuals.

2.7 Contemporary popular culture

With the advent of mass, commercialized transport and communication which became widespread and readily available to the majority of people in Western Europe and North America after the Second World War, many of the older cultural levels and facets lost ground rapidly. Bell (1976:188), the eminent social historian and sociologist, describes this as the banding together of society into one great ecumene which led to the breakdown of older, parochial cultures with the concomitant channelling of all the world's traditions of art, music and literature into:

... a new universal container accessible to all and obligatory upon all. This very enlargement of horizon, this mingling of the arts, this search for the new, whether as a voyage of discovery or as a snobbish effort to differentiate oneself from others, is itself the creation of a new kind of modernity ... a break with the past as past, catapulting it into the present. The old concept of culture is based on continuity, the modern one on vanity; the old value was tradition, the contemporary ideal is syncretism.

Glazer (1971:57) concurs that the distinction between the high, middle and low culture, which was so crucial in discussing American culture in the nineteen fifties, has largely disappeared due to the fact that the middle taste culture had captured the ideas of elite culture.

Bell (1970:19-20) determined that cultural choices were no longer being determined by class, i.e. socio-economic position, and that for a significant proportion of the population the relation of social position to cultural style no longer holds.

Gans (1974:6) finds that both Bell (1970, 1976) and Glazer (1971) are correct in suggesting that high culture ideas are being disseminated culturally throughout society, and are becoming more acceptable to the upper-middle class. The distinctions between high culture and popular culture have, however, not disappeared, and popular culture still differs from high culture.

It would therefore appear that the traditional view of culture as a vertically-structured concept from high to low according to perceived degrees of sophistication should be modified, and replaced with the concept of culture as a continuum with popular culture occupying the largest and middle part of the continuum, and folk and high culture forming the extremes.

Browne (1983:15) is quite correct in his supposition that:

Perhaps the most revealing metaphor for culture is a flattened ellipse or a lense ... with elite and folk cultures on either end, both looking fundamentally alike in many ways and both having some characteristics in common. In the center, largest in bulk by far is popular culture with no lines separating one from the other, only degrees of emphasis. Popular culture therefore consists of all aspects of civilization that make up a way of life.

Inge (1978:ix-x) points out that the serious scholarly study of popular culture itself is a fairly recent phenomenon, although some early investigations were first initiated within established disciplines. Sociologists have long found the popular culture materials to be a mirror wherein society can see itself, and better understand its character and needs. Film studies started taking place in the English Departments of universities after literary

scholars had realized that the same techniques applied to the appreciation of fiction, drama and poetry, could be applied with equal profit to the appreciation of motion pictures.

It is no longer necessary to justify the study of the popular arts, as scholars have come to recognize that each form or medium of expression has its own aesthetic principles, techniques and ways of conveying concepts. Each, like science fiction, has been misused but has also witnessed remarkably high levels of artistic accomplishment. Inge (1978:x) finds that each popular genre must be evaluated within and by its own self-generated set of standards and objectives.

Society is continually undergoing change in the economic, political, technological, industrial and other spheres with concomitant changes in culturally-related aspects such as leisure time and popular entertainment. Toffler (1964:229) notes that a person in a leisure-filled world has to structure his or her personality around differing clusters of values than a person in a work-dominated society. Lewis (1972:xiv) notes that all such changes in societal structure attain a focal point in forms and formats of contemporary popular culture.

Popular culture confirms the experience of the majority, in contrast to high culture which tends to explore the new. It is for this reason that popular culture has been an universally sensitive and accurate reflector of the attitudes and values of the society for which it is produced. Historians and critics have tended to neglect popular culture as a means of access to the values and ideas of a society (Lewis 1972:xiii). Wullschlager (1995:iii) refers to these values in popular culture as "... the indefinable: the cultural mood, the underlying hopes and fears of a nation which condition aesthetic taste".

Popular culture is the product of a free society and the triumph of democracy. The high culture of classical literature, art and music has only ever appealed to a minority.

Nye (1983:28) succinctly summarizes the correct approach towards popular culture

Whatever its manner of expression, popular culture and the arts included in that culture can no longer be treated with condescension nor merely dismissed as unworthy of study. Instead of the rigid divisions among high, mid-, and low-class art established by elitist critics over the past forty years, it is now much more reasonable - and useful - to view the arts as one long continuum, and to consider all levels of artistic accomplishment as related rather than disparate. To erase the boundaries that have so long divided the arts means, in the long run, greater understanding of them.

2.8 Conclusion

Culture is an all-pervading sense of ideals and values in society. In the modern world various taste cultures are present, with the majority of people preferring that level of culture broadly described as popular culture, instead of high culture with its stringent artistic and aesthetic standards and qualities. The appearance of popular culture derives from the great technological, socio-economic and political changes which commenced in the eighteenth century and culminated in modern mass society which was fully formed by the middle of the nineteenth century. The mass media and popular culture developed concomitantly, and by the middle of the nineteenth century popular arts such as popular fiction were firmly entrenched in Western Europe and North America. Popular culture has been bitterly associated over the last two centuries as a debasing influence which pitted the protagonists of high culture against the majority of society in what has been the longest and possibly most important cultural struggle in the Western world. Popular culture and the popular arts are now being studied seriously. Research by serious scholars such as Gans (1974), Kando (1975), Lewis (1978), Browne (1983) Nye (1983), Nell (1985, 1988) and Ross (1989), have convincingly refuted the argument that popular culture exercises a pernicious influence on its user.

In the following chapter, attention will be paid to popular fiction as popular culture, as well as science fiction as a manifestation of popular culture. Deliberation will be given to the role of popular fiction in the inner life of its user. Attention will be given to the critique of popular fiction, as well as possible motives for the reading of popular fiction in general and science fiction in particular.

CHAPTER 3

THE VALUE OF POPULAR FICTION AND SCIENCE FICTION FOR SOCIETY AND READER

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 examined contemporary popular culture in the light of its historical, societal and cultural antecedents, as well as the intense controversy caused by the philosophical assault by protagonists of high culture on popular culture over the past two centuries. It was demonstrated that there is no empirical evidence that popular culture is a social problem or detrimental to its audience or high culture. Chapter 2 also served to illustrate that society is continually undergoing change in the technological, economic and political sense, and that popular culture is a sensitive and accurate reflector of the attitudes and values and underlying hopes and fears of people. The fierce cultural struggle regarding popular culture and its inherent value also resonated within the field of public librarianship in regard of the selection and provision of popular fiction. This chapter will be devoted to examining the motives for and the value of reading popular fiction in general, and science fiction in particular. This chapter will thus be used to illustrate the social utility of science fiction within the public library, and will examine and explain the special significance of popular fiction within society and culture, as well as the motives involved in the reading of fiction in general, and science fiction in particular.

3.2 Advent of popular fiction

The printing press was one of the first mass-production devices and the novel the first literary form invented to be thus mass-produced. The novel was the first successful form of popular art to enter a society which was being more and more dominated by what was then viewed as paraliterature (Fiedle 982:53).

Early modern Europe had two cultural traditions, a majority for whom popular culture was the only culture, and the aristocratic minority who had access to the high cultural tradition (Burke 1978:28). The novel of the eighteenth century must be clearly distinguished from aristocratic high art, as well as folk art. In the course of the eighteenth century literature had separated into two distinct fields of art and commodity, the perceived opposing camps of popular literature and high literature (Lowenthal 1961:xii).

The novel as popular fiction was a product of both the Industrial Revolution and the political shifts in power which resulted in mass society (Fiedler 1982:53). In its beginnings the novel was a popular, demotic and levelling form. Elitist critics were embarrassed from the start by its intimate connection with the commercialization and democratization of culture in an emerging mass society. Only grudgingly did these elitist critics grant the novel the status of real literature at all (Fiedler 1982:76).

The printed book which was the support and vehicle of the great European literature of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, reached only a very small circle of society. Even the most popular novels like Pamela and Tom Jones never sold more than a few thousand copies. Escarpit (1966:29) cites Altick to the effect that the printings of these bestsellers never exceeded 4000 copies, with an average printing being somewhere between 500 - 1000 copies, and successful books having three to five printings.

Between 1800 and 1820 a series of inventions like the metal press, the foot-operated cylinder press and the mechanical steam press revolutionized printing techniques, and mass printing became common, with 10 000 copies of a novel, The Corsair, appearing. By 1848 this wave of mass printing had swept over Europe and North America (Escarpit 1966:23). Gutenberg technology changed enormously responding to the invention of steno-typing and linotyping. The discovery of procedures for producing cheap paper during the nineteenth century made the serial "penny" novel possible with its new appeal to a new mass audience (Fiedler 1982:53).

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the concept of a vast reading public and a publishing industry would have been little more than a dream. Fiction was rare and read by few, libraries were expensive and few, distribution was virtually impossible and travel hampered by poor roads. By the third quarter of the nineteenth century the situation had changed radically. Advanced and new printing techniques, the appearance of trains, railway book shops, public libraries and the power of affluent authors were all factors contributing to a new mass readership (Bloom 1996:51). The popular novel became a societal force in the nineteenth century in England for example, where the population was subjected to an enormous societal onslaught of new cities, new crowds and new machines. Writers like Dickens managed to take this new social reality and turn it into a new fictional representation that people could understand, and which could connect for them these various, disparate societal parts. The novel was thus a central form at that point, an organizing guide, especially for Victorian England (Syman & Johnson 1996:56). Science fiction would play an even stronger role in helping humanity to make sense of the onrush of rampant technology and science in the twentieth century.

The paperback revolution which started in 1935 enabled the cheap modern book (and popular genres such as science fiction) to take its place in civilization. Thus was born the new book which has conquered the world since 1950, with 46% of all future titles appearing in paperback by the nineteen sixties (Escarpit 1966:27-28). This great publishing development of the twentieth century had its origins in the mid-nineteenth century when an American publisher, Erastus Beadle, sold four million paperbacked novels in army camps during the American Civil War (1861-1865). An American company, Pocket Books, later sold 260 million books during the nineteen forties (Nye 1970:43-44). This development coincided with an increased interest in atomic energy, automation, rocketry, electronics and the real possibilities of space travel which in turn greatly assisted in popularizing works of science fiction.

3.3 Critique of popular fiction

The critique of popular culture originated in the eighteenth century with the beginnings of popular literature (Gans 1974:4). By the early years of the nineteenth century popular literature, like popular culture, was already being roundly condemned. Williams (1978:51), cites Sir Eyerton Brydges commenting on the 'vile evil' of popular literature having become a trade all over Europe, nurturing a corrupt taste and giving the unintellectual power over the intellectual. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the enormous rise of popular literature had generated a bitter and long-standing discussion on the merits of popular literature, with some critics condemning its lack of literary taste and concomitant threat to moral standards; and others viewing popular literature as the understandable need to escape from the grim pressures of the industrial age (Lowenthal 1984:159).

Twentieth century critics of popular fiction still abound, with the approach of Macdonald (1957:67-69) being typical of this approach when he severely condemns modern fiction such as science fiction. Nell (1988b:28-29) attributes this view of popular culture and literature, as a noxious influence, to the Protestant Reformation which led to a revolutionary restructuring of the Western conscience with regard to the correct use of time, the importance of work and the sinfulness of pleasure. This critical tradition still retained immense force whether in consciously intellectual guise or in the censorship of perceived trashy works effected by the public librarian. Far into the nineteenth century, the reading of novels, like the drinking of wine in the morning, was viewed as a sign of dissipation and vice (cf. Brewis 1992:39-40).

Squandering time and money on the purchase of profane works of fiction for pleasure reading was thus an offence in every sense against the Protestant ethic. Fiction reading was characterized by S.T. Coleridge as beggarly day-dreaming during which the reader furnished for himself nothing but "... laziness and a little mawkish sensibility" (Nell 1988b:28). These grave claims regarding the negative or even pernicious effects of light

fiction on its user have survived into the twentieth century, and can still be heard today. The positive and healing influence of popular fiction on the user will be elucidated hereafter.

Nell (1988b:4-5) has established that the high culture, elitist view that a reader belongs either to the literary few or the masses, deserves to be labelled as a fallacy. The doors between high culture and popular culture remain open. Buell (1973:17) observes that many writers like Charles Dickens and Ernest Hemingway wrote on both levels at once. Others like Melville set out to write popular literature and ended as serious writers; some works are borderline cases, with authors such as Kurt Vonnegut Jr. and John Hersey being noteworthy examples. Browne (1973:16-17) illustrates that popular culture also draws on high culture. The argument that popular fiction has no aesthetic quality has been refuted by American authors such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Walt Whitman and Mark Twain to name only four, as well as the greatest writers of all times and countries, such as Homer, Shakespeare, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoi. Shakespeare during his lifetime was surely seen as a popular author. In the America of the nineteenth century all his works were well-known and popular, even if simultaneously regarded as high culture. At present some of Shakespeare's works are popular culture such as Hamlet and Henry V which have been made into films starring such popular actors as Mel Gibson and Kenneth Branagh. These are, therefore, plays which are both popular and high culture. Other Shakespearean plays, such as Titus Andronicus, for example, are not widely known to the public and considered, for that very reason, to be high culture (Browne 1973:17-18).

3.4 Significance and value of popular fiction within society and culture

Although there has been a growth of interest in popular fiction over the last few years, it cannot be claimed that it has been established as a central component of literary studies, due to entrenched resistance to innovation within the intellectual discipline of Literary Studies which views itself as being confined only to high literature (Pawling 1984:2).

One of the most erudite critics of science fiction, Suvin (1979:1) has pointed out that a subject area such as the study of mainstream literature, which refuses to take into account ninety percent of its domain would seem to suffer from large areas of blindness, and also run the risk of distorted vision within the small zone of serious literature on which it focuses. There are, however, some indications that attitudes are changing and that popular fiction is beginning to be accepted as a serious area of study. This is a development to be welcomed because, in the words of Pawling (1984:4):

Like all forms of cultural creation, popular fiction both reflects social meanings/mores and, perhaps more importantly, *intervenes* in the life of society by organising and interpreting experiences which have previously been subjected only to partial reflection. Thus, to 'understand' popular fiction is to examine it as a form of cultural production and as a *process of meaning creation* which offers a particular way of thinking and feeling about one's relationship to oneself, to others, and to society as a whole.

Why then does popular fiction exert such a powerful influence on society? The answer is to be found in the concepts 'genre' and 'formula'. The term 'genre' derives from the French word for a literary type or class, and has been regarded since the Romantic period (*circa* 1789-1832) as convenient, arbitrary ways of classifying literature. An examination of popular fiction genres shows that particular rules or norms of expectation exist, which are crucial factors in the acceptance or rejection of the text (Pawling 1984:4). Genres are essentially contracts between author and reader, therefore literary institutions which like other institutions of society, are based on tacit agreements or contracts (Jameson 1975b:135).

Formula used in the literary sense is "a combination or synthesis of a number of specific cultural conventions with a more universal story form or archetype" (Cawelti 1977:181). Cawelti (1976, 1977) is an important and pioneering authority in the field of popular fiction, and his work on the meaning of literary formulae has provided a *leitmotif* for

literary historians and culture critics striving to take popular fiction and culture seriously (Yanarella & Sigelman 1988:7).

Cawelti (1977:186) finds that literary formulae in popular fiction exercise a cultural influence as by repetition they ultimately become the conventional way of representing themes. Science fiction for instance is regarded by some critics as a contemporary mythology (Parrinder 1980a:53), or at least as a popular genre with mythical elements.

Cawelti (1977:208-209) finds that the basic culture of formulaic literature is towards the maintenance of conventional patterns of imaginative expression, affirming prevailing views and attitudes by means of a fictional world which expresses these views and attitudes, reconciling tensions and ambiguities of value and interest among differing groups, and making it possible for the mass audience to cross the boundary between that which is culturally permissible and the forbidden. Changes in certain values can also be incorporated into prevailing culture in this manner.

Yanarella and Sigelman (1988:9) quite correctly point to the value of popular fiction when they state that

... buried within these genres and formulas is a deep lode of images, symbols and myths that shape the cultural and social world that we ... inhabit and that define the limits of the culturally and ideologically permissible in our society ... these genres and formulas also disclose cultural ideals, political values and literary symbols that have not been fulfilled in the past and continue to take on new literary and cultural expressions - expressions that limn the possibilities of emancipation from the cultural stereotypes and political myths constraining our political imagination and shaping our contemporary form of alienated politics.

3.5 Significance of popular fiction for individual readers

Apart from the significant collective role played by popular fiction in society and culture, popular fiction is a very important part of the inner life of individual readers, (cf. Brewis 1992:83-99).

Fiction is a particularly rewarding form of literature. It yields a measure of enjoyment and insight more readily than other forms of reading. Fiction, if read carefully and intelligently, can also broaden and intensify our enjoyment and understanding of life (Altenbernd & Lewis 1966:2).

3.5.1 Ludic reading

Nell (1988a:7-8) who has done major and intensive research into the psychology of reading for pleasure defines ludic reading (from the Latin word *ludo*: 'I play') as reading for pleasure and relaxation. Nell (1988a:7) cites the findings of Caillois (1961) and Huizinga (1950) that reading for pleasure is a form of play and free activity standing outside ordinary life. It absorbs the player completely, is unproductive and takes place within circumscribed limits of place and time. Nell (1988a:7-8) finds that fiction reading accounts for most ludic reading, pointing out that the experience of being lost in a book, absorbed and entranced, is most strongly associated with the reading of fiction. A ludic reader can be defined as a person who reads one book per week for pleasure.

Nell (1988b:1-4) finds reading for pleasure to be an extraordinary activity. The printed page gives the skilled reader a pleasure as acute, colourful and transfiguring as anything found or experienced in the real world. Pleasure reading effects a concentration so effortless that the absorbed reader of fiction, often recorded as an addict of the printed page, and denounced as the victim of a pernicious vice, should be the envy of all teachers and students.

The reading of fiction, like dreaming, transports the reader to other worlds. Nell (1988b:2-3) finds that books, unlike dreams, are subject to the reader's will because they can only envelop the reader in alternate realities at his or her behest. Books are the dreams the reader would most like to have, and fiction in the view of Nell (1988b:2-3), has the power to

... change consciousness, turning sadness to laughter and anxious introspection to the relaxed contemplation of some other time and place.

Nell (1988a:6-7) documents that, in the course of intensive research into the psychology of reading for pleasure, he communicated with hundreds of ludic readers, singly and in groups. These readers commonly enjoy serious literature as well as popular fiction and are equally moved by both, reread old favourites with undiminished enjoyment, and find that reading fiction provides a deeper pleasure than watching television or going to the theatre.

Ludic reading therefore provides private and engrossing entertainment which falls between the entertainments which are available on a commercial basis such as cinemas, theatres and shows, and those adult play activities conducted socially for which no money changes hands (Nell 1988b:3).

3.5.2 Relief of tension

Sigmund Freud is on record as having commented upon the fiction reading experience and viewed this action as the relief of tension. Freud is cited as saying "Ich bin der Meinung ... daß der eigentliche Genuss des Dichtwerkes aus der Befreiung von Spannungen in unserer Seele hervorgeht" (Gaus 1979:116).

Katz and Foulkes (1962:379) point out that most commentators on the use of popular culture such as popular fiction, seem to concur with Freud's analysis, as they suggest that everyday roles in modern society give rise to tensions, stress and drives, for which the

reader can obtain compensatory gratification via psychological processes such as identification with fictional characters and situations. Gaus (1979:130-131) concurs, viewing fiction as an important balance-redressing element of humankind's psychic household. Fiction reading relaxes the individual. Individuals long for a tension-free environment and as few persons are of the leisured, moneyed classes, they make do with reading fiction in their spare time to alleviate tension caused by work. The experience of fictional tension can alleviate real tension, although the theory has been advanced that the tension must be of a very specific kind and every novel is not experienced in the same way. The imaginative is a buffer which becomes operative when the individual's contact with reality goes wrong. The imaginative protects mankind from crashing into reality and consequently can be said to have an adaptive function (Gaus 1979:130-132).

Nell (1988a:44-45), who did extended and incisive research on ludic reading and its antecedents (five studies over a six-year period), found as a recurring theme among ludic readers that they enjoy reading fiction in bed in order to take their minds off the day's tensions and problems. One subject is quoted as saying that reading in bed "takes my mind away from the day's tension and sends me to sleep".

Gaus (1979:116) posits that the release of tensions takes place in the following sequence:

- (i) The reader of fiction experiences an accumulation of tension in himself or herself.
- (ii) These tensions are experienced as discomfort.
- (iii) The reading of written fiction is also attended by tensions.
- (iv) The latter (fictional) tensions neutralize or alleviate the former.

Gaus (1979:156-157) does, however, confirm that not all existential tension is alleviated or neutralized by using written fiction. The chance of real, aggressive behaviour however remains small as long as the internal, affective psychological system of the reader can be kept in equilibrium by means of fictional aggressive behaviour. Frustrated, tired, and downtrodden people find emotional relief when reading about fictional heroes and situations. Gaus (1979:157) perceptively comments that traditional religions have attempted to compensate for existential tensions in its individual members, which is why churches in the past have viewed both fiction and political ideology ('state fiction' as Gaus terms it) as competition, because both compensate for the inner tension of the individual.

Coetzee (1983:69) is in agreement with Gaus' approach, and illustrates that reading for pleasure is not aimless or without value, as such reading is essential for psychological/mental health because it relieves stress that could otherwise become unbearable. The need for fiction use goes deeper than the conscious mind and also finds expression in dreams and the need to dream. Reading, however, is not dreaming. The reader's volitional ability remains unimpaired and unlike dreams which may become so threatening that they lead to depersonalisation, readers can terminate book fantasy by lifting their eyes from the page at which moment the fiction experience ceases to exist. At the conclusion of his extensive research entitled Lost in a book: the psychology of reading for pleasure, Nell (1988b:267) finds that by reading a book, the ludic reader achieves the most startling changes of mood and consciousness - gloom explodes into delight, fear dissolves into power and agitation becomes easy tranquillity.

In sum, the reading of popular fiction plays an important, therapeutic role in helping readers to control stress and tension.

3.5.3 Communication

Coetzee (1983:69) states that the escape aspect of leisure reading is often so strongly over-emphasized, that the unfair impression is created that anybody who reads for

amusement is attempting to obviate harsh realities and personal shortcomings. In modern society, most members of society are in danger of becoming isolated with daily contacts mostly restricted to the field of work. The social life of the individual may therefore quite possibly be deficient. A person could therefore lack agreeable companionship in a wide range of activities and turn to fiction reading and the company of an author to compensate for his or her loneliness. The reader thus seeks the society of authors who are able to satisfy the former's need for communication (Coetzee 1983:69).

3.5.4 Societal consciousness

Gaus (1979:118) adds a further dimension to the role fiction reading can play in the life of the individual, by citing Jung's theory that any social period possesses just like the soul of an individual, a specific, limited and special state of consciousness which must be redressed by the author expressing that which is unspoken in a time-situation. Jung is cited as declaring "Darin liegt die soziale Bedeutsamkeit der Kunst ... sie führt jene Gestalten herauf, die dem Zeitgeist am meisten mangeln" ("Therein lies the social value of art ... it conjures up those images which are most lacking in the spirit of the times"). Jung therefore sees not so much an accumulation of inner tensions and stress in the reader as postulated by Freud, Coetzee and others mentioned above, but views art in general as having the function of providing those images which are lacking in the collective consciousness of a time-period in society (Gaus 1979:118). Mention has been made above (cf. paragraph 3.4) of the very important collective role played by popular fiction in society. Buried within popular fiction genres and their literary formulae is a deep vein of images, symbols and myths which shape the social and cultural world of the reader (Yanarella & Sigelman 1988:7). These genres and literary formulae carry certain cultural ideals and even political values which enrich the societal consciousness of readers of popular fiction.

3.5.5 Reinforcement of personal values

Wiegand (1980:3-8) makes a strong case that popular fiction is of great value to the average individual. Wiegand (1980:2-3) refers to investigations published in 1977 by Dervin (1977) and her colleagues, who posit that reality does not always fall into a rightful order for individuals struggling to define reality for themselves within their own space and time. The individual's perceptions are moreover heavily influenced by environmental factors unique to each person, or exemplified by factors such as family, socio-economic class/status and education.

Wiegand (1980:4-5) furthermore concurs with Gans's (1974) finding that popular culture (such as popular fiction) has been unfairly treated, and that individuals should be free to choose their own cultural boundaries. Wiegand (1980:5) puts forward a hypothesis, based on the investigations of both Dervin (1977) and Gans (1978), that the messages people receive from the products of their culture such as popular fiction, contain information which assists the individual in making sense of the world.

In Zaaïman's (1981:47) view it should be accepted that the intellectual and emotional experiences of readers of light fiction is no less valid than those of the readers of classical fiction. Schirmer (1988:171-172) views works of fiction as having the capability of offering the reader a broad range of satisfaction ranging from a profound intellectual satisfaction, to a simple vicarious experience, from entertainment to a complete treatment of problems.

3.5.6 Education about and for life

Fiction reading is not only an agreeable pastime but also provides a new perspective on life and a way to personal enrichment. Berger (1977:187) judges that fiction positively influences the reader's life by assisting him or her to form own attitudes and values towards what has existed on earth, and what should exist. Gertz (1986:7-8) analyses the

positive educational informative strengths of fiction reading, finding that fiction teaches readers about themselves and other people. Gertz (1986:9) cites Allen (1956) as stating that fiction offers the opportunity of knowing representations of human beings with a far greater intimacy than the reader can ever know actual human beings. The novel therefore ministers to men's yearning to understand fellow human beings.

Scannell is cited (Gertz 1986:6), as saying that fiction teaches about life, and that the reader can learn more about the mysteries of human relationships, of love, hatred, jealousy, sacrifice and generosity and the endlessly ambiguous and fascinating nature of man's aspirations and spiritual hunger from reading fiction, than from most other kinds of writing. The novelist does not set out his notions of good and evil in abstract terms, as does the moral philosopher, and does not set out to persuade the reader to adopt his way of thinking. If the reader does formulate a moral judgement, it is emotional as well as intellectual and the reader's understanding and sympathies are deepened.

The reading of fiction teaches the reader much about other cultures. Moretto and Weidenburner (1984:1728) find that many authors of fiction are widely travelled, and that this is reflected in works of fiction such as historical novels and romances. Readers therefore learn much about other countries, their customs, scenery, local dress and history. Haines (1960:vii) views modern fiction as being a powerful record and interpretation of every aspect of life which connects it to history, science, and many other fields of fact and utilitarian information, a facet in which science fiction excels.

Campbell (1971:184-185) illustrates the educational value of fiction by detailing the educational value of the novel, as well as studies which assert that the novel can inspire and educate in a wide range of academic disciplines and issues like the relationship between the state and the individual, racism and religion: aspects often encountered as themes in science fiction. Many university librarians in the United Kingdom have according to Campbell (1971:185), noticed the educational potential of fiction and built up their collections accordingly. Reading fiction also educates for life by establishing and

maintaining the reading habit thus encouraging high literacy and self-development (Goodall & Kinnell 1992:211-229).

3.5.7 Escape

Nell (1988b:231) points out that fiction reading has been considered and criticized by many critics as pure escapism ever since the eighteenth century. Most writers on the effects of popular culture (including popular fiction) are of the opinion that the user is motivated by a desire for escape. Katz and Foulkes (1962:379-380) find that most writers theorize that people are deprived and alienated, and therefore turn to a dreamlike world for substitute gratification; the consequence of which is still further withdrawal from active social and political participation in everyday life. Alienation may mean the feeling of powerlessness or meaninglessness or the feeling of ideological or social isolation. Theorists of escape via the mass media (including popular fiction), postulate that this feeling of alienation produces the desire to escape by means of vicarious participation in the lives and adventures of fictional characters (Katz & Foulkes 1962:381-382).

Coetzee (1983:69) finds that persons who read because of an escapist motive, are attempting to get away from harsh reality and personal shortcomings. Nell (1988b:239-242) finds that for many of his subjects ludic reading and escapism were synonymous.

With most of the persons examined by Nell (1988b:240-241), the common metaphor used, although couched in a variety of ways, was that of switching off one world and switching to another. Psychometric evidence was brought forward in the course of this research by Nell (1988b) that heavy readers of fiction tend to be introverts, who must retreat to quieter areas in which their psychological stimulus loads do not threaten to become overwhelming. The world of fiction reading is such a domain because of the facile control the reader achieves over it (Nell 1988b:241).

3.5.8 Resolving personal problems

A further possibility is that a reader may be faced with a problem situation in which the reader's own experience and capacity for thought may fail to offer guidance: in such a case the reader may resort to reading, not to escape but to find a way out of his or her difficulties. This type of reading is a mode in which the reader is vicariously intent on finding a solution to his/her personal problems by entering fictional lives and societies and perhaps finding an analogy where a solution is suggested (Coetzee 1983:69).

In general popular fiction therefore plays an important role in the life of the reader. Wulfschlager (1995:iii) cites an academic specialist in the history of fiction, Sutherland of London University, as stating that popular fiction "... expresses and feeds certain needs in the reading public. It ... provides comfort, is therapy". Merry (1977:34) concurs.

Patients suffering from psychological problems can be treated by means of bibliotherapy, which is defined as the use of selected reading material as therapeutic adjuvants in medicine and psychiatry and guidance in the solution of personal problems through directed reading (Horne 1975:27). Alston (1962:166) finds that fiction, poetry and non-fiction can be of value in the treatment of psychological disturbances.

3.6 **Science fiction as popular fiction**

The literary origins of science fiction as a genre can be traced to the Industrial Revolution, and science fiction can as a genre be typified as a child of technology. The first recognizable work of science fiction appeared on 11 March 1818: Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus. The Industrial Revolution with its immense technological impact on society together with other far-reaching, fundamental changes in society such as the American Declaration of Independence (1776), and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789) led to a very changeable cultural climate

from which the genre to be known as 'science fiction' emerged with Gothic and Romantic antecedents, described by Aldiss (1976:16) :

The rise of industrialization fostered the growth of large manufacturing towns and the spread of cities. People were obliged to live among strangers to make their living. Church bells were replaced by the more exacting railway timetable. The effects of these unprecedented changes - cumulating in our day in an *umwelt* of continual change - was far-reaching. The human psyche was not immune to them. The fiction that evolved to accommodate this situation - a middle class fiction, somewhere between romance and realism, as it was between science and myth - was the Gothic fantasy. Backward-looking and nostalgic at first, it developed rapidly during the nineteenth century to confront more closely the conditions which nurtured it. The archetypal figures of cruel father and seducing monk were transformed into those of scientist and alien. Designed as pure entertainment, as "escapism", the Gothic proved to have remarkable strengths when it traded on current fears, hopes, and obsessions. It could venture where the solid realistic social novel could not go. Although the social novel is seen as the dominant literary form of the nineteenth century, its doppelganger, the Gothic, kept in silent step with it, from *Frankenstein* at the century's beginning to *Dracula* at its end. Indeed, the archetypal figures who emerged from those novels are now familiar all over the world; *Oliver Twist*, *Madame Bovary*, and *Anna Karenina* enjoy a more tenuous existence beyond their respective volumes than do *Frankenstein* and *Count Dracula*.

The noted science fiction historian Stableford reports that the earliest use of the expression 'science fiction' is to be found in a tract by William Wilson entitled *A Little Earnest Book Upon a Great Old Subject*, 1851, in which the latter discusses the poetry of science, and predicts the spreading of this new genre (Broderick 1995:6). By the late Victorian era science fiction had become one of the major popular genres (namely

historical romance, supernatural romance, detective romance and scientific romance), the latter to be renamed 'science fiction' in the early years of the twentieth century. (Bloom 1996:122).

The nineteenth century was, as documented by Broderick (1996:7), replete with early forms of science fiction; as illustrated by Suvin. Suvin (1983) completed a seventy-two page bibliography of science fiction books published between 1848 and 1900 in the United Kingdom. During the early decades of the twentieth century science fiction's first effective niche was the American pulps, " ... the twentieth-century Depression offspring of the publishing heritage" (Broderick 1995:22), which was read by thirty to forty percent of the literate American public (Cioffi 1982:19, 23).

Science fiction would outgrow its pulp magazine phase of the nineteen twenties, thirties and forties and go on to be published in conventional book form as novels and collections of short stories. Science fiction would go on to progress through a modernist and post-modernist phase, and become a rich and complex genre. Davis (1984:391-392) who effected thorough research into the popular paperback era of the post Second World War era, compiled a list of the most influential paperbacks, i.e. popular literature:

I set out to list the ten most consequential paperbacks ever published - that is books that in their paperback format reached a broad audience and had some basic impact on American culture and consciousness ... I have settled for these fifty. They are books that I believe made some fundamental alteration in the way Americans thought and deeply reflect the major changes in American society during the past forty years.

It is immediately noticeable that several science fiction novels are prominent in this select list: Slaughterhouse - Five, published in 1969 by Kurt Vonnegut, Fahrenheit 451 of 1953 by Ray Bradbury, Brave New World, published in 1952 by Aldous Huxley, and 1984 dated 1951, by George Orwell. In order to judge the relative importance of being included

in this list, it should be borne in mind that other books in the this list include Dale Carnegie's famous bestseller How to Win Friends and Influence People of 1940, the very influential book by Dr Benjamin Spock, Body and Child Care of 1946, Hiroshima written in 1948 by John Hersey, The Report of the Warren Commission of 1964 on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy; as well as Future Shock in 1971, by Alvin Toffler. Fiction works in this list include works now acknowledged as being outstanding mainstream fiction, *inter alia*, Waiting for Godot of 1953, by Samuel Beckett, The Catcher in the Rye of the same year by J.D. Salinger, To Kill A Mockingbird of 1962, by Harper Lee; and One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich, published in 1963, by Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

Science fiction is regarded by critics as the inevitable and necessary expression of the contemporary human condition. The respected scholar Scholes (1976, 1987), is cited as viewing science fiction as the literature of the Darwinian and Einsteinian revolution which has replaced Historical Man with Structural Man, whilst Alvin Toffler suggests that the function of science fiction is to assist readers in adjusting to future shock (Parrinder 1980a:31).

Science fiction, as a popular commercial genre, is one of the major literary success areas of the second half of the twentieth century. In the United States, science fiction has transformed itself from a minor publishing genre with constant low sales from book to book into a major sphere of commercial publishing. Many science fiction novels have become bestsellers (Spinrad 1990:192). Science fiction has since outstripped mysteries, romances, Gothics, war novels and Westerns in sales (Pohl 1974:36-37), and currently represents 20% of all fiction published in the United States of America (Spinrad 1990:55).

3.7 **Motives and values involved in the reading of science fiction**

Science fiction forms an integral part of popular fiction, and is read for the same general motives as those involved in the reading of other genres of popular fiction. Due to its

unique characteristics, science fiction readers read the genre for its exciting possibilities as speculative literature. Readers of science fiction tend to be predominantly university graduates of the upper-income bracket, cf. paragraph 11.4 and Table 11.1), thus representing an educated audience which is intrigued by the wide and diverse scenarios offered by this genre regarding the future.

3.7.1 Gedankenexperiment

Science fiction typically commences with a premise which requires of the reader to suspend belief and enter into an imaginary future society and be transported to alien worlds. Science fiction is unequalled as speculative literature and thrives on the *Gedankenexperiment*. Science fiction not only creates fictional characters, societies and forces of destiny but, in addition, transports the reader to an entire alien (or utterly-changed) universe where these characters, societies and forces of destiny interact with each other (Spinrad 1971:181). It is a measure of science fiction's multi-layered richness and variety that there is no generally-accepted definition of science fiction. This very characteristic makes science fiction an ideal fictional vehicle for the relief of inner tension. Spinrad (1990:139-145) finds that conflict between individuals and societies is a dark, primordial *leitmotif* in this genre which is more than just a commercial formula: it is a cross-cultural archetypal literary expression arising out of the collective unconsciousness of humankind. Prevalent themes in science fiction are humanity's precarious position in the universe, and whether the human species will be able to survive its own inherent tendency towards violence which could easily lead to nuclear Armageddon. At its finest contemporary science fiction is a laboratory of imagination which uses the distancing effect of far-off worlds and times to reflect the hopes and fears of our own era (Zebrowski 1986:4).

3.7.2 Perspective on society

Science fiction has proved itself to have a facility for social criticism and often reflects the tension between spiritual and materialistic world views, often having a strong religious overtone (Rose 1981:40-47). These facets are ideally suited to the reader whose life may lack these elements of cultural contact and communication.

Science fiction is by nature ideally suited to provide these images which may be lacking in the societal Zeitgeist. Delany (1977:138-142) establishes that good-quality science fiction is a socially-valuable genre as its basic entertainment value is intellectual, technological, sociological and philosophic. Science fiction is in the same fashion also well suited for the reinforcement of personal and societal values as it focuses on man's relationship with the universe, and has very strong universal epic and romantic themes which can hold the reader spellbound (Parrinder 1980b:91-93).

3.7.3 Reflecting crucial contemporary and future societal issues

Science fiction as a genre is constructive reading for the purpose of informal education and general information about society and the future of humankind. Asimov (1981:87-93) finds that science fiction constantly deals with major contemporary and future societal issues, *inter alia* such as population control, global government, permanent energy resources, weather control, robotic and artificial intelligence and computerized education. Other facets identified range from mass transfer, bionic human beings, genetic engineering and biological evolutionary control to issues such as telepathy, space settlements, interstellar travel and interspecies communication.

Science fiction treats issues of social concern and represents a significant and rich instrument for social criticism, dealing with political, religious, racial, sexual and ecological issues (Delany 1984:237).

Insofar as science fiction presents, projects and pushes ideas, themes and developments of the present to their logical or creative limits in a future society, it can clarify the courses and possible resolutions of basic tensions and contradictions in readers' political cultures (Yanarella & Sigelman 1988:14).

Science fiction due to its explorative philosophy and historical plurality (Delany 1984:31), is peculiarly relevant to the grave global crises mankind is facing on the threshold of the twenty-first century. The famed science fiction author and critic, B.W. Aldiss is cited as saying that science fiction writers are the ones who are prodromically moved to write of change. Science fiction in his view, is concerned with more than just the present-day world, as it also works on a philosophical level, "... Science fiction is not about reality ... it is about sharpening our understanding of reality" (Herbert 1986b:59).

3.7.4 Perspective on scientific advances

Much of science fiction uses authentic scientific facts and theory, indeed, many authors like Gregory Benford, Arthur C. Clarke and Isaac Asimov were highly-trained scientific specialists before turning to the writing of science fiction. Much useful background can be gleaned, informally when reading this genre. Science fiction reinforces the fundamental belief of science that the universe is knowable and that rational minds can unravel its workings, thus encouraging young readers to become scientifically literate. Almost without exception every astronaut who has set foot on the moon started his career after reading science fiction. Nobel laureates not only read science fiction, some of them write works of science fiction (Bova 1985:35).

Science fiction has almost unconsciously become part of contemporary society. The Star of 19 February 1997 for instance carries a matter-of-fact article on page 10, entitled "Life on other planets may be underground", reporting the announcement by Nasa scientists that evidence of life has been found on Mars. The same daily of 24 December 1996 carries an

article on page 6 under the heading “Changing conception of life in the universe”, in which it is reported that scientists have established that two stars, 47 Ursa Majoris and Lalande 21185, have planets like the planet Jupiter in Earth’s own solar system, and that several other stars have planets appearing to be hospitable to life. No special attention is really paid to such reports outside the scientific community concerned and it is almost as if the man or woman in the street accepts that scientists exist to make such discoveries. Contemporary society has indeed become almost science fictional.

3.7.5 Utilization as a teaching instrument

Dubeck (1990:316-318) finds that science fiction can be used to teach scientific principles, describing a college-level course which used science fiction to teach scientific principles and explore scientific principles. Cox (1990:35-38) concurs that science fiction can be useful as a teaching instrument and, documents a nine-week course held on science fiction, which stimulated students to make connections across various academic disciplines thus encouraging their general cultural literacy.

Science fiction can encourage students to reflect on the interaction of science, humanism and literature, and how this interplay causes permutation in human thought. Goldbort (1991:121-125) recommends thematic teaching approaches based on writings dealing with ethics, biological determinism, science and society, and science and the humanities.

Smith (1990:2-37) reports that science fiction can be a valuable tool for constructing a highly mental schema in a learner on which to build new learning, to stimulate creative problem solving, and to generate the flexibility needed for adjusting to a rapidly-changing, progressively-technological society. By using science fiction in a science class, a science teacher can focus on the science concepts around which the narrative is built.

Science fiction is a literary genre which can be used in humanities courses to discuss ideas, ethics, morality, attitudes, and the effects of science and technology on the global

population (Aix 1994:1-7). One of the best examples of a classic science fiction novel is Aldous Huxley's Brave New World published in 1932. In this novel the visionary Huxley addressed many of the current scientific and technological issues, long before they manifested themselves. Huxley illustrated humanity's fear of dehumanization, and it should be remarked upon that the environmental depredation depicted in the novel is better managed than in the real world.

3.7.6 Modern-day mythology

Prothero (1990:32-34) argues convincingly that science fiction is very serious literature and that modern scientific civilizations are still in need of mythology. Science fiction is a modern-day form of mythology and can thus transmit such values to contemporary society (cf. paragraph 7.3.3 in this regard). Many mythical archetypes can be found in science fiction. Science fiction is the modern-day form of mythology *par excellence*, and the ideas and myths of science fiction have in some cases provided a focal point for mythological classes in a demythologized age.

3.8 **Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the advent of popular fiction which, due to technological and socio-economic developments, soon reached a mass readership which would have been inconceivable at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The critique of popular fiction as a pernicious influence was studied and refuted. The chapter demonstrated the value of popular fiction in society and culture, as the popular fiction genres contain a deep lode of images, symbols and myths which disclose cultural ideals, political values and societal symbols. Popular fiction thus exerts a strong influence on society and culture. Apart from its collective and general role in society, popular fiction also plays a positive and therapeutic role in the lives of its users, and several specific areas were identified in this regard. The value of science fiction in both the general societal and cultural context was demonstrated, as well as its positive value for individual readers. Science fiction pushes

ideas, themes and possible developments to their logical limits in the future and can thus clarify many societal, cultural and political tensions, contradiction and issues.

Science fiction has added qualities not always found in other popular genres: its basic entertainment value is intellectual, technological, sociological, political and philosophic. It reinforces the fundamental scientific belief that the universe is knowable. Science fiction can be utilized to good effect at secondary and tertiary level in promoting scientific and cultural literacy as well as cross-discipline reflection.

Science fiction is a modern-day form of mythology which transmits societal values to this technology-driven society, and is extremely well suited to the treatment of issues ranging from the ecological to the metaphysical and religious.

In essence, science fiction with its prodromic, predictive, didactic, sociological and philosophic functions, is of immense value to the enquiring mind.

The following chapter will study the phases of growth of science fiction from its origins in the nineteenth century to its contemporary status as a popular and sophisticated genre. It will delineate and illustrate the literary development of the genre as well as the most prominent individual authors and works in each phase.

CHAPTER 4

LITERARY HISTORY AND PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENCE FICTION UP TO 1950

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter has served to illuminate popular fiction as a manifestation of popular culture and refuted the negative critique of popular fiction. It has been demonstrated that popular fiction, such as the science fiction genre, possesses a definite societal and cultural value for the reader, as popular fiction genres and the formulae they contain are a deep source of images, symbols and myths which carry cultural ideals as well as certain values. Besides the general cultural and societal value of popular fiction, it furthermore plays a positive, even therapeutic role in the lives of its users. Science fiction takes ideas, themes and possible developments to their logical limits in the future and thus sheds light on future societal, cultural and political issues which will face humanity.

Viewed against this cultural and societal background, the purpose of this chapter will be to trace, delineate and illuminate the origin, development and distinct phases of science fiction as a genre, including the prevailing cultural dominants and literary paradigms.

Public librarians would be wise to learn what they can about the range of types within a genre, its history and its secondary literature. This knowledge is the key to the development of an enduring and appealing collection (Gerhard 1991:58).

The development of science fiction will be traced from its earliest discernible literary roots which lie in ancient narratives of exotic and fantastic journeys, classical utopian descriptions and religious literature up to the appearance of the first identifiable modern work of science fiction in 1818.

The genre displays a somewhat convoluted cultural and literary history, and the description of the evolution will be structured according to certain distinguishable literary phases and stylistic and thematic ground swells within these phases.

4.2 **Societal and cultural climate prevailing during the origin of science fiction as a genre**

The nineteenth century was a vibrant, swiftly-progressive era in which strong and societal-shaping forces interacted: urbanization, mass production, population growth and universal education. Two distinct but related movements achieved their full culmination. The first was the ascendancy of the middle classes to economic, social and political power as a result of the Industrial Revolution (Coleman 1989:i-xii). The middle classes had, for the first time, the financial means, the time and the education to pursue leisure activities such as reading for pleasure. These culture consumers created a growing demand for more reading material as well as a receptive market for new types of literature. Concurrent with the industrialization of the West and the rise of a broad middle class, four new types of literature emerged: science fiction, detective fiction, fantasy fiction and society fiction (Coleman 1989:i-xii).

Aldiss (1986:29-39) records that industrialization was not the only major event involved in the emergence of science fiction, and that the basic originating impulse of science fiction was as much evolutionary as technological. The American Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man in 1789 were evidence of the radical revision of the individual's role in society.

By the nineteenth century the world had come to believe in the limitless miracles of science and the seeds were sown for the development of science fiction. The nineteenth-century world was rapidly being remade by science and technology, and witnessed the impact of steam on transportation systems, the electrical lamp, the telegraph and telephone, new explosives and destructive weapons, the photograph and the phonograph. Mankind contemplated a new relation between itself and Nature. It was not until

mankind's growing control over nature became apparent to perceptive men and women, that science fiction became possible (Gunn 1974:187).

The new sciences destroyed established notions which viewed time as cyclic and static. The dominant paradigm in scientific thought in the eighteenth century had been that of a self-regulatory mechanism, which now became the concept of gradual irreversible and inevitable change.

Malmgren (1991a:4) comments that:

... science fiction is predicated upon a world-view which takes for granted that the future will be different from the present, that there exists a spectrum of possible futures all with their germs in the present, and that articulation of one of those possibilities can be of real value. Science fiction by definition sees the norms of any age, including emphatically its own, as unique, changeable and therefore subject to a cognitive view. Because this world view was not firmly in place until the nineteenth century, science fiction is a relatively 'modern' phenomenon.

It was from this changeable cultural climate that science fiction emerged (Aldiss 1986:29). Whereas the end of the eighteenth century witnessed a transformation of the social, moral and political order created by the political turmoil and revolutions in Western Europe and North America, the close of the nineteenth century would experience a no less radical transformation caused by a revolution in science, technology and social modernisation (Bradbury 1995:22).

Physical scientists, as they perfected their instruments of vision and measurement, began to discover worlds which compared to ordinary human perceptions seemed fantastic. Cosmic space and time began to reveal extraordinary secrets, posing problems which only 'fantastic' speculators seemed likely of solving (Scholes & Rabkin 1977:4). Science fiction was predicated on societal assumptions on the way the world functions which had been

perceived during the Enlightenment, but were not fully in place until the nineteenth century (Malmgren 1991a:2).

Science fiction as a literary genre would become the distinctly modern literary vehicle which would seize the new, radically-altered world-view and utilize it to define humanity's relation to and place within the universe.

Science fiction as a modern literary genre would develop from its first literary progenitor, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's Frankenstein, first published on 11 March 1818, and viewed by most literary historians as the first work of fiction exhibiting all the characteristics of the science fiction genre (Scholes & Rabkin 1977: 6).

4.3 Nineteenth-century literary influences on science fiction

Science fiction as a genre would, from its origins in the early nineteenth century, be affected by the epochal periods and structure of cultural consciousness in the arts in general and literature in particular. Science fiction, as a genre, was born in the heart of the Romantic period in English literature. The Romantic period is usually set at either from 1789 (the beginning of the French Revolution) or 1798 (the publication of Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads*), up to 1832, when Sir Walter Scott died and the passage of the Reform Bill signalled the political preoccupations of the Victorian era. This literary movement favoured innovation instead of traditionalism in the materials, forms and style of literature, and reflected the overflow of powerful feelings, new beginnings and high possibilities. It viewed man as a being of limitless aspiration (Abrams 1971:104-106). The Romantics embraced the sublime as evidence of the eternal and the infinite (Voller 1993:27).

The Romantic tradition as literary movement tends freely towards symbolism and allegory, and lends itself to the treatment of philosophical issues in fictional form. It often utilizes representative rather than individual characters such as the knight versus the evil magician in the battle between good and evil. The romance in Jameson's view (1975b:138) "...

comes to be seen as the struggle between the higher and lower realms, between heaven and hell, or the angelic and the demonic or diabolic". Frye (1982:193) emphasizes the importance of the quest romance, a theme often encountered in science fiction. Science fiction would come to share the generic ability of romance to treat sweeping, grandiose themes. Rose (1976:3-4) comments that science fiction having inherited the generalizing mode of romance, tends to use representative rather than individualized characters, and that the romantic genre's quasi-religious sense of awe is often introduced.

A further broad literary influence which would bequeath some elements to science fiction, was the Gothic fashion dating back to Edmund Burke's essay on The Sublime and the Beautiful, published in 1756, in which the sublime which inspires awe, terror and delightful horror is eulogized (Aldiss 1986:33). It was first personified in this fashion by the Ossianic poems of Macpherson, which featured Celtic ghosts, giants, cliffs, storms and bloodshed (Aldiss 1986:34). The earliest Gothic novel was Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto, which first appeared in 1765. Although having abated in popularity by the nineteenth century, the Gothic mode's emphasis on the distant and the unearthly, its brooding landscapes, isolated castles and mysterious figures would influence science fiction (Aldiss 1986:35). In Gothic fiction especially, the sublime became linked with visceral (as opposed to religious) terror; an element which would be transferred to science fiction.

Many critics have argued that the themes and *motifs* of science fiction are merely a futuristic, displaced form of the Gothic style, with old sorcerers becoming modern scientists in science fiction, corpses now rejuvenated by means of cryogenics instead of by supernatural means, and demonic possession being replaced by telepathy or the time travel *motif* as theme (Keeling 1980:109). In sum the Gothic mode placed emphasis on the distant and unearthly, while suspense entered literature for the first time (Aldiss 1986:35), elements which would feature strongly in the new genre called 'science fiction'.

4.4 **Cultural-literary determinants of science fiction in the course of the twentieth century**

Science fiction would in the course of the twentieth century form part of and be influenced, even if belatedly in some cases, by the two broad cultural dominants or modes of the twentieth century: modernism and its successor mode, post-modernism. These two broad cultural paradigms can be related and traced back, as Bradbury (1995:22) comments:

... to shifts in the processes of history, the structure of culture, the nature of collective consciousness, and the aesthetics, styles and preoccupations of the arts.

4.4.1 Modernism and modernist fiction

Modernism can be regarded as the major movement in the literature and art of the first half of the twentieth century. The temporal boundaries of modernism, can according to the critics such as Bradbury (1995), be established as being roughly between 1890 and 1930, with other critics advancing the boundary to 1940 (DeKoven 1991:6). If it is possible to identify modernism as the major movement in Western literature (and art in general), it is possible to identify a cluster of stylistic practices.

These characteristics according to Gunn as cited by DeKoven (1991:6) are:

- aesthetic self-consciousness
- simultaneity, juxtaposition, 'montage' and fragmentation
- paradox, ambiguity and uncertainty
- dehumanisation and the demise of the integrated or unified subject

Other key modernist characteristics worthy of mention are Bradbury and McFarlane's identification of "... abstraction and highly conscious artifice, taking us behind familiar reality, breaking away from familiar functions of language and conventions of form ... the shock, the violation of expected continuities, the element of de-creation and crisis." (DeKoven 1991:6).

In sum, modernism and modernist fiction attempt, as the noted philosopher Ortega y Gasset is documented as commenting, the purification of art through the "progressive elimination of the human, all too human elements" (Strehle 1992:2).

Science fiction would after its first literary flowering in Britain, in the works of H.G. Wells, not be regarded as part of mainstream Modernist literature. McHale (1987:68) documents that science fiction lagged behind mainstream literature in its adoption of new literary modes. The first advent of popular science fiction in the United States during the nineteen thirties, coincided with the years of American modernism's most profound formal innovations as expressed in the works of Faulkner, Dos Passos and others. The poetics of science fiction did not fall within the modernist mode, but in that of realist poetics which modernism was in the process of superseding as literary paradigm. In the earliest phases of science fiction in the United States, from the nineteen twenties to the nineteen forties, science fiction and mainstream fiction existed in mutual isolation from one another. Modern science fiction developed as an isolated enclave, largely out of touch with both contemporary best-selling fiction and advanced mainstream fiction. The first important contact occurred in the nineteen fifties when science fiction authors such as Heinlein, Asimov, Clarke and Sturgeon commenced writing in the style of best-seller fiction.

Most of the science fiction published in the nineteen twenties, thirties and forties was published in magazines and read avidly by its readers if they were prepared to overlook its literary shortcomings, as these stories tended to emphasize the scientific plot at the expense of character, scene and style, an anxiety to press on with the narrative without embodying it convincingly in scenes which furthered action and meaning (Aldiss 1984:13).

Le Guin (1993:31) concurs that science fiction was marginalized during the Modernist period, and first moved towards the centre of contemporary and even post-modern fiction during the nineteen sixties:

... because it provides some of the things contemporary and post-modern writers and readers want from narrative - among them, an open context allowing a fluid, unfixed, often multiple, undeterminate apprehension of experience. No authority. Nothing taken for granted.

During the nineteen sixties a new movement in the genre generally referred to as the 'New Wave' swept over science fiction. These new authors were primarily interested in literature for its own sake and did not turn to established science fiction writers such as Robert A. Heinlein, Arthur C. Clarke or Isaac Asimov for inspiration, but instead to Faulkner, Joyce, Kafka and other seriously-regarded authors. The New Wave literary philosophy was based on the view that the primary element of fiction was to be found in the handling of literary style, symbolism and attitude rather than story development or plot (Del Rey 1980:253).

Much controversy resulted amongst the genre's authors, critics and readers regarding these new *avant garde* works, described perspicaciously by Everman (1986:24) as

... self-referential science fiction texts that called attention to their own verbal structure and betrayed their own fictivity by making use of the innovative techniques that were being developed in other literary quarters ... these authors work within the traditional boundaries of science fiction while simultaneously pushing against those boundaries, creating texts that are not intended to be realistic or even believable. Rather, these works are coherent and separate realities, language structures that reflect on themselves, on the nature of science fiction in particular and of literature in general, and on the relationship between the language of fiction and the language of fact. With

the works of Samuel R. Delany, Thomas M. Disch, Roger Zelazny, Michael Moorcock and others, the science fiction genre - a realm of adolescent pulp for decades - became an arena for serious literature.

The second great cultural dominant to influence twentieth century literature would be the mode known as post-modernism, which is viewed by the noted researcher McHale (1992b:149) as a predominantly non-literary, visual and spatial cultural phenomenon, of which the preferred media is architecture, photography, art installations, film and video material.

4.4.2 Dominant characteristics of modernist and post-modernist fiction: epistemological versus ontological strategies

Before proceeding to the discussion of post-modernism and post-modernist fiction, it is essential to accentuate the finding advanced by McHale that the dominant strategy of modernist fiction is epistemological, whilst that of post-modernist fiction is ontological (McHale 1987:9-12).

Epistemologically-oriented fiction such as modernist fiction in general, and especially the detective novel or story which McHale (1987) views as the epistemological genre *par excellence*, are preoccupied with questions such as: What is there to know about the world? Who knows it and how reliably? How is knowledge transmitted, to whom and how reliably? Ontologically-oriented fiction such as post-modernist fiction in general, and science fiction in particular, pose questions, such as: What is a world? How is a world constituted? Are there alternative worlds? and if so how are they constituted? How do different worlds and different kinds of worlds differ? What happens when one passes from one world to another? (McHale 1992b:151). Other questions are, Which world is this? What is to be done in it? Which of my selves is to do it? McHale (1987:10-11) concedes that it is not inconceivable to raise epistemological questions about a post-modern text, but correctly points out that the ontological nature of a post-modernist text would be foregrounded and dominant, and that epistemological considerations would be secondary.

Bukatman (1993:164) takes issue with McHale (1987, 1992b), and is critical of the latter's view, pointing out that the post-modernist phenomenon of the subject (individual) ceasing to function as the site of meaning and cohesion in the world, goes beyond the literary-aesthetic significance as identified by McHale (1987, 1992b). The epistemological dominant according to Bukatman (1993:164) is not simply not just excluded, but is, in effect, surrendered:

The world has lost visibility, corporeality and comprehensibility. New modes of experience have not yet fully arisen to ground and explain the subject within these new realities, although some post-modern textural practices represent remarkable attempts at such new mappings. Here is the point at which the subject disappears from our fictions as coherent sites of exploration, to be replaced by works and zones whose rules of functioning are precisely not to be determined.

Bukatman (1993) has done incisive and thought-provoking research into the human identity in the post-modern era, finding a cultural crisis of visibility and control over a new electronically-defined reality which makes it difficult, in ever-increasing measure, to separate the human from the technological, both rhetorically and phenomenologically. In the view of Bukatman (1993:2) much is at stake, as electronic technology rises to:

... pose a set of crucial ontological questions regarding the status and power of the human. It has fallen to science fiction to repeatedly narrate a new subject that can somehow directly interface with - and master - the cybernetic technologies of the Information Age, an era in which, as Jean Baudrillard (1983) observed, the subject has become a 'terminal of multiple networks'.

McHale (1987, 1992b) and Bukatman (1993) are both essentially correct in their theses, and for the purpose of this study, the principal difference between modernist fiction (and

its epistemological genre the detective story) and post-modern fiction (such as post-modern science fiction), is viewed as modernist fiction being concerned with **knowing**, whereas post-modern fiction investigates the state of **being**.

4.4.3 Post-modernism and post-modernist fiction

The principal features associated with the post-modernism are described by Jameson (1984:60-77) as being

- a flatness or depthlessness: perhaps the supreme formal feature of all the post-modernisms
- a waning of affect of feeling, linked to a loss of discrete subjectivity
- the replacement of affect, especially *angst*, by euphoria and loss of memory
- an end to personal or unique style and a sense of history and their substitution for a *pastiche* of jargon, badges and other decorative codes
- the fragmentation of artistic texts into the form of *collage* governed by differentiation rather than unification
- the hysterical sublime in which the 'other' of the human condition surpasses the artist's power to represent it and pitches the viewer into a Gothic-type rapture

Post-modernist fiction emerged in the nineteen sixties in a number of fictional works heralding a radical change in literary-aesthetic sensibility. Leading mainstream authors involved in this radical new literary direction were John Barth, Thomas Pynchon, Joseph Heller and Donald Barthelme, to mention but a few. The leading American commentator McCaffrey (1986:xx) remarks that the new post-modern fiction

... reflected the sense, shared by many ... that we had been led (and misled) into the age of nuclear nightmare, into Vietnam, into ecological apocalypse, into political oppression, and into an insane and immoral sense of values ... a natural extension of this feeling was the desire to tear down the ruling

ideologies (political, sexual, moral, social, aesthetic) all of which proved remarkably integrated and reveal them for, what they were: arbitrary structures imposed as a result of various complex historical and economic forces ... all of which served in one way or another, to reinforce the status quo and insure the continued world view (and hence the continual power) of those who established these ideologies.

Science fiction as a genre had been in the literary crucible formed by the visible effects of science and technology. Technology as McDougall (1985:12) points out, is always descriptive and creates a crisis of culture. Post-modernism and post-modern fiction overlapped the advent of the space age, and Bukatman (1993:6) is fully justified in declaring that there is simply no overstating the importance of science fiction to the present-day cultural moment, a moment that perceives itself as science fiction.

The interaction that had began between mainstream serious fiction and the so-called New Wave of science fiction in the nineteen sixties and seventies led to authors of science fiction like J.G. Ballard, John Brunner, Philip J. Farmer and Thomas Disch respectively finding inspiration in high-modernist authors such as Joseph Conrad, John dos Passos, James Joyce and Thomas Mann. Similarly advanced mainstream high-modernist and post-modernist authors such as Kurt Vonnegut, William Burroughs, Thomas Pynchon and Italo Calvin began to draw on science fiction for materials, imagery and themes (McHale 1992a:228).

Science fiction in turn commenced the incorporation of elements of post-modern poetics and in the words of McHale (1992a:229)

... a feedback loop begins to operate between science fiction and post-modernist fiction. That is, we find post-modernist texts absorbing materials from SF texts that have already been post-modernized to some degree through contact with mainstream post-modernist fiction that has already been 'science-fictionized' to some degree through its contact with SF poetics. Thus certain elements can be

identified as having cycled from SF to mainstream post-modernism and back to SF again, or in the opposite direction ... It is this latest phase of the interaction between SF and post-modernist fiction that, on the SF end of the feedback loop, has acquired the label of 'cyberpunk' SF.

In contrast to modernist science fiction certain post-modernist changes in fiction texts from the nineteen sixties onwards can be detected which Broderick (1995:109-111) summarizes as:

- A certain flatness, a lack of mimetic or illusory depth, and citing as example Jameson's (1975a) identification of an attempt at world reduction (in Ursula K. Le Guin's The Left Hand of Darkness) with an experimental landscape in which the sensory links with multiple, shifting perceptual fields are abstracted so radically that a glimpse of the ultimate nature of human reality is possible.
- A loss of discrete subjectivity and memory leading a blend of flattened affect and a peculiar euphoria, signalled in general by the replacement of time by space as the hegemonic dimensionality. (Brian Aldiss's Helliconia Spring which appeared in 1982, Helliconia Summer published in 1983 and Helliconia Winter in 1985 and Vonda McIntyre's The exile waiting in 1975 are identified as works embodying this facet.
- The abandonment by the author of any pretence to a unique style localised in history, in favour of *pastiche*, jargon and nostalgia. (The works of Brian Aldiss and Ursula K. Le Guin and the cyberpunk narratives of the nineteen eighties and nineties).
- Schizophrenic *écriture*, jumbled *collage* and a radical breakdown in reality-testing (Philip K. Dick's A scanner darkly published in 1977 and Valis published in 1981 exemplify these facets).
- The hysterically sublime (in total contrast to well-behaved modernist texts which have carefully arranged moments of epiphany) such as the climax of

Arthur C. Clarke's Childhood's End published in 1954 which demonstrates transcendental paradigm crisis.

Science fiction thus entered its post-modern phase with a new aesthetic and thematical hierarchy within the genre in which the very fictivity of science fiction is its primary element. As Ebert (1980:93-96) correctly states, none of its traditional components are completely lost and "the very texture and substance of the fictive structures of the fictions, whether of Delany or Sukenick or Pynchon, are woven out of the complex and multiple web of science and technology".

4.5 **Post-modernist science fiction and the divide between high culture and popular culture**

Jameson (1991b:419), in an influential work Post-modernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism, regrets that it does not contain a chapter devoted to cyberpunk science fiction "... henceforth, for many of us, the supreme literary expression if not of post-modernism, then of late capitalism itself". An equally influential critic, Huyssen (1986:ix-xiv) finds that modernism constituted itself by means of a conscious policy of exclusion of popular culture, and in effect created a great divide between these two manifestations of culture. Post-modernism unlike modernism rejected the distinction between high literature and popular literature. Experts in post-modernism, such as McHale (1992a), detect a feedback loop between science fiction and post-modernist fiction with post-modern *motifs*, models and styles being drawn upon by science fiction writers, as well as the reverse. McHale (1992a:235-236) states that the poetics of mainstream post-modernism and the poetics of the latest wave of science fiction have come to overlap and interface to an unprecedented degree. McHale (1992a:225) refers to the authoritative Columbia Literary History of the United States of 1988, which states that science fiction is arguably the most significant body of work in contemporary fiction, and that its emergence "as a major literary genre" is among the "most significant new directions in recent American fiction".

Science fiction, regarded as pulp literature during the nineteen twenties to the nineteen forties, was afterwards excluded from being regarded as serious literature by the strict tenets of high Modernism, with the exception of a few best-selling masterpieces which attracted mainstream attention. Science fiction first began to converge with mainstream fiction during the nineteen sixties when a wave of young authors of science fiction, influenced by modernist fiction commenced incorporating *avant garde* mainstream literary techniques and stylistics into science fiction texts. Mainstream authors such as Doris Lessing, Joseph McElroy, Italo Calvino, Walter Tevis and Raymond Federman became attracted to science fiction. Many of these authors have been successful with science fiction *aficionados*, as well as critics who had previously regarded science fiction as unworthy of attention (Everman 1986:24).

The attraction of post-modernism for science fiction is, as Luckhurst (1994:37) states, its apparent transgressive aesthetic, its erasure of the borders between disciplines, discursive regimes, and

... crucially for SF the boundary between the high and the low. With post-modernism, it would appear, the ghetto walls of the popular can be dismantled and SF can (re)join the 'mainstream' of fiction, no longer being equated with the embarrassing and degrading label of popular genre fiction. The longing for (re)entry to the 'mainstream' is the enduring central element of SF criticism.

There is much active cross-fertilization between science fiction and serious mainstream post-modernist fiction, to such an extent that the respected researcher and commentator McHale (1992a:229) views cyberpunk, the newest wave of science fiction, as

... SF which derives certain of its elements from post-modernist mainstream fiction which itself has, in its turn, already been 'science-fictionalized' to some greater or lesser degree.

Science fiction is ever-increasingly being regarded as a major literary genre and a significant new development in American literature. Its new literary legitimacy is aided, in the view of many critics, by the collapse of hierarchical distinctions between high culture and popular culture.

4.6 **The cyberpunk movement as post-modernist science fiction**

The 'cyberpunk' movement in post-modernist science fiction came to prominence as an innovative new literary current. The word 'cyberpunk' itself was a derisory appellation which soon became generally accepted in lieu of such literary labels as the 'Eighties Wave', 'Radical Hard SF', the 'Outlaw Technologists' and the 'Neuromantics'. Cyberpunk centres on the concept of cyberspace which is "... an abstraction which diegetically and extradiegetically provides a narrative compensation for the loss and visibility in the world, the movement of power into the cybernetic matrices of the global computer banks, and the corresponding divestiture of power from the subject (Bukatman 1993:141). This literary movement was launched by the first generation of science fiction writers to grow up not only in the tradition of the genre, but also to experience at first hand a truly science-fictional world in which, in their view, technical culture has exceeded its controllability. Sterling (1986:x-xi), a leading author in the movement explicates that

The advances of the sciences are so deeply radical, so disturbing, upsetting and revolutionary that they can no longer be contained. They are surging into culture at large; they are invasive; they are everywhere. The traditional power structure, the traditional institutions, have lost control of the pace of change ... certain central themes spring up repeatedly ... The theme of body invasion: prosthetic limbs, implanted circuitry, cosmetic surgery, genetic alteration. The even more powerful theme of mind invasion: brain computer interfaces, artificial intelligence, neurochemistry-techniques radically redefining the nature of humanity, the nature of the self.

The cyberpunk wave of authors such as William Gibson, Bruce Sterling, Greg Bear, John Shirley and Rudy Rucker, is in fact practising what great science fiction practitioners have always done: they are confronting the moral and cultural implications of technological and social change.

4.7 **Origins of science fiction**

Perusal of the available subject literature reveals differing points of view as to when the first identifiable works of science fiction originated. Three main schools of thought emerge:

- Those tracing science fiction back to Antiquity, as far back as the epic Gilgamesh (3000 year old) or Lucien of Samasata's The true history, *circa* AD 175 (Del Rey 1980).
- Those who view Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's Frankenstein, published on 11 March 1818, as the first true novel of science fiction. This school includes respected critics and academics such as Aldiss (1986) and Scholes and Rabkin (1977).
- Those who consider that the origin of science fiction, as a discrete genre, can be traced to the month of April in the year of 1926 when the first magazine ever to be exclusively devoted to science fiction, Amazing Stories, made its appearance (Asimov 1981:27).

Clearly those critics and authors wishing to trace the roots of science fiction back to the mists of Antiquity and early speculative writing, seek to project science fiction as the contemporary culmination of a long Western tradition of speculative writing, also perhaps as Suerbaum (1981a:37) correctly points out, to produce proof of classic antecedents for a genre once considered a stepchild of the literary family of man. Ash (1975:15) cites the respected author C.M. Kornbluth as stating that:

Some of the amateur scholars of science fiction are veritable Hitlers for aggrandizing their field. If they perceive in, say, a sixteenth century satire some vaguely speculative element they see it as a trembling and persecuted minority, demand *Anschluss*, and proceed to annex the satire to science fiction.

There are many half-forgotten examples in ancient and old forms of literature such as voyages of discovery, fantastic adventures and symbolic happenings, which, as Aldiss (1986:27) agrees, are part of a grand storytelling tradition which the realistic novel of the modern world has rejected. The Epic of Gilgamesh, in which the world is destroyed by flood, in the Odyssey, Beowulf and many others have at times been classed as early science fiction.

Such early narratives from the pre-scientific times should be seen as closely allied to myths from the world of our ancestors where change was not visible, as was to be the case when science and technology made change visible. Scholes and Rabkin (1977:3-5) reason that religious rituals were used in these times to explain the history, creation, values and memory of mankind. Such memories and values eventually became separated from ritual enactment and lived on as myths, i.e. supernatural stories preserving values and explanations for the world. When a person thus started writing down myths and inventing details and language, the story became the property of the writer, which effectively removed it from common or group ownership.

The history of fiction should therefore be seen as a movement away from mythology towards a more rational or empirical way of interpreting it (Scholes & Rabkin 1977:4-5). As science developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, fiction became more and more realistic; mimetically representing the present world in the present time. Curiously, as Scholes and Rabkin (1977:5-6) explain, eventually cosmic space and atomic space began to reveal startling secrets and the pace of technological change led thinking

persons to ponder on the shape of the future in the face of rapid, startling scientific advances.

One of the earliest myths expressing man's desire to take to the air is the story of Icarus and Daedalus who utilized artificial wings to fly, Icarus venturing too close to the sun and causing the wax securing the feathers on his wings to melt with mortal consequences for this mythical aeronaut.

Most literary historians agree that the first work of science fiction to have all the literary characteristics of the science fiction genre, was Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's Frankenstein.

Suerbaum (1981a:38) argues, correctly, that there can be no genealogical approach tracing science fiction over the centuries, and that narratives often incorrectly pointed to as early examples of science fiction do not as such stand in direct linear relation to science fiction. Indeed, in own literary context, such narratives did not fulfil the same literary function modern science fiction does as a genre. Suerbaum (1981a:38-41) distinguishes the following types of such early narratives.

4.7.1 Narratives of exotic and fantastic journeys

From Antiquity onwards, through the Middle Ages and even as far as the early-modern era, narratives of exotic and fantastic journeys appealed to a broad public. These narratives were instructive, entertaining and also tended towards fictional descriptions, with the line between fiction and fact being very fluid. A good example of this was the French, English and Latin versions of Mandeville's Travels, a compilation of pilgrims' routes to the Holy Land with many wonders and fables included, much read between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe is another example of disguised fiction masquerading as fact.

Lucien of Samasata (AD 125-200) furnishes one of the very earliest examples of fantastic journeys to the moon in Icaromenippos and A True History.

Cyrano de Bergerac wrote The Crucial History of the States and Empires of the World of the Moon in 1656, in which a fantastic lunar journey is utilized as vehicle for criticism of the mores and society of his own time. Much utopian literature was also written in the form of travel narratives. There is an analogy to be found between these narratives and contemporary science fiction, as most science fiction novels dealing with extraterrestrial scenarios are often written in the form of travel narratives.

4.7.2 Classical utopias

There is some common ground between science fiction and utopian narratives such as Thomas More's classic Utopia of the year 1516, and Swift's Gullivers Travels published in 1726, which satirically depicts other forms of governments and states. Suerbaum (1981a:41) emphasizes that the utopian state exists in isolation from real history. The author has the possibility of creating an alternative to reality, removed from the empirical world. The analogy with science fiction is clearly the creation of alternative societies and states as is found in the contemporary genre.

4.7.3 Religious literature

The utopian mode of writing changed during the nineteenth century. The isolated utopian state, divorced from the empirical world was no longer feasible in the literary sense due to the rise of science and technology. The only literature with a vision directed to the future, was the literature which depicted the heavenly Utopia (Jerusalem), paradise, hell and the Last Judgement. An important work in this regard was John Bunyan's The Pilgrims' Progress from this World to That which is to come of 1678, which couched the truths of the Bible in the form of an allegorical-imaginary journey. The secularization of the intellect gradually removed the concept of the future from the realm of the religious, and transferred this concept to the art of modern fiction. Science fiction, in effect, became the

heir to this concept, inherited from religious literature (Suerbaum 1981a:42). For a growing body of readers science fiction has gradually come to satisfy whatever profound expectations and needs used to be fulfilled in scripture (Hanzo 1980:139). The first literary work to have all the characteristics of the science fiction genre, as known at present, was Shelley's Frankenstein published in 1818, written shortly after the political revolutions in the United States and France which changed, in the most concrete way, humanity's sense of the future (Scholes & Rabkin 1977:6).

4.8 Science fiction of the nineteenth century

When Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley wrote Frankenstein in the second decade of the nineteenth century, science fiction had neither a name nor any status or recognition as a separate form of literature, a situation which was to last a century. In the course of this century there would follow extraordinary scientific discoveries by Charles Darwin, Pasteur, Einstein and many others with phenomenal technological advances and social change including steam engines, factories, railroads, electricity, the telegraph and telephone, the automobile and the first aircraft rapidly changing the world (Scholes & Rabkin 1977:7-8).

It followed inevitably that many writers, among them respected authors, turned to fiction that investigated and utilized the possibilities offered by rapidly-advancing science and technology.

Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus, published on 11 March 1818, is a worthy progenitor and literary pacesetter for the exciting, fast-changing modern society to follow (Aldiss 1986:36). The plot is familiar from many film and television versions: Doctor Victor Frankenstein, a brilliant scientist, assembles a body from many assorted parts of deceased persons and manages to give this being the spark of life. This being is rejected by Dr Frankenstein and in turn becomes a threat to its creator. It is a powerful, engrossing and chilling narrative which unfolds in this first science fiction novel, upon which Aldiss

(1986:51) comments as follows regarding Dr Frankenstein's quest for knowledge, power and self-fulfilment:

The use of this modernized Faust theme is particularly suited to the first real novel of science fiction: Frankenstein is *the* modern predicament, involving the post-Rousseauvian dichotomy between the individual and his society, as well as the encroachment of science on that society, and mankind's dual nature, whose inherited ape curiosity has brought him both success and misery. His great discovery apart, Frankenstein is an over-reacher and victim, staggering through a world where virtues are few ... Instead of hope and forgiveness, there remain only the misunderstandings of men and the noxious half life of the monster. Knowledge brings no guarantee of happiness.

Following on Frankenstein's appearance, four other authors can be singled out who, writing in the century after Frankenstein, illustrate the literary directions for the young genre's early days. These writers are the Americans Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), Edward Bellamy (1850-1898) and Edgar Rice Burroughs (1875-1950); and the Frenchman Jules Verne (1829-1905).

Edgar Allan Poe, often listed among the great American writers of the nineteenth century, is primarily known for his stories designed to produce a chill of horror such as The Fall of the House of Usher, The Pit and the Pendulum and The Mystery of Marie Roget. Poe also perfected a certain kind of speculative tale based on scientific or philosophical ideas. In his tale The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion of 1839, two beings who are changed into a more rarefied form after dying, meet to discuss the end of the world caused by a collision with a comet which caused chemical changes which set the globe afire (Scholes & Rabkin 1977:9). Other tales by Poe which qualify to be termed science fiction are The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym published in 1837, and The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar which appeared in 1845.

Poe contributed also towards the success of science fiction inasmuch as he was one of the literary pioneers and founding figures of the theory and practice of the short story which became one of the major vehicles of the genre.

A major figure of the nineteenth century materialized in Jules Verne, the only French writer of renown associated with science fiction, whose works have been translated into more than one hundred languages. It must be emphasized that Verne is not in the strict sense of the word a pure science fiction author. Many critics feel that he does not answer to the requirements of science fiction, but that he served as forerunner in this regard. Suvin, an eminent critic and theorist of the genre has observed that Verne's voyages " ... fill in the white spots of already sketched space, but they do not reach new imaginative space" (Scholes & Rabkin 1977:9). Verne's works do not imagine or invent new science or technology, he merely exalts the use of technology already present in his time (Del Rey 1980:17). Scholes and Rabkin (1977:9) concur with this view and comment that Verne should be seen as a literary figure in the tradition of Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, published in 1719, who conquers a new world by using a stock of guns and hardware cast up with him. Verne merely extended the Crusoe tradition under the sea, into the air and onto the moon by means of scientifically-advanced machines.

Verne's Journey to the Centre of the Earth of 1864 was an early success, followed by works such as A Trip from the Earth to the Moon in 1865, Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea during 1870, Hector Servadac, off on a Comet in 1877, and Clipper of the Clouds which appeared in 1886.

Although Verne's writing is fascinating when it comes to scientific applications of existing knowledge, his literary tone is flat, his characters are thin and he often lectures the reader, as " ... his is a non-sensual world, choked with facts" (Aldiss 1986:105).

If Verne represents the physical dimension of nineteenth century science, and Poe the metaphysical aspect of this new literary phenomenon, Edward Bellamy represents two further dimensions: social concern and time as the fourth dimension (Scholes & Rabkin

1977:10-11). Bellamy wrote a single book Looking Backward (1888), an influential work, which is set in the Boston of the year 2000, describing a socialist Utopia with appropriate technological and economic-industrial facets.

A further minor figure, worthy of peripheral mention was Edgar Rice Burroughs who wrote, *inter alia*, a fantasy novel entitled A Princess of Mars (1917), followed by a series of Martian novels. These are amazing tales of pure fantasy with no scientific element involved, although they do exhibit a certain talent for inventiveness and vivid descriptions of alien societies in extraterrestrial settings, which would influence in turn the literary style of authors of science fiction.

4.9 **Close of the nineteenth century: first flowering of the genre**

These above-mentioned early practitioners of the genre undoubtedly served to raise the level of interest in science fiction. The author who unquestionably did more to have science fiction regarded as acceptable literature, than any of his predecessors, was H.G. Wells a brilliant, self-made man of humble social origins who studied biology under the famed Thomas Huxley. Wells published his first great work of science fiction in 1895. Entitled The Time Machine, its sceptical view of the present and its pessimistic vision of the future of mankind seen through the eyes of a time-travelling inventor, challenged many of the optimistic ideas of progress so prevalent at the end of the nineteenth century (Aldiss 1986:118). It is “... a bitter story but splendidly written, with a strong mood and almost poetic insights” (Del Rey 1980:19).

In H.G. Wells' The Time Machine science fiction achieved its first literary flowering, and Ash (1975:51) states:

No one had painted so graphically in terms of 'sense of wonder' what the end of the world - short of cataclysm - was likely to be. And 'painted' is not too exaggerated a term, for The Time Machine is the work of an artist whose handling of images and rhythm at times took the story to the brink of poetry.

The Time Traveller brings back to his own day a handful of flowers given to him by an Eloi girl. Having told his tale to his incredulous friends, he sets off on his machine again - and never returns ... V.B. Leyland has shown how this last section falls, almost without persuasion, into free verse.

Wells followed the success with The Island of Dr Moreau in 1896, dealing with an island owned by an eccentric scientist. There are shrouded figures and strange cries in the night. It transpires that Dr Moreau has experimented on animals and turned them into something half-human: it is Prospero's island populated by Calibans (Aldiss 1986:124). These monsters fear their master and creator and also revere him as a god, repeating prayers to convince and remind themselves that they are human and should not descend again into their previous, bestial state. Eventually Moreau dies and the island's inhabitants revert to their savage former state. The book is "an allegorical comment on the animal heritage of man and the ever present danger of degenerating into savagery", in the words of Ash (1975:53). Scholes and Rabkin (1977:20) view this as Wells's darkest vision in which he asks "... why man has evolved to such a tormenting state of being, with aspirations towards ideals that are continually thwarted by his animal appetites".

Wells is in Aldiss' view (1986:125-126) trying to create a synthesis between evolutionary and religious theory. The Island of Dr Moreau joins a line of books characterizing man as an animal, Gulliver's Travels being a well-known example. Wells revived this literary tradition, and had the added advantage of an audience which was educated in evolutionary theory. This audience understood that it was "no mere fancy" to regard man as animal, that this in their perception was the truth. Formalized religion began to decline more rapidly in this period (Aldiss 1986:126). Wells's next novel was The Invisible Man, published in 1897 which shows that science can be a terrible and dehumanizing power. The protagonist, Griffin, having rendered himself invisible, finds himself driven to anti-social acts of theft and violence. He is finally beaten to death by an angry crowd because they cannot see how badly they are hurting him. This novel like The Time Machine and The Island of Dr Moreau, has the strong characteristic of a fable or a parable, being brief, vivid and presenting wonders in a realistic matter-of-fact fashion (Scholes & Rabkin

1977:20). Ash (1975:56) regards this as a special gift of Wells which he often employed to lend credibility to his accounts of the improbable:

What distinguished The Invisible Man, among other things, from the common tale of the megalomaniac scientist running amok is Wells' masterly evocation of a quiet country setting. In the absence of gleaming laboratories or dark and sinister cellars, the action of the novel is played out amid the sunny lanes of Sussex, with Griffin putting his wits against a collection of earthy bucolic folk who would not recognize one end of a spectroscope from the other. This was an especial gift of Wells which he employed time and again, ... he made easy the willing suspension of disbelief by conjuring up homely and familiar backgrounds, and suddenly infusing them with strange and abnormal happenings.

The very same concentration on rural settings would be seen in The War of the Worlds of 1898 which is the first novel of interplanetary warfare, with Martian invaders landing in the pleasant English countryside. The Martian invaders are seeking *Lebensraum* as their own planet is decaying rapidly. The Martians are set on exterminating the human race, and Wells manages to have us realize that mankind has also coldly exterminated other animal species and human beings such as the aboriginal people of Australia.

The First Man on the Moon which appeared in 1901 rivals The Time Machine in its "brilliant use of symbols and images to create an acceptable but totally strange background", and again shows how impervious an advanced intelligence might be towards our intellectually-inferior species (Ash 1975:59).

Wells' major works of science fiction can be divided into two groups, with Group 1 reflecting his overriding interest in pure science fiction *per se*, with Group 2 reflecting a science fiction of social concern and commitment:

Group 1.	The Time Machine	1895
	The Island of Dr Moreau	1896
	The Invisible Man	1897
	The War of the Worlds	1898
	The First Men in the Moon	1901
Group 2.	When the Sleeper Wakes	1899
	The Food of the Gods	1904
	In the Days of the Comet	1906
	The War in the Air	1908

When the Sleeper Wakes depicts an ordinary man awakening after two centuries to find an England in which starvation and disease are no more, but workers and managers are rigidly divided into separate classes, with the whole world being ruthlessly exploited. The noble nineteenth century dream of individual liberty and universal happiness had therefore been utterly betrayed.

In The Food of the Gods Wells depicts a scientific (nutritional) discovery which produces an enhanced, giant race of men who eventually battle the ordinary, little people. In the Days of the Comet has peace descending upon the planet as a result of gas released into Earth's atmosphere by a passing comet. This novel has strong utopian overtones. Wells also depicted with "startling prophetic powers" what air warfare would be like in the twentieth century (Scholes & Rabkin 1977:22). A further work worthy of mention was The World Set Free published in 1914, which accurately predicts the horror of trench warfare as well as nuclear weapons, even calling them 'atomic bombs' (Asimov 1981:107).

Wells' last science fiction work is The Shape of Things to Come, which appeared in 1933 which is a rambling account of a supranational state established after a second world war, accurately predicted by Wells to commence in 1939 (Ash 1975:62). Wells was born in the year dynamite was invented and lived to see the first nuclear weapons used on Nagasaki

and Hiroshima. Wells's many other mainstream works of fiction are almost forgotten but his science fiction is still read with relish (Aldiss 1986:134).

Wollheim (1971:20) correctly argues that Wells's contribution to the genre was of immense value:

One can go through the works of Wells and pick out the original concepts that seem to be firsts in the formulations of modern science fiction ... rivalry of insect civilization with humanity, war tanks, man-eating plants, diamond making, a collision with another star, superacceleration of life, the shop of marvels, the man with psi [paranormal mental] talents, worship of science, germ development, travel beyond this dimension and on and on ... we find aerial warfare, the bedlam of the overcrowded future city, size-changing foods and atomic power.

Wells, in his works listed above, captures a “... darkly beautiful quality of imagination, or that instructive-seeming unity of construction, which lives in his early novels and in his science fiction” (Aldiss 1986:28). Wells's great strength as a writer and his great contribution can be found in his ability to “combine the fantastic with the plausible, the strange with the familiar, the new with the old”, presenting unearthly things in concrete and specific language and striking us “with a vivid horror when seen through the eyes of a calm, plain-spoken narrator” (Scholes & Rabkin 1977:23). Wells was an excellent storyteller able to engage the reader's interests in the fate of his characters. His sense of human society as an eco-system helped him to project convincing visions of the future (Scholes & Rabkin 1977:26). Wells's texts were all reprinted in the early editions of Amazing Stories magazines in the United States by editor Hugo Gernsback who viewed these works as being of central importance to the self-conscious new genre. They remain central to this day. Clute (1995:114) finds that the Time Machine and The War of the Worlds are perhaps the best-known, but to single these two out above the rest, is to miss both the consistent high quality of his output and the enduring questions that he examines.

Aldiss (1986:134) deftly summarizes Wells's great contribution by paying tribute to his gift of elevating extraordinary events into an artistic whole, in consequence of which he brought to the genre

... a popularity and a distinctness from other genres which it has never lost since, despite the blunders of many following in his wake. Wells is the Prospero of all the brave new worlds of the mind, and the Shakespeare of science fiction.

4.10 Early twentieth-century science fiction

As the nineteenth century drew to its close, a literary revolution, equally as important as the paperback revolution of the nineteen fifties was taking place. Wells and his contemporaries, as Aldiss (1986:135) reports, were enjoying expanding markets with new periodicals and journals starting up every week to provide for an expanding reading public. In 1878 a total of 381 novels were published, whilst at the turn of the century over two thousand were appearing per year.

The main discernible characteristic of most of the science fiction authors active between the eighteen nineties and the nineteen twenties, was a wish to escape from a claustrophobic urban culture (Aldiss 1986:136).

Several authors, virtually unknown today, were publishing science fiction in this period, such as E.L. Arnold who wrote Lieutenant Gulliver Jones: His Vacation dated 1905, later republished in the sixties as Gulliver of Mars. The novel relates the sudden displacement of a military officer to Mars where he battles a malevolent race menacing the gentle people of a decaying culture. This novel featured powerful descriptive prose (Aldiss 1986:140-141).

Europe, unlike the United States of America, was undergoing massive socio-political upheaval and change with revolutions taking place from 1917 onwards in Russia, Germany, Italy and later Spain, of communist or fascist origin. These politically traumatic

developments led to the creation of a new kind of science fiction: the anti-utopian or dystopian movement (Scholes & Rabkin 1977:26).

Two continental writers, Yevgeny Zamyatin and Karel Capek produced powerful dystopian novels. Zamyatin's We published in 1924, which was being denied publication in 1923 in Russia, is set in a future world-wide state where people no longer have names but only numbers. It poses the question whether freedom and happiness are both attainable, and postulates that science can lead society in the direction of totalitarianism.

Karel Capek produced prolifically but only a few of his works are available in English. He wrote three science fiction novels The Absolute at Large which appeared in 1922, also called The Factory for the Absolute, Krakatit was published in 1924 and somewhat later War with the Newts in 1936. (Scholes & Rabkin 1977:29). Capek is *inter alia* responsible for coining the word 'robot' from the old Czech word for drudgery ('robota'). War with the Newts is considered his best work, a political satire at times humorous, but also chillingly ominous, centring around an oppressed animal species (salamanders) becoming aware of their exploitation and rising up against mankind. The novel finds the real evil to be in mankind. The newts (salamanders) are victims until they learn from their oppressors how to be ruthless (Scholes & Rabkin 1977:31).

Science fiction was to enter a new phase in the nineteen twenties with the rise of the science fiction magazine. Judged as a whole, the magazine phase from 1926 onwards, proved to be much inferior to the fascinating and engrossing tales of H.G. Wells. Yevgeny Zamyatin is cited by Scholes and Rabkin (1977:25) as declaring that

In Wells' sociofantastic [sic] novels, the plot is always dynamic, built on collisions, the story is complex and entertaining ... in adopting the form of the adventure novel, Wells deepened it, raised its intellectual value and brought into it the elements of social philosophy and science ... In his own field ... Wells may be likened to Dostoyevsky, who took the form of the cheap detective novel and infused it with brilliant psychological analysis. An artist

of considerable stature, a brilliant and subtle dialectician who has created models of an extraordinarily contemporary form - models of the urban myth, of socioscientific fantasy - Wells will unquestionably have literary successors and descendants.

4.11 Magazine science fiction of the nineteen twenties and thirties

In 1926 science fiction entered a new phase when Hugo Gernsback published Amazing Stories, the first magazine ever to be devoted exclusively to the genre. At first Gernsback had to rely on the reprinting of stories by Wells, Verne and other writers but, gradually, he started attracting a new generation of American writers. Asimov (1981:107) demonstrates that magazine science fiction opened up a new era of optimism in the genre. The United States had carried the Industrial Revolution to its apex, and had suffered no devastation in the First World War. Americans were looking to the future and further technology-driven progress with great optimism.

Ash (1975:66) finds that the development of modern science fiction since the nineteen twenties has “mirrored very precisely the unprecedented rates of social change and scientific advance which have now brought humanity to the lip of a watershed”.

A factor which should be taken into account when judging American magazine science fiction, is that the science fiction written in Europe in the nineteen twenties and thirties was both more dignified and durable than that produced in the United States. The European science fiction was written by authors of broad general culture, who were in no way cut off from the central artistic and intellectual life of their times. In America the situation was very different. Spreading public education had created a vast new readership which however lacked interest in the more esoteric levels of literature. These readers sought dime novels, adventure stories and Westerns (Scholes & Rabkin 1977:35).

Young Americans were also very interested in the rapidly advancing American science and technology and thus formed a receptive audience for any literature touching on these

areas. Several critics such as Suerbaum (1981b:51), Ash (1975:67) and Del Rey (1980:32-33) are in agreement that Gernsback's emphasis as prime mover of the magazine science fiction, was directed as much towards popularization of science *per se* as towards the literary extrapolation of its progress and its effect on society. It demonstrated that his rigid insistence on scientific plausibility and the "narrowness of his vision" (Ash 1975:67-68), held back those more imaginative and socially-aware writers. Aldiss (1986:202-203) states that it is not difficult to reason that Gernsback was a literary disaster because of his literary philosophy. Suerbaum (1981b:51) states that under Gernsback's editorial leadership

Es ist unbestreitbar, daß Gernsbacks Ideal der wissenschaftlichen Science Fiction theoretisch und praktisch ein Unding ist. Es ist ebenso unstreitbar, daß die Qualität der früheren Zeitschriften - Science Fiction unter jedem Aspekt - Originalität, gedankliche Struktur und sprachlich-literarische Ausführung - miserabel war und historisch gesehen einen Rückschritt bedeutete.

Gernsback founded the first seven magazines in the United States which, concentrating exclusively on science fiction, heavily emphasized the glorification of the machine. In this mode of science fiction it was the machine which would cement man's conquest of Earth and the stars and their alien populations. It invited in effect the sweeping tales of future histories, galactic empires and interstellar sagas (Ash 1975:70).

Well-known American magazines of this period were Amazing Stories, Astonishing Stories of Super Science (it later became Astonishing Science Fiction), The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction and Galaxy. In Britain two magazines Tales of Wonder and Authentic Science Fiction Monthly reprinted many contributions from the United States.

The most well-known author of the interstellar sagas was E.E. Smith's Skylark of Space which appeared in 1928, and his later Lensman series of novels. The very existence of Gernsback's magazines attracted new writers such as Murray Leinster, Jack Williamson, Clifford D. Simak, David H. Keller, Bob Olsen, Stanton A. Coblentz, Harl Vincent,

Stanley G. Weinbaum and Phillip Francis Nowlan who wrote the Buck Rogers series, later to be filmed for the cinema screen and television.

Although Gernsback can thus be justly criticized for his editorial direction which over-emphasized scientific facts to the detriment of the free literary development of the genre, he remains a major determinant of the science fiction of this era. Gernsback did much to make science fiction a viable genre, and as the founder of magazine science fiction arranged contests, readers' columns and leagues which brought readers together. In this sense he is undoubtedly owed a debt as he assisted science fiction in becoming established as a specialized genre with its own distinct readership. By 1940 sufficient interest had been created in science fiction, and anthologies of the better stories were being published on a regular basis by 1948.

4.12 **Other significant science fiction of the nineteen thirties and forties**

A great and lasting influence in the genre from the nineteen thirties to the present day was the British author Olaf Stapledon (1886-1950) an intellectual and philosopher, probably one of the most influential science fiction authors ever to write in any language (Scholes & Rabkin 1977:32). The best known work of Stapledon is his Last and First Men: A Story of the Near and Far Future of 1930. This work made a profound and lasting impression on later writers of science fiction. The eminent author Arthur C. Clarke (cited by Scholes & Rabkin 1977:3) lauds

William Olaf Stapledon's tremendous saga of future history, Last and First Men, ... with its multimillion year vistas, and its roll call of great but doomed civilizations, the book produced an overwhelming effect on me.

Stapledon produced several other works such as Last Men in London which appeared in 1932 and Odd John also published in 1932, the story of a superior mutant with special powers attempting to found a colony in the Pacific. His greatest work, which is much neglected, is Star Maker published in 1937 which deals with a traveller traversing the

universe and seeing varied species of man, symbiotic races, composite beings, interstellar ships, wars between planets, terrible crises in galactic history until a galactic utopia becomes a possibility. Stapledon is "the great classical example, the cold pitch of perfection as he turns scientific concepts into vast ontological epic prose poems, the ultimate SF writer" (Aldiss 1986:196-199).

Another notable writer who, like Stapledon, falls outside any recognized phase or era of science fiction, was C.S. Lewis the great scholar and teacher of Medieval and Renaissance literature at Oxford and Cambridge Universities. His space trilogy consists of Out of the Silent Planet published in 1938, Peregrina appearing in 1943 and That Hideous Strength in 1945. In the first two novels two Earthmen are kidnapped and transported successively to Mars and Venus. They meet with extraterrestrial people and civilizations, and inadvertently free the bound Satan. In the final volume there is a grand confrontation between the forces of light and darkness and Paradise is regained. The trilogy is radiant with the powerful religious nature of C.S. Lewis's mind and is not so much dystopian as simply against the idea of Utopia (Aldiss 1986:190-193). Lewis was, in the opinion of Scholes and Rabkin (1977:44), provoked into writing these works by the machine-oriented magazine science fiction of Gernsback's time as well as by Olaf Stapledon's philosophy and character in Star Maker who combines in one person, the Creator, the qualities of both God and Satan; something which seemed to Lewis to be nothing short of blasphemy.

Aldous Huxley produced, in 1932, a work of dystopian projection which has proved so appealing that it has never been out of print since. Brave New World paints a picture of future technological horror, and is one of the most famous science fiction novels ever written.

4.13 **The Golden Age: 1938-1950**

4.13.1 Magazine science fiction

This period in the history of the genre commences when the doyen of science fiction editors, John W. Campbell, assumed the editorship of the genre magazine Astounding Science Fiction. In contrast to Astounding Science Fiction, most of the science fiction published in other genre magazines is considered mediocre (Aldiss 1986:217). Campbell who wrote under the pseudonym Don A. Stuart had strong ideas on science fiction, and encouraged and fostered the careers of many young writers who would become the master authors of this genre. He guided his authors in deliberating about their thoughts and ideals in good literary fashion.

The roll call of those who published short stories and serials in Astounding Science Fiction from 1938 onwards, reads like the Who's Who of the genre. Asimov (1981:123) points out that Campbell developed a stable of writers, many of whose names are still familiar today and who dominated the genre for decades thereafter: Robert A. Heinlein, Arthur C. Clarke, Lester Del Rey, Isaac Asimov and Hal Clement. Outstanding examples here are L. Sprague de Camp's The Command and Finished, Clifford D. Simak's City and Cosmic Engineers, Theodor Sturgeon's Microcosmic God, Killdozer's Ether Breather and What Dead Men Tell, A.E. Van Vogt's Empire of the Atom as well as E.E. Smith's second Lensman series, Grey Lensman. Isaac Asimov contributed Trends, Nightfall and Reason, as well as Formulation, the first story in a series that was to become the most popular in genre history (Del Rey 1980:103).

A major discovery was Robert A. Heinlein, already showing proof of his future prolific, high-quality output with classic short stories such as Life-Line, Requiem, Solution Unsatisfactory, his serial Methuselah's Children during 1941 and novelettes Common Sense and By His Bootstraps.

Other well-known authors to be published by Campbell were Lester Del Rey, Anthony Boucher, Henry Kuttner, C.L. Moore and Arthur C. Clarke. Poul Anderson, H. Beam Piper and Jack Williamson also made their debut in the pages of Astounding Science Fiction (Del Rey 1980:91-127). Science fiction magazines, led by Campbell's Astounding Stories, continued to gain in literary respect. It is interesting to note that with the advent of television in the United States, the world of printed fiction was deeply shaken as people abandoned reading popular fiction in favour of television Westerns, crime shows and situation comedies. Asimov (1981:125) points out that this decline was true for all magazine fiction except science fiction. Other magazines such as Amazing Stories started publishing stories by authors such as Asimov, Robert Bloch and Don Wilcox from 1938 onwards. Other magazines like Thrilling Wonder Stories and Startling Stories commenced publishing science fiction, followed by several other magazines, some of them short-lived.

Aldiss (1986:224) finds that the stellar empire postulated by Asimov in his Foundation series or Van Vogt in his Empire of the Atom series have a superior advantage over any other fictitious empires appearing in print, because they have as

... basic premise that technology demands continuity and expansion. The Manhattan Project [which produced the first atomic bomb] involving specialists from many countries, drove the lesson home - but the lesson is foreshadowed in science fiction before it emerges fully in society. That the way to the Moon lay through a door marked Research & Development is a perception one first encounters in Campbell's Astounding.

This telling point is illustrated by the fact that in 1944 military intelligence officers and FBI agents visited Campbell's office to question him about a published story entitled Deadline by author Cleve Cartmill, which postulated the development of an atomic bomb and a trigger mechanism. Cartmill in fact did not know of the ultra-secret multi-billion Project Manhattan which was in the process of completing the atomic bombs shortly afterwards used against Japan in 1945. The federal authorities were at first convinced that Cartmill

had illicitly had sight of classified documents, and even intended closing down Campbell's office (Del Rey 1980:108).

Robert A. Heinlein revealed a scheme during 1941 for a Future History series, whilst Asimov formulated his famous three laws of robotics, which prevent robot from harmony humans. Asimov's famous Foundation series on the rise and fall of galactic empires and civilisations further helped to bring literary order into magazine science fiction. Both Heinlein and Asimov "brought intelligence and knowledge to their storytelling" (Aldiss 1986:218). Heinlein wrote a brilliant short novel If This Goes On... (1941) which is a fine and convincing tale of a future dictatorship in America which utilizes religion to keep its citizens in political and social bondage.

A.E. Van Vogt who was popular in the nineteen thirties, did not survive to become a science fiction great like his contemporaries Heinlein or Asimov (whose overall contributions will be discussed in Chapter 5), along with those other authors deemed to be classic masters of the genre. Van Vogt, a confident writer who indulged in sweeping works of science fiction, could at times write with descriptive clarity and colour, as his early short stories such as The Storm in 1943 attest. His The Weapon Shops of Isher also published in 1941, were followed by the ill-structured and confusing The World of Null-A in 1945 and its sequel The Pawns of Null A in 1949. Scholes and Rabkin (1977:51-52) illustrate that his novel Slan (published by Campbell as a series in 1940 in Astounding Science Fiction) is indicative of his weakness. The first scenes are vivid, lively and emotionally gripping

... but after this, as adventure is piled on adventure, and no individual or group behaves with consistent, intelligible motivation, the novel falls apart ... In his lust for adventure Van Vogt neglects to construct a world which will make adventures intelligible and believable. Villains become heroes or heroines without warning, people are invincible one moment and totally vulnerable the next, as all logic of motivation disappears ... given sufficient

room Van Vogt destroys the basis of his own story, and is forced to provide increasingly preposterous explanations for increasingly absurd behaviour.

In general the prevailing mood adopted by science fiction in the late nineteen forties and early nineteen fifties was pessimistic. Many authors were pondering the advent of the nuclear age and the terrible destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as the prospect of an eventual nuclear Armageddon between the West and the then Soviet Union and its allies. Aldiss (1986:234) summarizes that

It was a painful progress: the old power fantasies were rising to the surface of reality. Many stories were of Earth destroyed, culture, doomed, humanity dying and of the terrific effect of radiation, which brought mutation or insidious death. Nor were things depicted as much cheerier beyond the solar system.

Magazine science fiction appearing in Astounding Science Fiction reflects this pessimism: Dawn of Nothing (Chandler), The End is Not Yet (Hubbard), Tomorrow and Tomorrow (Kuttner), And Then There Were None (Russell), and There is No Defence (Sturgeon). Clifford D. Simak's City series depicts a fiction where humans have disappeared from the face of Earth, leaving it to a rabble of dogs and miniature robots.

Science fiction starting with its earliest example Frankenstein first published in 1818, has been a gloomy genre which can be typified as a Gothic-type romance. Aldiss (1986:235) finds this "natural and decent despair" in the writings of such authors as Alfred Bester, Harry Harrison, Robert Sheckley, and later in the works of J.G. Ballard, Thomas M. Disch and Norman Spinrad, "a despair which lends zest to the rest of life".

On August 6, 1945, over a crowded city in Japan, the extravagant fiction of the science fiction magazines became horrifying reality, and the world at large would experience to an ever-increasing extent much of what had already been reflected so vividly in the literary crystal ball of the genre.

4.13.2 Science fiction in book form

During the early nineteen forties science fiction began to gradually arouse some interest with the publishing houses. Verne and Wells had, after all, owed much of their success to book publication. A trickle of science fiction had persisted in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Lewis's Out of the Silent Planet appeared in 1939 followed by Phil Strong's anthology of science fiction and fantasy entitled Other Worlds during 1942. Donald A. Wollheim edited The Pocket Book of Science Fiction (1943) which contained older science fiction by authors such as H.G. Wells and John Collier, as well as stories by Robert A. Heinlein, Stanley Weinbaum and Theodore Sturgeon.

In 1946 Groff Conklin edited The Best of Science Fiction containing forty stories including fine old and new material, following this with A Treasury of Science Fiction in 1948 containing *inter alia* four of Heinlein's novelettes.

During 1946 R.J. Healy and J.F. McComas edited and published an important, indeed definitive anthology Adventures in Time and Space containing half a million words (almost a thousand pages of fine work). Adventures of Time and Space was later issued as a Modern Library edition under the title Famous Science Fiction Stories, continuing to sell for many years, later as a paperback edition in the nineteen seventies.

During the late nineteen forties Robert A. Heinlein published his juvenile science fiction novels, beginning with Rocket Ship Galileo in 1947, Space Cadet during 1948 and Red Planet in 1949. Especially Red Planet showed first proof of Heinlein's realistic and engrossing science fiction which would enrich the genre considerably. As a result of Heinlein's success public libraries were faced with a growing demand for science fiction from their teenaged readers (Del Rey 1980:132).

Publishers of books for the adult market were much slower to accept science fiction than those specialising in the juvenile book market (Del Rey 1980:132). Other notable books to

appear in the late nineteen forties were Jack Williamson's The Legion of Space published in 1947 and E.E. Smith's Space Hounds of JPC which appeared in the same year, Heinlein's Beyond This Horizon and Stanley Weinbaum's The Black Flame both followed during 1948.

Once science fiction had spread from magazines to the mainstream publishing houses, it reached the general public and the public library, setting the seal on the general acceptance of this genre.

Other prominent works of the nineteen thirties and forties were Swastika Night in 1937 by Katherine Burdekin writing as Murray Constantine, The New Adam in 1939 by Stanley Weinbaum, Sixth Column by Robert A. Heinlein, The Star Kings by Edward Hamilton, and Earth Abides by George R. Stewart; all three being published in 1949.

4.14 Conclusion

Science fiction after its first blossoming in the United States in magazines such as Amazing, would continue to grow vigorously. A genre had been born. Clute (1995:121) correctly points out that the American magazines cannot be given all the credit as European authors like Karel Capek, Aldous Huxley and Olaf Stapledon were all writing what is still today regarded as highly sophisticated science fiction, although they themselves never knew it by that name. The heart of the genre had become unquestionably American by the nineteen forties (Clute 1995:121), and has remained so to the present day.

This chapter has surveyed the cultural-literary influences and dominants of science fiction during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as the Romantic and Gothic traditions as well as Modernism and Post-modernism; in order to furnish a broad overview of the genre as a whole. The chapter also surveyed the phases of development of science fiction from its first nineteenth-century flowering in the brilliant works of H.G. Wells, the maga-

zine phase of the nineteen twenties and thirties as well as the phase of science fiction of the period 1938-1950 which would come to be known as the Golden Age.

Chapter 5 will survey the growth of science fiction to full literary maturity during the nineteen fifties and sixties.

CHAPTER 5

AGE OF ACCEPTANCE AND THE NEW WAVE: SCIENCE FICTION FROM 1950 UP TO 1973

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 served to highlight the origins of science fiction, its cultural and literal determinants which would affect science fiction during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and also described the age of magazine fiction of the nineteen twenties and thirties. Chapter 4 concluded with an overview of the Golden Age of the genre during which some of the major authors in the genre published their first works. These works and authors were mainly known to readers of the science fiction magazines such as Amazing Stories, Astounding Stories of Super Science (later retitled Astounding Science-Fiction), Wonder Stories (later retitled Thrilling Wonder Stories), and Startling Stories, to name but a few. The early fifties would see the emergence of a talented new generation of writers. The science fiction magazines lost their prominence as the Second World War led to many forms of rationing, including that of paper, which led to the closure of many science fiction magazines.

After the war which had been ended by the utilization of atom bombs against the Japanese cities Nagasaki and Hiroshima, the general public suddenly became very much aware of the equal potential of science for good and evil purposes, and science fiction began to emerge into the open. Novels and collections of stories from the magazines began to be published in hardback by major general publishing companies such as Doubleday. Science fiction, in the literary sense, took a giant step towards maturity, and the nineteen fifties saw the emergence of a talented new generation of readers some of whom had previously dabbled in the genre, but only now found their true direction (Ashley 1978:58-61).

5.2 **Literary development of science fiction up to the early nineteen sixties**

In general science fiction, as a genre, developed energetically in the course of the twentieth century. It had traversed the early years of the century when the genre, under the guidance of Gernsback and contemporaries, had over-emphasized science and technology to such an extent that originality, characterization, language and literary style suffered as a consequence (Suerbaum 1981b:55). Science fiction was therefore seen, during the nineteen thirties and forties, as a peripheral genre mostly found in pulp magazines and read by only dedicated adolescent and adult followers: a literature written by specialists for a following of dedicated but indiscriminating readers. The post-Gernsbackian era of the nineteen fifties witnessed a considerable improvement in general literary style and quality and the genre gained many critical readers. It was now written in plain businesslike prose, with a few writers preferring a pseudo-romantic style (Priest 1978:164). The period 1950-1961 gave ample proof, however, that science fiction was developing into a seriously-written and richly-textured popular genre, as was evident in the works of Heinlein, Miller, Asimov, Herbert and Clarke. Outstanding examples of what science fiction was capable of, had indeed been evident even earlier: Stapledon's Last and First Men in 1930, C.S. Lewis's Out of the Silent Planet in 1938 and That Hideous Strength in 1945, had already clearly been literary proof that the genre could be stylish, thought-provoking and intellectually challenging.

5.3 **Age of Acceptance of science fiction: 1950-1961**

In the nineteen fifties rapid scientific technological advances began to make their mark, and space travel which had been the archetypal dream of the genre became reality. The genre itself with its emphasis on the unlikely becoming likely through changes in the level of science thus became accepted "... the impossible had happened. People began to expect the unexpected" (Aldiss 1986:234).

The literary style of science fiction was still the older realistic poetics of the nineteenth century, which had already been superseded in mainstream modernist literature (cf. paragraph 4.4.1). Notable as the first year of this period is Clifford D. Simak's Time Quarry which appeared in 1950, later published as Time and Again, a complex story of time travel and confrontation between mankind and machine. The same year saw L. Ron Hubbard's serial To the Stars commencing, which was later published as Return to Tomorrow. The novel centres on spacecrews travelling at nearly the speed of light thus, slowing their own ageing process, but never being able to return to family and friends after each voyage as nearly a century would have passed in real Earth time "... and behind it all lies a stranger mission. This is a grim novel that somehow manages to return a feeling of hope and romance" (Del Rey 1980:172).

5.3.1 Prominent authors

Robert A. Heinlein's enduring classic novella The Puppet Masters appeared in 1951, a fine novella depicting mankind being controlled covertly by a race of alien parasites. It is a Cold War allegory extolling the values of a free society (Franklin 1980:100). Further fine science fiction novels for juveniles followed such as Tunnel in the Sky in 1955, dealing with an overpopulated Earth sending its surplus people as colonists to harsh planets. Heinlein portrays the quintessential individualistic pioneer fighting against odds to survive under extreme conditions. This novel, written for a teenage readership, still also reads well for adults.

Heinlein rapidly proved to be the literary star of the nineteen fifties, following up with The Door into Summer in 1956, an inventive, engrossing novel of time travel, juggling and illustrating concepts such as free will versus predestination. Double Star, also published in 1956, is an equally well-written novel, in the Wellsian tradition of a struggling actor, called upon to impersonate an interplanetary politician temporarily incapacitated, eventually being forced to take on the role permanently. The novel is slightly flawed regarding some of the political background issues, nevertheless showed clear proof of his developing literary prowess. Aldiss (1986:267) is fully justified in his view that

Robert Heinlein's transition from magazine writer to novelist is dramatic. His great and rare virtue is that he has never been content to repeat a winner or rely on a formula ... a special wide popularity has been his.

A further Heinlein success was Time for the Stars in 1956 dealing with an expedition to the stars, during which space ships communicate by means of telepathy across the vast distances. It is well-written with an enduring human quality. Citizen of the Galaxy followed in 1957, with slavery and the quest for freedom as central themes.

Between 1947 and 1959 Heinlein published sixteen novels, two novellas and twenty-six identified stories. His very successful career as an author for juveniles ended in 1959 with Starship Troopers, the story of a raw military recruit and his progress in the Interstellar Mobile Infantry. Starship Troopers has often been criticized for being a vehicle for Heinlein's perceived right-wing political philosophy as it "... displays the superelite force designed to fight the permanent wars necessary to fulfil Earth's manifest destiny. And the Terran Federation, the society employing this force, is ruled exclusively by veterans of this elite military machine and its non-combatant auxiliaries" (Franklin 1980:111).

Heinlein himself denies propagating any militaristic philosophy or extreme-right views, although critics like Aldiss (1986:267) accuse him of rationalizing his perceived desire for power "... into a right-wing political philosophy, as in Starship Troopers, a sentimental and heroic view of what it is like to train and fight as an infantryman in a future war". Whatever one's views on the political background of this novel for juveniles may be, Starship Troopers remains a powerful, engrossing work of science fiction with vivid scenes and excellent technical detail. It is still much read, also by adults, and has been reprinted many times. These above-mentioned works of Heinlein, mainly written for juveniles during the nineteen fifties gave ample promise of even better novels to follow. Del Rey (1980:150) comments correctly that Heinlein was a master at taking the reader into the future without long descriptive lectures. His hero is usually a highly competent man facing a different problem growing out of some aspect of that future. The reader is

inserted directly into that person's mind to see and experience the future world as the hero does, and it is told in the matter-of-fact mode, thus seeming real and inevitable. By the time the reader has finished the story, he or she has lived in the world in which Heinlein set his narrative. Heinlein was not the only major author to emerge in the nineteen fifties.

Ray Bradbury's short story The Fireman first appeared in 1951, later expanded into the classic anti-utopian novel entitled Fahrenheit 451 which appeared in 1953 and depicted a future dictatorship where books have been outlawed. The title is the combustion temperature of paper, reflecting the book burning and intellectual witch-hunting which is its theme.

Alfred Bester created two outstanding novels The Demolished Man which appeared in 1952, and The Stars My Destination (serialized in 1956 and 1957) later also published as Tiger! Tiger!, both vibrant and vivid pictures of a future interplanetary society. The Stars My Destination is a sweeping galactic adventure full of brilliant scenery, dramatic scenes and a joyous taking for granted of the unlikely including teleportation. The Demolished Man features a society based on the wide use of extra-sensory perception such as telepathy.

Several authors who were to become major talents in the genre appeared in this period: Gordon R. Dickson, Poul Anderson, Chad Oliver, Robert Sheckley, and William Tenn.

Gordon R. Dickson's Dorsai of 1959 was later also published as The Genetic General, the first of several novels dealing with the political development of future worlds and their interrelationships. Dorsai is the story of a man from a world which supports itself by renting out its men as mercenary soldiers to other worlds.

Poul Anderson's story The Man Who Counts appeared in 1958, later to be published in novel form as War of the Wing Men, was the first of a series about the interstellar merchant Nicholas van Rijn who travels the galaxy trading with alien societies. Anderson went on to become one of the most well-liked and prolific authors in the genre.

Chad Oliver, a professor of anthropology at the University of Texas published Shadows in the Sun (1954), the narrative of an anthropologist visiting a small town discovering that aliens have taken over despite its seeming normality.

Robert Sheckley's story Trap of 1957 "an ingenious alien invasion tale, more comic than sinister" (Aldiss 1986:257), gave first evidence of his talent which was to follow in the nineteen sixties. The nineteen fifties also saw the advent of Damon Knight who brought forth blackly humouristic stories such as To Serve Man (1950) and Country of the Kind in 1956. Another satirist appearing on the literary scene, William Tenn, utilized frightening confrontations between humans and aliens such as in Down Among the Dead in 1954 and also wrote Eastward Ho published in 1958, where in a post-holocaust world Americans set out to colonize Europe. His most satisfying and durable satire is The Liberation of Earth (1953) where Earth has sided with first one and then the opposing side on a vast galactic war between alien species. Eventually Earth is ruined and mankind reduced to no better than a burrowing animal. The narrator concludes the narrative by declaiming that the human race can therefore say, with pardonable pride, that it has been as thoroughly liberated as it is possible for a race to be.

Further prominent authors of the nineteen fifties were Frederik Pohl, Cyril Kornbluth, Ward Moore and the visionary James Blish.

Frederik Pohl and Cyril Kornbluth's The Space Merchants (1953) is also a satirical projection of advertising industry controlling the future. Ward Moore published his classic alternative future novel Bring the Jubilee in 1953, in which the Confederate states won the American Civil War. Moore's novel has proved an enduring classic, has been reprinted several times and will always have an honoured place among science fiction's classic works, as a thoughtful finely-written alternative history.

A further major talent coming to prominence in the nineteen fifties was James Blish, described as an irreplaceable mixture of savant, plain hack and visionary (Aldiss

1986:240). Religion, devils, angels and archaic systems of thought in conflict with modern scientific belief feature prominently in his works such as A Case of Conscience of 1958. In this work Earthmen discover an amphibian race dwelling in idyllic circumstances and apparently free of sin. A priest decides that the planet (Lythia) is the creation of the devil and he performs an exorcism with apocalyptic results. Del Rey (1980:175) views this work as a “deeply philosophical treatment of religion, in which a priest must face and accept a world of ultimate heresy where Satan proves to be capable of creation”.

5.3.2 Mainstream authors participate in viewing humanity’s future in a totalitarian society

During the late nineteen forties and fifties many mainstream novelists as well as authors of science fiction began to examine man in the context of a future authoritarian society. Examples of science fiction writers’ works are Kurt Vonnegut’s Player Piano in 1952, Pohl and Kornbluth’s The Space Merchants which appeared in 1953, and Ray Bradbury’s Fahrenheit 451 of 1953, as mentioned in paragraph 5.3.1. The same theme, treated in a science fictional mode, could also be found in the works of mainstream authors such as B.F. Skinner’s Walden Two published in 1948, George Orwell’s 1984 which appeared in 1948, Evelyn Waugh’s Love Among the Ruins published in 1953. Anthony Burgess produced two fine works in A Clockwork Orange and The Wanting Seed, both published in 1962. In all these novels the authors are in the words of Aldiss (1986:243) “ ... searching for a definition of man that will stand in the terrifying light of twentieth century knowledge”.

The list of mainstream literary celebrities who have, since the Second World War, essayed one or more works in the science fictional mode is impressive: William Burroughs, Paddy Chayefsky, Don De Lillo, Lawrence Durrell, William Golding, Russel Hoban, Vladimir Nabokov, Thomas Pynchon and Gore Vidal.

Three authors who would become major forces in science fiction first made their appearance in the nineteen fifties: Arthur C. Clarke, Frank Herbert and Isaac Asimov.

Arthur C. Clarke who was to become a major practitioner of the genre, published two novels in the fifties, Childhood's End in 1953 and The City and the Stars during 1956. Childhood's End celebrates the possibility that man will surpass himself and evolve into a superior being, and is like all Clarke's science fiction, positive in its faith in mankind and belief in science as man's servant.

A further major talent also made his debut in this time: Frank Herbert to later become the celebrated author of the classic Dune novels, published Under Pressure in 1955, a novel of men doing wartime undersea mining in enemy territory.

Asimov would become a revered and prolific author. He altered the thinking of the scientific community about robots, and created innovative fiction regarding the Laws of Robotics. He has been a prolific and successful author over many decades, although never a great literary stylist with deep psychological insight or moving fictional characters. He is, however, a writer of good workmanlike prose and, more importantly, he has many ideas to discuss in his fiction (Scholes & Rabkin 1977:62). He would later win major awards for novels such as The Gods Themselves in 1972 and his Foundation and Empire first published in 1952, about a galactic empire is an enduring classic, as is The End of Eternity which appeared in 1955. (Two of his later novels, Foundation's Edge, which is a sequel to Foundation and Empire, and The Robots of Dawn, both published in 1983, sold over a million copies in the United States.)

The greater majority of the authors of the Age of Acceptance are American. Some British authors were very active in the nineteen fifties such as John Wyndham who previously wrote in the nineteen thirties and forties under the names John Beynon Harris and John Beynon. His first notable success was The Day of the Triffids in 1951, a novel of catastrophe and havoc caused by malevolent plants. Wyndham followed this success with a further novel of catastrophe The Kraken Wakes published in 1953, later published in the United States as Out of the Deep, in which aliens settle in the oceans and melt the polar icecaps. Wyndham wrote several other novels in this vein such as The Midwich Cuckoos

which appeared in 1957, and the earlier The Chrysalids of 1955, the last an horrific evocation of a post-nuclear holocaust world where all mutant children are killed by the community leaders. A further successful British writer in this vein is John Christopher with The Death of Grass published in 1956, in which a virus destroys all grass and grains.

Two very influential novels appeared at the end of the Age of Acceptance history: Robert A. Heinlein's Stranger in a Strange Land in 1961, and A Canticle for Leibowitz by Walter M. Miller jr. which was first published in 1960.

Stranger in a Strange Land made such an impact on fiction in general that, as Franklin (1980:126-127) correctly states, had Heinlein never written another word, he would still be an important figure in modern American culture. Stranger in a Strange Land has sold millions of copies and appealed to readers across the literary spectrum. It was and is still widely read on campuses. The central figure is Valentine Michael Smith, a human, born on Mars and raised by alien Martians. He becomes a messiah-like cult figure on Earth, due to his paranormal mental powers such as psychokinesis and is eventually killed by an angry mob. This novel was even instrumental in giving a new expression to the English language: to 'grok' (meaning that the observer understands the situation so lucidly that he becomes part of it, merges with and becomes part of the group experience). The novel also describes water-sharing ceremonies which were, and are still practiced by Bohemian and counterculture groups in the United States. 'Grok' thus expresses, in Franklin's view (1980:137), a quest for community and an attempt to reverse the intensifying process of alienation in society.

Stranger in a Strange Land is filled with religious concepts, political philosophy and debates on morals and issues such as free love, thus exhibiting a rich texture of science fiction which appealed to even those who would not normally be attracted to this genre, thus creating an audience "far beyond that of any other book of science fiction" (Del Rey 1980:201).

A Canticle for Leibowitz (1960) immediately drew the warmest praise from its reviewers, so much so, that the remark was made that it was so great a literary work that it could not possibly be science fiction (Aldiss 1986:269). This work is indisputably the best of the post-nuclear holocaust novels, described by Aldiss (1986:269) as follows:

A Dark Age follows the nuclear holocaust, and such shreds of learning as can be picked from the ruins are preserved by the Catholic Church, and in particular by the holy men of the Order of Saint Liebowitz. This is far from being one more tedious exercise in revamped feudal history, Miller's sense of irony and of place ensure that. He takes us towards another Renaissance, when once more technology builds up to its previous level. Give or take a few mutants, everything is as before: Then the bombs begin to fall again.

5.4 **The New Wave: 1962-1973**

5.4.1 Origins

In the nineteen sixties man was travelling in space, computer technology was advancing so fast that no one could keep pace, pollution and radio-active fallout and runaway industrialism were cause for great concern: the world was becoming the sort of place that the science fiction writers of the Golden Age had dreamed of as the new Utopia. The nineteen sixties witnessed the coming of age of the so-called baby-boom generation. There were many millions more young adults about seeking to impose their will on the culture of the decade, which would witness such diverse influences as Herbert Marcuse, Che Guevara, Marshall McLuhan, John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Biafra, Czechoslovakia and Vietnam. There was now a new generation of science fiction readers which sensed a lack of immediacy in the older science fiction even if it still found a positive response in enquiring minds (Priest 1978:164-165).

Aldiss (1986:221) illustrates that there is a clearly discernible thematic ground swell with the period 1938-1950 concentrating mostly on space travel, war and telepathy. During the

nineteen fifties and early sixties, the Cold War and the threat of nuclear holocaust overshadowed the globe. Many writers thus adopted a pessimistic note as regards the future of mankind, and the tendency is clearly to be seen in the novels of writers such as Alfred Bester, Robert Sheckley and Harry Harrison, who exhibit a noticeable despair which stemmed from a total disenchantment with science and the notion that there was a glowing future of endless progress ahead.

Klein (1977:3-13) points out that between the nineteen thirties and the onset of the Cold War when, despite the Depression and the Second World War, science fiction as a genre remained resolutely optimistic. During the nineteen fifties and early nineteen sixties science fiction remained confident regarding science even if skeptical. From the mid-1960s onwards science fiction would, as a genre, succumb to pessimism and succumb to describing a three-fold malediction: overpopulation, pollution, dehumanization.

Many of the 1960s writers had also participated or grown up in the aftermath of the Second World War and its terrible conclusion with the use of atomic bombs, and conventional mass bombing raids against large concentrations of civilians in metropolitan areas. These authors, some of whom had seen service as soldiers (e.g. Kurt Vonnegut who had, as a prisoner of war in Dresden, survived its near total destruction in a terrible, massive firebombing air raid), were perturbed by the large-scale destruction of human beings and the environment, the apparent shrinkage of the dignity of the average citizen, as well as the total failure of politics to deal with technological problems in a logical fashion.

In sum, as Mellor (1984:39) finds, science fiction remained culturally marginalized for as long as it continued to embrace science and technology and view the future of humankind with optimism. Science fiction thus embraced the values of pessimism and tragic despair from even the nineteen fifties onwards, and became expressive of the core values of the educated middle class. Mellor (1984:39-40) is justified in stating that

Mainstream culture's new interest in SF, the vast growth of college science fiction courses in the United States, the advance of certain SF texts to the status of cult objects within the (middle-class) hippie counter-culture; all this becomes explicable as a meeting of ideological minds. It is not the educated middle class that has changed, it is science fiction ... Amongst the earliest products of the SF ghetto to achieve academic respectability was the work of Ray Bradbury, and it is significant that *Fahrenheit 451* presents a dystopian vision of a future whose chief characteristic is the systematic attempt to extinguish literary culture.

The literary ground swell in science fiction in the sixties is one which emphasizes environmental topics: new socio-scientific attitudes and the complex factors involved in the Western technological culture's "slow debasement of man and his natural world" (Aldiss 1986:250).

5.4.2 New stylistic approach

Del Rey (1980:231-233) dates the start of this new literary period as being 1962 when authors like Roger Zelazny and Thomas M. Disch were first published. By 1962 science fiction had evolved greatly in matters of style and characterization but was still not a modern literary form of fiction (Del Rey 1980:249).

During the nineteen sixties the authors of science fiction were undergoing a major change in their approach towards science fiction. Whereas the writing of science fiction had previously been only a hobby for most, and very few had nourished the ambition of writing professionally, rising sales now made this possibility viable. New writers would primarily be interested in writing in itself and as a career.

Literary style lies at the heart of the controversy which raged between practitioners and critics of the genre during the nineteen sixties, which reflected a widening of choices rather than the rigid conformity of ideas, attitudes and expressions which had been the case in the

nineteen thirties and nineteen forties under the tutelage of the then doyen of editors, John W. Campbell. Priest (1978:164) finds that much of science fiction during the period 1926-1961 was heavily influenced by the genre magazines controlled by the same few editors. The writers read each other's work and derived ideas from this closed environment. As a consequence an orthodox idiom emerged. There was always a Caucasian male as central character, white women in secondary roles, and there was always a clearly identifiable but uncontroversial threat. In terms of style, science fiction was written in plain, business-like prose, although some writers used a romantic tone. Characterization and plot have been much standardized up to the nineteen forties. It was only during the period 1950 - 1962 that authors such as Heinlein, Clarke, Miller, Asimov and Herbert demonstrated that the genre could be capably-written, even stylish, richly-textured, and with convincing narrative structure and improved characterization.

The individual backgrounds of these new authors coming to prominence in the nineteen sixties were unlike that of earlier science fiction writers. Few of these earlier writers had intended to be writers and their writing was a by-product of their fascination with science and the future gained from a profession, university or the reading of science fiction. The new writers were primarily interested in writing *per se* with many being the products of formal university courses in literature or classes in creative writing. Del Rey (1980:251) is of the opinion that:

They did not turn to Heinlein or Asimov for the background, but to Faulkner, Joyce, Kafka and other authors deemed worthy of study by professors, rather than mere entertainment reading. Somehow literature courses seem to overlook the fact that Faulkner and the others wrote excellent entertainment.

As a non-canonical genre, science fiction had, as McHale (1987:69) documents, inevitably tended to lag behind canonized (or mainstream) literature in its adoption of literary modes. Science fiction up to the nineteen fifties had been couched in the realist poetics of the previous century, long superseded by modernist literature and the literary innovations of

authors such as John dos Passos, William Faulkner and their contemporaries. Science fiction's breakthrough to modernist poetics would not occur until its New Wave of the nineteen sixties, spearheaded by Michael Moorcock and his contemporaries.

A revolution therefore was about to shake the tree of science fiction to its roots: the so-called New Wave in the genre. New writers nurtured on Kafka, Joyce and Faulkner were eager for experimentation, and found a welcome market in the British magazine New Worlds, edited by an imaginative author of pure fantasy narratives, Michael Moorcock who assumed the editorial chair in 1964. Moorcock gathered a nucleus of new science fiction authors around him (Suerbaum 1981b:51). The most important of these proved to be Brian W. Aldiss, J.G. Ballard, Samuel R. Delany, Thomas M. Disch, Harlan Ellison and Roger Zelazny, and together with Moorcock, there was a concerted effort to change the very literary essence of the genre, and to make science fiction the *avant garde* of modern mainstream fiction. The purpose of the New Wave was to release authors and readers from the preconceptions of the pulp magazine idiom (Priest 1978:170).

Moorcock, a vigorous and innovative editor and author of considerable talent, advocated fiction with ideas. This resulted in science fiction works which were immediately controversial in both treatment and style, as well as the breaking of hitherto respected taboos, e.g. Norman Spinrad's Bug Jack Barron of 1969, the publication of which in New Worlds led to questions in the House of Commons. Literary experimentation was commenced and this in turn "... steadily became the focus for a re-evaluation of genre standards and a crucible for new attitudes" (Aldiss 1986:299). One of Moorcock's polemical editorials, as cited by Priest (178:165) illustrates his *avant garde* thinking:

We need more writers who reflect the pragmatic mood of today, who use images apt for today, who employ symbols gathered from the world of today, who use sophisticated writing techniques that can match the other techniques of today, who employ characters fitted for the society of today. Like all good writing, good sf [science fiction] must relate primarily to the time in which it is written; a writer must write primarily for his own

generation. He must not seek to emulate his predecessors in their own territory, neither must he write for a posterity which will anyway not remember him unless he is true to himself and his own age. He can learn from his predecessors, but he should not imitate them.

Moorcock's New Worlds had few taboos. It encouraged rather than rejected literary experimentation and steadily became the focus for a re-evaluation of genre standards and a crucible for new attitudes. Moorcock's energy and the imagery of writers such as J.G. Ballard and Brian W. Aldiss attracted a new audience to science fiction (Aldiss 1986:299).

There was a shift away from traditional science fiction in the sense that New Wave authors viewed the primary element of fiction to lie in the handling of style and attitude rather than story development or plotting. Symbolism became a virtue and the more intricate and abstruse the structure of a work, the better it was considered to be. The New Wave distrusted science and viewed humankind as contemptible, or at least of no importance (Del Rey 1980:253).

5.4.3 Important authors of the New Wave

a J.G. Ballard

J.G. Ballard exemplifies the New Wave as much as any other contemporary author. He had started out as a writer in the school of disaster science fiction such as also seen in John Wyndham's The Kraken Wakes, which appeared in 1953 or John Christopher's No Blade of Grass, in 1956. Ballard as the leading New Wave exponent wrote condensed novels, described by Aldiss (1986:300) as "impacted visions of a timeless, dimensionless world, lacerated by anguish, desiccated by knowledge, and illustrative of William Burrough's dictum that 'a psychotic is a guy who's just discovered what's going on'." (Aldiss 1986:300).

Ballard's novels were of catastrophic events, vast floods and droughts and he utilized his condensed format to give a series of random vivid scenes and situations. Ballard (1969:52) grounded his literary philosophy on the motivation that:

The great bulk of fiction still being written is retrospective in character ... it interprets the present in terms of the past and it uses a narrative technique, by and large the linear narrative, in which events are shown in more or less chronological sequence, which is suited to it ... I feel that one needs a non-linear technique, simply because our lives today are not conducted in linear terms. They are much more quantified; a whole stream of random events is taking place.

Many followers of Ballard view his novel In the Crystal World of 1966 as his finest work, an eerie process of crystallisation of all living things, it shows Ballard's style "... glittering darkly and reduplicating itself like the jewels encasing his saturnine forests. But the central problem of writing a novel without having the characters pursue any purposeful course of action ... is not resolved" (Aldiss 1986:301).

Other works in this literary mould were The Drowned World published in 1962 and The Drought of 1965 in which man is a threatened species in a world returning to prehistoric times, menaced by rising temperatures and rising water. Suerbaum (1981b:104) aptly comments that:

Dem Regress der Erde in diesen Romanen entspricht durchweg ein Regress der Menschheit ... die logische Konsequenz dieser beiden Strukturprinzipien - der ständigen Steigerung der katastrophalen Weltveränderung und der immer stärkeren Reduktion der menschlichen Zivilisation und der menschlichen Überlebenschancen - wäre nun ein Schluss, der zur totalen Apokalypse führen würde.

Aldiss (1986:301) concedes that Ballard's repetitive use of the same imagery, setting, jargon and characterization is his weakness, but correctly defends Ballard's "... ferocious intelligence, his wit, his cantankerousness, and, in particular his single-minded rendering of the perverse pleasures of today's paranoia". Some of J.G. Ballard's condensed novels were published in a collection as The Atrocity Exhibition in 1970 in England, later republished and retitled Love and Napalm: Export USA in the United States.

b Samuel R. Delany

Delany's work borders, at times, on pure fantasy, and remains very influential in the genre because of his inspired use of language such as in his novel Babel 17 of 1969 in which the central theme is the world-moulding power of language (Suerbaum 1981b:147). Aldiss (1986:293-294) finds that Delany's main accomplishment was sheer literary style. Delany's possibly finest novel is Nova, published in 1968, which is based on the myth of Prometheus and his short stories like Time Considered as a Helix of Semi-Precious Stones which appeared in 1969, showed his intelligent approach to writing and his recognition of the sheer potentiality of science fiction's vast stock of ill-used and under-used metaphors.

Delany would go on to write an epic novel which became a cult classic in the nineteen seventies, Dhalgren, published in 1975, which portrays in complex and richly-textured detail the disintegration of a megalopolis of the future (Wolfe 1979:93-94).

c Roger Zelazny

The richly-textured and mythically-based works of Zelazny were foreshadowed by his first appearance in print in 1963 with his story A Rose for Ecclesiastes, which tells of "... an Earthman who is translating our poetry into Martian, a flower, and a Martian girl who is the last hope for the red planet" (Del Rey 1980:234). This story has as Aldiss (1986:295) points out, "... a rich embellishment and resonance built around the central metaphor of the rose, a sense of an old tired culture encountering a new vitally creative one". Zelazny wrote several fine, richly-descriptive and interlayered novels such as This Immortal of

1966, a melange of Greek myth and aliens from the Vega system wishing to utilize the Earth for a holiday resort. The Dream Master followed in the same year, centred on the psychiatry of the future.

One of Zelazny's most "powerful" novels Land of Light, first published in 1967, is set in the future on a far planet and is based on Hindu mythology and culture, used with startling effect.

Zelazny wrote a further novel in this vein Creatures of Light and Darkness, which appeared in 1969, featuring Egyptian mythologies, once again couched in a richly literate and vividly-evocative style.

d Harlan Ellison

A further author of the New Wave was to prove a powerful influence in this era of science fiction: Harlan Ellison who soon gave up conventional style and plots to produce "nightmare visions with a fury of style that sometimes seemed a continuous scream against the injustices he saw in life" (Del Rey 1980:35).

His novella 'Repent, Harlequin!', Said the Ticktockman of 1965, is a powerful modern fable with a dark vision of future overpopulated cities controlled and held at bay by aerial police (Ash 1975:121). Ellison wrote a classic, prize-winning novella A Boy and His Dog in 1969 set in the post-nuclear Armageddon year 2024, a chilling, stylish evocation in which the boy's sweetheart inevitably becomes food for his trusty and telepathically-gifted canine companion.

Ellison became a leading editorial influence in the nineteen sixties, producing under his able editorship the anthology Dangerous Visions of 1967, a collection of thirty-three stories by mostly leading authors. Ellison requested these authors to contribute these stories they felt would not be published elsewhere because they transgressed into literary territory held to be taboo at the time, such as incest and homosexuality. Some of the

stories, by old and new wave authors, were of surprisingly high quality, examples being Norman Spinrad's Carcinoma Angels and Philip Jose Farmer's Riders of the Purple Wage (Aldiss 1986:297). Ellison followed the highly-successful anthology which reached record sales, with a further collection in 1972 entitled Again, Dangerous Visions.

Ellison felt very strongly that writers of science fiction were finding their works pre-censored even before writing because they were aware that their editors would not allow certain political discussions and sexual themes (Sutherland 1979:169-170). Ellison thus helped enlarge the thematic parameters of the genre.

e Brian W. Aldiss

Brian W. Aldiss exerted considerable influence during the New Wave era although not strictly speaking a member of the Moorcock group, as he had been publishing science fiction before the advent of the New Wave. Aldiss is often satiric about human development. Non-Stop of 1958 paints the decline of society inside a giant spaceship, Bow Down to Nul published in 1960 sees mankind as the slaves of an alien race, and in Earthworks which appeared in 1965, overpopulation turns Earth into a wasteland. Hothouse of 1986 has a group of mutated humans trying to survive in a future world about to go nova, fighting desperately against predators. Manlove (1986:76) calls the novel a book of stunning images and prodigious vitality and inventiveness.

f Michael Moorcock

Moorcock himself wrote powerfully and prolifically, much of it of the sword and sorcery type such as his superseries The Tale of the Eternal Champion featuring heroes such as Elric Hawkmoon and Jerek Carnelian. He wrote a brilliant time-travel novella Behold the Man, (1966), as well as his Jerry Cornelius novels featuring this attractive anti-hero and written in a darkly-comic vein.

Thomas M. Disch became an innovative and stylish writer of science fiction in the nineteen sixties. Notable are his novels The Genocides of 1965 which has an alien invasion profoundly affecting the human race, and Camp Concentration from 1968, in which a drug derived from the syphilis bacterium is used to enhance human intelligence in experiments on political prisoners. Disch writes exceptionally wittily with fine irony and is generally considered one of the finest stylists in the genre (Wingrove 1984:89).

5.4.4 Literary characteristics

In drawing up a literary balance sheet of the New Wave there is much division amongst critics. Some view the movement within the genre as nothing more than a superficial parody or emulation of the styles and techniques of mainstream fiction writers, which at times reads like parodies of John Dos Passos, Christopher Isherwood, Samuel Beckett and William Burroughs (Suerbaum 1981b:59-60). Other critics like Rottensteiner (1975:132) view the New Wave as a brave literary attempt.

Priest (1978:173) argues with good reason that the New Wave achieved a release from the dependence on the orthodox idioms of the science fiction magazines, and thus was a successful attempt “ ... to restore a sense of perspective to speculative fiction” thus bringing science fiction closer to modernist mainstream literature. Aldiss (1986:307) finds that the New Wave brought “ ... a cold sixties sophistication and in some cases mere trendiness” to the conceptual content of the genre, but that at the heart of the New Wave was a hard and very unpalatable message: a scepticism about the benefits of any present or future society.

On balance it can be concluded that the New Wave introduced a much needed infusion of innovative and rich literary style, symbolism and expression, which contributed greatly towards making the genre the varied, sophisticated and multi-textured genre it is in the nineteen nineties. Six names dominated the New Wave, three American and three British:

Thomas M. Disch, Samuel R. Delany and Roger Zelazny were the American authors, with Brian W. Aldiss, J.G. Ballard and Michael Moorcock hailing from Britain.

Not all existing or new writers of science fiction were automatically subsumed under this *avant garde* movement in the genre, and Isaac Asimov, a traditionalist, is cited as saying that he hoped that "... when the New Wave has deposited its froth and receded, the vast and solid shore of science fiction will appear once more" (Suerbaum 1981b:59). By 1972 the New Wave was hardly being mentioned in the United States, partly because of poor sales in America. Its literary influence would, however, leave a lasting stylistic impression on the genre.

5.5 Individualistic authors of the nineteen sixties

Not all science fiction authors of the nineteen sixties were associated with or committed to the literary iconoclasm of the New Wave and many like Poul Anderson, Frank Herbert and Philip K. Dick were secure in their own literary identities and niches and thus did not belong to any specific school within the genre.

a Poul Anderson

Typical of these uniquely individual writers of the nineteen sixties is the prize-winning author Poul Anderson, known like Heinlein for his emphasis on rugged and adventurous individualism, militarism and hardware. His post-holocaust novella No Truce With Kings of 1963 defeated the much-acclaimed story by New Wave writer Zelazny, A Rose for Ecclesiastes, for the prized Hugo award for best short work of 1963. Anderson is a romantic writer and infuses much of his work with a genuine and deep affection for humanity, its aspirations and its mistakes. His works are numerous and entertainingly readable, often with colourful mythology and an engaging, swashbuckling style.

b Frank Herbert

An equally individualistic writer is Frank Herbert. His epic work Dune first appeared as a serialization in 1963, a mesmerizing blend of politics and religion in a harsh future. (It was published as a novel in 1965). It is generally viewed as a science fiction classic, depicting a desert tribe on a planet completely covered in sand awaiting a leader to lead them in a holy war. Later and succeeding books were Dune Messiah in 1970, Children of Dune in 1976, God Emperor of Dune during 1981 and Heretics of Dune of 1984. These are epic works with sweeping societal and religious themes which made Herbert into a major author and ranked him with the masters: Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke and Robert A. Heinlein.

c John Brunner

John Brunner produced a still-popular work, Stand on Zanzibar in 1968 which depicts the overpopulation of the twenty first century. Brunner uses a complex technique of close-ups, newspaper clippings, conversations, bulletins and jokes to create a dense and complex narrative (Aldiss 1986:317). He followed with a further success, The Sheep Look Up of 1972, an excellent novel of ecological and technological horror. Brunner is a much underrated writer whose works are still high-quality science fiction, as relevant today as when first published. Other noteworthy works by this author are Times Without Number of 1962 and The Jagged Orbit published in 1969.

d Harry Harrison

Harry Harrison came to prominence with an ironic and mocking adventure entitled Bill the Galactic Hero published in 1965, followed by A Transatlantic Tunnel, Hurrah! in 1972, an alternative history in which the Americas remained part of Britain. His fast-paced adventures often have a darkly ironic streak (Wingrove 1984:162). Harrison has a caustic understanding of mankind as it is, and successfully walks the bridge between New and Old Waves (Aldiss 1986:318).

e

Clifford D. Simak

Clifford Simak produced several excellent novels in the nineteen sixties, the most prominent among them being Way Station of 1963, an award-winning novel of an American Civil War soldier chosen to be guardian on Earth of an intergalactic doorway through which travellers and commerce pass back and forth. The guardian does not age as he lives within the force field of this doorway and he is thus an immortal who meets strange travellers. It is “... a book about substantial ghosts, loneliness and about the sense of wonder itself ... it ran against the general tide of the genre - that bipolarization of science fiction into colourful power fantasy and literary introversion” (Aldiss 1986:321). Simak followed with thoughtful and haunting novels in a similar vein such as All Flesh is Grass in 1965, Why Call Them Back from Heaven in 1967 and The Goblin Reservation of 1968, the last dealing with time travel and an alien invasion of Earth. Simak is much underrated as an author of science fiction.

f

Edgar Pangborn

Edgar Pangborn is a further, valued writer in the same vein as Simak who also managed to introduce a feeling of country and open spaces in his novels. His most well-known work is Davy of 1964, a post-holocaust novel of a young man growing up in a much altered world. Pangborn's deeply-emotional work is characterized by a tension between an idealistic view of human potential and a realistic bitter knowledge that corruption and doom are more likely than transcendence (Wingrove 1984:211).

g

Zenna Henderson

Zenna Henderson is best known in the genre for her series of stories about “The People” a race of gentle aliens, human in appearance, who are shipwrecked on Earth and forced to live as humans, hiding their considerable mental powers. Henderson's science fiction is, like that of Simak and Pangborn, caring and people-oriented, thus also falling outside the

power-introversion axis of the genre in this era. Her deeply wistful and humanistic streak makes her works highly readable (Wingrove 1984:164).

h Kurt Vonnegut

Kurt Vonnegut rose to prominence in the nineteen sixties with novels like Cat's Cradle in 1963 featuring a new religion, and his earlier The Sirens of Titan of 1959, a complex novel of vaulting literary invention, although it has been criticized for being too loosely-structured with too many clichés (Suerbaum 1981b:122). Slaughterhouse 5, published in 1969, is a popular work centring on a time traveller who lives through the horrific firebombing of Dresden. Vonnegut uses science fiction themes brilliantly, but insists that his works are not within the genre, an assessment with which some critics such as Del Rey (1980:243) concur, and others like Aldiss (1986:328) disagree. All Vonnegut's fiction is dogmatic, imaginatively ingenious and morally-reassuring (Wingrove 1984:257).

i Philip K. Dick

A very prominent and complex literary figure of the nineteen sixties was Philip K. Dick, who published nineteen novels in this period. Aldiss (1986:329) deftly encapsulates the controversial works of this author as follows:

In his novels things are never quite what they seem. Between life and death lie the many shadow lands of Dick, places of hallucination, perceptual slumps, cloacae of dim half life, paranoid states, tomb worlds and orthodox hells. All his novels are one novel, a fatidical *A la recherche du temps perfide*. This multidextrous work is elegant, surprising and witty, spilling out disconcerting artefacts, scarecrow people, exiles, streetwise teenage girls, Faberge animals, robots with ill consciences and bizarre but friendly aliens.

Dick's best-known work is The Man in the High Castle of 1962 an alternative history novel in which Germany and Japan were the victors of the Second World War, and

America an occupation zone divided between the victors. This is an alternative world which seems very real to the reader, a finely-balanced, brooding and melancholically-moving novel.

In The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch, first published in 1965, an alien invasion and take-over narrative, Dick achieves a multilayered, apocalyptic note in a battle for the human soul itself between a dark invader and a frail human, with Dick giving his modern-day Satan the trappings of high technology (Aldiss 1986:332).

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? of 1968, was brilliantly filmed by Ridley Scott as Blade Runner in 1982, which although only centring on the blade runner (bounty hunter) pursuing and killing renegade androids, instead of the several intertwined plots of the novel, became a very successful science fiction film with brilliant special effects.

Further noteworthy Philip K. Dick novels appearing in the nineteen sixties were The Simulacra in 1964, Dr Bloodmoney in 1965, Counter-Clock World in 1967, Galactic Pot-Healer in 1969, and Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said of 1974.

j Robert A. Heinlein

During the nineteen sixties Robert A. Heinlein continued to produce high-quality science fiction with works such as Podkayne of Mars in 1962, a novel of interplanetary intrigue. It develops a grim future history of Earth being a corporate, oppressive dictatorship. Glory Road of 1963 features a lonely, alienated hero in a dreary consumer society, who sets out on an adventurous quest and experiences wild, romantic adventures (Franklin 1980:148-150).

Heinlein's next novel was Farnham's Freehold, published in 1964 and detailing a typical middle-class family struggling to survive in a post-holocaust world. In his epic The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress which appeared in 1966, the Earth is under the harsh sway of a world

government with the few colonials on the moon fighting for liberty against the Earth's oppressive and mismanaged autocracy.

k Keith Roberts

No discussion of the science fiction of this decade would be complete without honourable mention of Keith Roberts and his exceptional novel Pavane of 1968. Roberts, also a member of the New Wave movement, produced an exquisitely-crafted novel showing us the alternative year 1968 AD: England was successfully invaded in 1588 by the Spanish armada, Elizabeth I assassinated and Phillip II of Spain ascended to the English throne. The Industrial Revolution never happened because the Church and its Inquisition suppressed all heretical and subversive new inventions such as electricity. The focus of the novel is on several individual Englishmen and women and their struggle to survive in this difficult environment. Aldiss (1986:373-374) does no less than justice to Pavane by commenting that:

Roberts's setting for Pavane, as for so much of his work, will be familiar to anyone who has read Thomas Hardy. Rural Dorset at the heart of Wessex is seen with the sharpest of eyes and presented with a haunting visual clarity. Corfe Castle and its surroundings - the Isle of Purbeck - are marvellously and unforgettably locked. Roberts' alternate world is credible because its landscape is so lovingly re-created for us. The story unfolds slowly like the dance from which the novel takes its title ... The forces of rebellion of suppressed technological progress spark and ignite against a rigidly static society. ... Roberts' gift in Pavane is to make us see both the delights and the horrors of this simpler alternative; to see this alternate world as a complex, functioning reality, filled with living, breathing, suffering people. It is a world in which the Old People, sons and daughters of Yggdrasil, the World Ash of the druids, still exist. But it is far from whimsy. These things seem starkly real to us ... The novel ends with the assumption that Man has learned something, attained a kind of maturity and balance, and the horrors of the

Church Militants' campaign of repression are a lesser evil than the horrors of Belsen, Buchenwald and Paschendaale. We aren't wholly convinced.

Keith Roberts went on to write several excellent and very readable works: The Chalk Giants in 1974, The Grain Kings in 1976 and Kiteworld in 1985. None, however, had the special poignancy, exquisite language and literary power evinced in Pavane. Roberts remains an acknowledged but still underrated exponent of the genre.

5.6 Conclusion

The period 1950 to 1973 saw science fiction realize its full potential. The nineteen forties and fifties had witnessed the rapid advance of modern science and technology, and the wide acceptance of science fiction as a popular genre in book form, the themes of which no longer seemed as improbable as they had appeared earlier. An impressive array of new authors appeared, and the genre took a considerable literary step forward, showing ample proof that it could be stylish and richly-textured. The beginning of the nineteen sixties saw a radical stylistic and thematic movement deeply ingrained with pessimism, which transformed the genre into a modern, sophisticated literary form which would go from strength to strength.

Chapter 6 will study the development of science fiction from 1973 up to the present day.

CHAPTER 6

SCIENCE FICTION SINCE 1973

6.1 Introduction

The nineteen fifties had witnessed the acceptance of science fiction as a popular genre and the appearance of well-written and stylish novels. The nineteen sixties would see the focus of science fiction shift to radical stylistic and thematic experimentation which supplied an infusion of innovative and rich literary texture, symbolism and expression.

The nineteen seventies should in the view of Zelazny (1988:10-11), be viewed as a period when all these factors fused to produce a mature literary form. The dominant themes during the nineteen seventies would be the ecology, computerization, psychoanalysis, drugs, nuclear power, and feminism. Science fiction in the nineteen seventies would prove to be a vibrant, ever-expanding genre in both the literary and philosophical sense.

By the nineteen eighties science fiction had demonstrated that it was the fastest-growing branch of popular fiction, with Delany (1984:102) estimating that works of science fiction were accounting for 15% of all fiction published in the United States. This figure would rise to 20% by the beginning of the nineteen nineties (Spinrad 1990:55). Science fiction would attain an advanced and sophisticated state in the nineteen eighties, further enriched in part by the exciting new and innovative cyberpunk movement. Science fiction of the nineteen nineties would demonstrate an impressive degree of literary sophistication and be unmatched in popular fiction for its sheer thematic versatility and evocative mood.

6.2 Nineteen seventies: a period of maturation

During the nineteen seventies science fiction remained, as ever, the literature of ideas with brilliant inventiveness being shown by authors such as Greg Bear, William Gibson and Larry Niven who introduced concepts such as biochip mutation, planetary engineering and cyberspace (Zelazny 1988:10). Advancing technology also injected new themes into the genre: cloning, biotechnology and computer science grew more important, as sciences grew even more complex and specialized and harder to grasp.

The early and mid seventies would be a period of maturation after the liberating and ostentatious stylistic experimentation of the New Wave era, characterized by a certain amount of introspection (Clute 1995:79).

The early and mid seventies were a time of considerable maturation in the genre, with Aldiss (1986:340-341) summarizing that:

After the liberating and oft-times garish experimentation of the sixties, when style had seemed all-important and the desire to shock as great an impetus as the desire to tell a story well, the writing of the seventies was quieter, less ostentatious - but no less impressive. It was immediately evident that a greater sensitivity prevailed in the field, a restraint and care for craftsmanship matched by a desire to recapture the "sense of wonder" so marked in the SF of the thirties and forties. And not merely to recapture the sense, but to articulate it intelligently and evocatively. In a way to make good the fudged work of yesteryear.

Works published in 1980 will be mentioned in the context of the nineteen seventies, where they belong to this period in the literary sense, if not strictly chronologically.

6.2.1 Important authors

a Robert Silverberg

One of the prominent writers who matured during the nineteen seventies was to be Robert Silverberg, who as a young writer in the nineteen fifties had produced many competently written novels and stories in the pulp style.

Robert Silverberg, one of the stalwarts of the genre reached his peak as an author in the nineteen seventies, after having started his career with fairly stereotyped and predictable works. His Nightwings of 1969 gave first notice of his expertise in this exquisite picture of a future Earth conquered by extraterrestrials, creating "... a strong feeling and atmosphere, with the color that had previously been missing from his work" (Del Rey 1980:236). It is a fine novel of rebirth, redemption, alienation and metamorphosis, and Silverberg clearly took advantage of the literary progress made by the New Wave, especially as regards characterization.

Silverberg followed this success with an equally well-written novel, Downward to the Earth published in 1970, a novel of a planet colony returned to native possession after the discovery that the inhabitants are a sentient species with a discrete religion. In a further work in 1971 entitled A Time of Changes, a young man on a colony planet where selfhood is abominated, must learn an overwhelming truth: unless one knows oneself, one can never know another (Clute 1995:226).

In Dying Inside which appeared in 1972 Silverberg used telepathy to illustrate the human condition by means of a telepath whose mental powers are gradually fading. Further Silverberg novels such as The Stochastic Man of 1975 and Shadrach in the Furnace of 1976, dealt with themes such as precognition and genetic illnesses. At present Silverberg is regarded as one of the genre's eminent writers.

Ursula K. Le Guin, one of the genre's truly outstanding authors of almost lyrical insight into the human condition, became very prominent in the nineteen seventies with The Left Hand of Darkness (1969) a story of first contact with aliens, described by both Aldiss (1986:346-347) and Del Rey (1980:244) as an outstanding science fiction novel. This work is set on a distant planet, Gethen/Winter, where humans have evolved in such a way that they are capable of assuming the male or female role : "Thus for example, many individuals have been both father and mother ... not only does she [Le Guin] make the reader question the stereotypes of the gender roles in present society, but by implication at least she shows how divisive those roles - and sexuality itself - are to our common humanity" (Clareson 1981:16-17). This novel shows extraordinary and sustained vision even though it uses an established *motif* (the alien encounter), "... to explore such themes as the nature of integrity, of patriotism, and of isolation and alienation in human relationship (Scholes & Rabkin 1977:226).

Genly Ai is an envoy from the League of All Worlds and as Aldiss (1986:347) correctly finds:

The strangeness of Gethen/Winter is experienced through his eyes, interpreted through his perception of events. But the strangeness of Genly Ai is seen through the eyes of his host, Therem Harth rem ir Estraven, the "King's Ear" of the kingdom of Karhide. Gethen is a strange world. Its wintry condition has bred a hard, independent people. But more important than climatic determinants is the biological oddity of its native race. The Gethenians are androgynous, taking on a definite, polarized sexuality only once a month, during "kemmer" - sometimes male, sometimes female; able both to sire and gestate an infant. This peculiarity shapes Gethenian society in distinctive ways, but Le Guin's skill is in making us accept the alien as familiar. Such was Silverberg's skill in *Dying Inside*. When we encounter

normal human being again, we see them from a changed viewpoint. Indeed, they seem more alien than the aliens ... The tale of Genly Ai and Estraven is a story of misunderstandings, mistrust and betrayal, but it is also about bridge-building, trust and the marriage of alien cultures. The long passage towards the end of the book where the envoy and the exiled Estraven trek across the glacier - a desperate journey of 81 days and 840 miles, in foul conditions at the worst time of the year - vividly personalizes the issues of the novel. The extraneous is pared away and we come down to the essentials of human contact, as exemplified by the creed of the Ekumen in contacting other races ... Le Guin has an artist's understanding of the power of motif of taking simple visual images - the keystone in the arch, a shadow on snow - and transforming them into complex metaphors. Her use of motif, a weaving of various strands into a whole, gives her writing a depth and a richness that invites re-reading and growth in the reader's appreciation of her work.

Further Le Guin novels which are noteworthy, are The Lathe of Heaven of 1971 dealing with a man who can change the physical world at will, and her novella The Word for World is Forest in 1972 and The Eye of the Heron in 1978. Le Guin's work does have the single drawback that, like Herman Hesse and Leo Tolstoy, she tends to preach. At its best, however, Le Guin's work possesses not merely the intellectual muscularity and honesty of George Orwell, but also an entrancing lyricism wedded to an open-eyed realism (Aldiss 1986:347-348).

c Gregory Benford

Benford, a professor of Physics fused impressive scientific knowledge with an equally well-founded literary style to produce novels such as The Stars in Shroud in 1978 dealing with human-alien conflict, and Timescape in 1980. The latter a fine and sensitively-written novel, features scientists of the decaying world of the twenty-first century desperately seeking to send messages back to their predecessors to warn of crucial mistakes being made. The novel is pessimistic but at the same time conveys a haunting sense of nostalgia

and *déjà vu*. The noted science fiction author and critic Brian W. Aldiss (1986:353) accurately points to the essence in both Timescape and Benford's work in general:

Timescape is a long, complex novel and reflects a far more realistic vision of our world than most SF novels. As in so much of Benford's work, it is set only decades away, where things are falling apart moment by moment, the eco-system dying, social institutions crumbling and absurd, millennial religions springing up like weeds in a wasteland. It is a dark, pessimistic work; almost, one might say, British in its preoccupations (much of the novel is set in England). But against the doom and gloom realism is a strong belief in the process of science; not optimistic in the old, ill-considered forties sense, but certainly affirmative. Benford never denigrates scientific achievement. Lest we make it seem a formula for dullness, it must be said that there is mystical depth to much of Benford's work. If he takes the close and narrow view of his characters - an all-too-human view, of illness, work and marital problems - his vision of the universe in which such frail beings exist is one of vast perspectives, rather in the tradition of Stapledon and Clarke. Huge spans of space and time form the backdrop of Benford's novels. His aliens and their artefacts are ancient, and we are their creations as often as not. In *The Stars in Shroud* (1978), for instance, we learn that the alien enemy, the Quarn, created intelligence in humankind. The interest in anthropological roots, in language and its limitations, and in the curious division of the human brain between thought and feeling, characterizes not merely Benford's work but much of the SF of the seventies.

d Michael Bishop

Michael Bishop's first novel A Funeral for the Eyes of Fire published in 1975, of two brothers transporting an alien, focused attention on this talented new writer, who went on to write Transfigurations in 1979 and the award-winning No Enemy but Time which appeared in 1982, both dealing with extraterrestrial intelligent species. Bishop's novels

exhibit alienation and intensity, and deal mostly with complex alien societies, and he fills his novels with the dispossessed of the earth (Clute 1995:189). Other noteworthy novels by Bishop are Stolen Faces published in 1977 and Catacomb Years which appeared in 1979.

e George R.R. Martin

George R.R. Martin achieved success with his fusion of romantic and traditional science fiction elements such as his exquisite story With Morning Comes Mistfall from 1973, and A Song for Lya in 1974, a haunting narrative of alien religions and societies. Martin's Dying of the Light, published in 1977, is likewise an exquisite mixture of romance and harshness. From the outset Martin was a romantic whose ideas and imagery spanned a wide and colourful spectrum. Vampires and spacecraft exist cheek by jowl in his stories, and elements of science fiction fantasy and horror form a heady mixture, but behind the deceptive surface texture lurks a seriousness of intent equal to that of Benford or Bishop (Aldiss 1986:357).

f Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle

Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle formed a very successful writing team in producing such novels as Lucifer's Hammer in 1977 centring on a comet due to collide with Earth, and a classic novel in the The Mote in God's Eye in 1974, which has been much acclaimed by follow authors and critics alike. Mankind encounters a race of aliens ("Moties") with a terrible secret, and in the end is forced to quarantine this race for its own good. In spite of its militaristic tone and setting, it is a thoughtful and well-written work, with sympathy for both the human and alien protagonists. Clute (1995:228) accurately argues that it would be possible to cavil at the novel's depicted interstellar human empire, stuffed with royalty and stiff-necked military martinets, but the alien Moties are ingenuously different from anything our planet could have evolved, and the secret behind their life cycle is convincingly deadly.

Joe Haldeman, a combat veteran of the Vietnam conflict produced several sensitive works depicting the horror of future war in novels such as the award-winning The Forever War in 1974. Clute (1995:228) judges that:

The trauma of Vietnam cut very deeply into the underlying story told by traditional SF [science fiction]: it proved that war could be endless, the aliens completely unconquerable, and the victory just a dead dream. Joe Haldeman's endless interstellar war, with its time-dilated soldiers forever lost, is Vietnam.

Ian Watson wrote several original and inventive novels in the nineteen seventies including The Embedding in 1973, The Jonah Kit in 1975 and Alien Embassy which appeared in 1977. He can be described as a "... cerebral writer with a penchant for exotic locations and alien concepts. Metaphysics rather than physics is his forte" (Aldiss 1986:375). Ian Watson was not the first science fiction writer to speculate on the nature of language as he did so brilliantly in The Embedding, but here the ways in which languages create the human world are brilliantly examined in an incandescently percipient first novel (Clute 1995:228).

Robert A. Heinlein (cf. paragraphs 4.13.1, 5.3.1 and 5.5 j), often acknowledged as the grand master of the genre performed characteristically strongly in the nineteen seventies with several powerful and complex novels. I Will Fear No Evil of 1970 marked the beginning of a more internalized style with the action taking place inside the narrator's mind. Here an old man's brain is transplanted into a young woman's body, and he finds himself in mental dialogue with her. In Time Enough for Love published in 1973 the same

approach is used, and the near-immortal main protagonist travels through time and space. This protagonist, Lazarus Long, first appeared in Heinlein's 1941 serial Methuselah's Children (Del Rey 1980:99).

The Number of the Beast which appeared in 1980, deals with several alternate societies, and is written in a somewhat rambling style, very different from the engrossing, tangible science fiction written by Heinlein in the nineteen forties, fifties and sixties.

6.2.2 More women authors enter the field

Apart from the highly-acclaimed Ursula K. Le Guin (cf. paragraph 6.2.1 *b*), many more talented women authors entered the field and made striking contributions. Connie Willis, an author of exquisitely-crafted literary style and characterization first appeared in the seventies. (She went on to produce fine science fiction such as Fire Watch in 1980 and A letter from the Clearys, published in 1982.)

Anne McCaffrey wrote the first of the award-winning Dragonrider series in 1968 and its sequels such as Dragonquest, Dragonsong and Dragondrums, in which humans and alien flying beasts together combat deadly falling material. Kate Wilhelm wrote an award-winning post-Holocaust novel entitled Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang, published in 1976 and Vonda McIntyre's Dreamsnake of 1978 depicting a young woman healer in a post-holocaust world, which won several awards.

C.J. Cherryh wrote adventurous, well-received epics such as The Book of Morgaine which appeared in 1979 and the Faded Sun series of 1979 as well as Downbelow Station in 1980, a rousing space adventure. Other noted female authors of this period are Suzy McKee Charnas whose novel Walk to the End of the World of 1976 has a feminist perspective in a post-holocaust world, and Joan Vinge who wrote intricate and romantic works such as The Snow Queen which appeared in 1980.

The list of women authors would not be complete without the inclusion of Joanna Russ, who introduced a radical feminist note into her science fiction works like The Female Man of 1975 dealing with women in a world where all the men have died in a plague. This is a biting, complex and beautifully constructed assault on the male-dominated world and has become the classic feminist science fiction novel (Clute 1995:228).

An amusing footnote in the genre is that the award-winning author of the nineteen seventies named James Tiptree Junior, proved to be a woman named Alice Sheldon. Tiptree's works are deeply humanistic, with a blend of lyricism and inventiveness (Aldiss 1986:366). Notable novels are Up the Walls of the World of 1978 and Warm Worlds and Otherwise which appeared in 1975.

It is an indication of the maturity of the genre of the nineteen seventies that women writers and feminist perspectives swiftly became a very powerful part of the genre. In the present day it would be hard to picture science fiction without its many talented and innovative women authors.

6.2.3 Science fiction continues to define humanity's destiny

In the nineteen seventies science fiction was moving into the third and fourth generation. The New Wave was already part of history. Sputnik, the space race and the first Moon landing would also be history by 1970. Some critics entertained the suspicion that science fiction was no longer a beacon to lead to the future, but just a literary monument, although as Clute (1995:179-177) argues:

Not everyone feels this - even as the end of the century approaches, many SF [science fiction] writers continue to argue about the world, and to entertain an ever-growing readership, with stories that are unashamedly cast in the old genre moulds. And even those who have doubts do retain one central consolation: that of the world is becoming too conscious of the innumerable

possible futures jostling for its attention, SF had a central role in creating that urgent consciousness.

These fears that the genre would become a literary-historical monument proved to be groundless. The deeply humanistic works of Le Guin, Tiptree and Bishop, the feminist perspectives of Russ, McIntyre and Charnas, and the exhilarating adventures of Niven and Pournelle, Cherryh and McCaffery, to name but a few outstanding authors of the decade all point to one inescapable conclusion: that science fiction remains a living, breathing genre still intent upon searching for and defining humanity's destiny in the wide universe. Other notable authors of the nineteen seventies also produced high-quality works. Notable here are Octavia Butler's Patternmaster in 1976, Survivor in 1978 and Kindred in 1979; John Crowley's The Deep in 1975, Beasts of 1976 and Engine Summer in 1979. Frederik Pohl produced Man Plus in 1976 and TEM: The making of a Utopia by 1979, Christopher Priest wrote the novels Indoctrinaire, published in 1970 and A Dream of Wessex in 1977, John Sladek produced The Müller-Fokker Effect in 1970, and John Varley The Ophiuchi Hotline of 1977 and Titan in 1979.

6.3 Nineteen eighties: a sophisticated genre

The nineteen seventies had witnessed science fiction firmly established as a vibrant, ever-expanding genre in both literary and philosophical terms. Science fiction in Perrin's words (1989:37) "... was well out of its infancy ... in fact, enough science fiction of high literary quality, pure and unmixed with either space opera or fantasy, already existed to fill two or three [university] courses".

By the nineteen eighties, science fiction had demonstrated that it was the only branch of popular literature that had grown very strongly since the nineteen thirties, in contrast with romances and mystery fiction, which had only maintained their positions but not noticeably expanded. The nineteen seventies had heralded a boom in science fiction in which more authors and publishers entered this field than ever before, resulting by the beginning of the nineteen eighties, in a very large and prosperous community of authors, publishers, readers

and film producers (Hartwell 1984:31-33). The genre now saw its visions made into images by means of sophisticated special effects. It was clear that science fiction had evolved into a complex, multi-textured and sophisticated genre.

The advanced and sophisticated state of the genre during the nineteen eighties could also be traced back to those stalwarts of the genre such as Asimov, Clarke and Heinlein who had consistently been producing high-quality science fiction since the nineteen forties and the nineteen fifties and were still forming the solid base on which the new authors of this genre could embellish and experiment (cf. paragraph 4.13.1 and 5.3.2).

It is significant to note that the science fiction genre keeps more of its past works in print than any other fictional genre. It has also become a place for writers to plunder old ideas and for readers to revisit their childhood, and the childhood of the century, by reading texts so made available (Clute 1995:192-193). The advent of cyberpunk would follow in the nineteen eighties and in the opinion of Clute (1995:194-195):

In other ways the genre is becoming broader - some would say diluted - and accepting new styles, new scenarios, and new approaches that would not have been recognized as SF [science fiction] a few decades or even just a few years before. Boundaries have become blurred: non-SF writers write SF novels - this has always happened, but is becoming more widespread - and SF writers write novels that are not SF. As the decade closes, more SF titles are being published than ever before, but some say SF is disappearing. How so? Because everything else is looking more like SF, and SF is looking more like everything else.

The first half of this decade witnessed further excellent works by the acknowledged leaders in science fiction such as Robert Heinlein, Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke and Frank Herbert, as well as the appearance of talented new authors such as Tim Powers.

6.3.1 Important authors

a Isaac Asimov

Isaac Asimov, generally acknowledged as one of the great writers of science fiction was still active in the nineteen eighties. Well-known already for his robot stories and his Foundation novel series, Asimov published The Robots of Dawn in 1983 which is a science fiction story couched in the detective mode, followed by Robots and Empire in 1985, which served as a sequel to The Robots of Dawn.

b Frank Herbert

Frank Herbert, one of science fiction's greatest authors died in 1986 after having written the last novel in the 2300-page Dune series: God Emperor of Dune in 1981, Heretics of Dune, 1983, and Chapter House Dune in 1985, all continuing the best-selling saga of the desert planet and its strangely-gifted inhabitants.

c Arthur C. Clarke

Prolific and highly-respected author Arthur C. Clarke remained active in the genre during the nineteen eighties. He co-wrote the highly-acclaimed film 2001: A Space Odyssey, with film director Stanley Kubrick in 1968. The film was based on Clarke's short story The Sentinel of 1953. Clarke produced a sequel entitled 2010: Odyssey Two during 1982 which followed his novels of the previous decade Imperial Earth of 1975, a novel with greater human emphasis than is normally found in his works, and Fountains of Paradise in 1979, an optimistic look at man's future technological destiny. The sequel 2010: Odyssey Two of 1982 was also made into a successful film entitled 2010 in 1984.

d Frederik Pohl

Frederik Pohl wrote the sequels Beyond the Blue Event Horizon of 1980 and Heechee Rendezvous of 1984 to Man Plus of 1976, the story of a human surgically altered to be able to live on Mars. Pohl followed on those novels with The Merchants' War of 1985, a sequel to his novel The Space Merchants, written in 1953 in collaboration with the late Cyril Kornbluth.

e Brian W. Aldiss

Brian W. Aldiss produced a brilliant trilogy of books: Helliconia Spring, Helliconia Summer and Helliconia Winter (1982-1985), a brilliant exercise in imaginary planet-building.

f Tim Powers

Tim Powers added an excellent deeply-moving and evocative novel The Anubis Gates to the genre during 1983, in which Doyle a specialist in English Romantic poetry, takes a group of time tourists back to the England of 1810 where he is accidentally marooned. Aldiss (1986:425) describes one vignette from this award-winning novel:

But he is not the only person from our present back in that year. One of the most delightful and understated moments of the book is when Doyle, [the protagonist] walking down a rough-cast iron road in the London of 1810, hears someone nearby whistling Lennon and McCartney's [song] Yesterday ... The Anubis Gates is a deeply considered work. Powers has taken the trouble time and again to consider the implications of the things he is describing. This is why the book lives on more than the one level of simple adventure. He invests each scene, each character with vivid life: complex, oft

confused, but concentrated life. He neatly resolves the time paradoxes and convincingly conjures up the London of 1810.

Powers followed this with another excellent post-holocaust novel Dinner at Deviant's Palace, published in 1985.

g Lucius Shepard

Lucius Shepard contributed excellent short stories and novellas during this decade, notably Salvador in 1984 of a future Vietnam-type war, and a novel Green Eyes in the same year, a dark brooding work of intrigue and of raising the dead. Shepard afterwards published Life During Wartime in 1987, a haunting tale, interwoven with strong and effective elements of the literary movement known as Latin American magic realism, also laced with elements of the cyberpunk genre. Shepard followed up these successes with The Scalehunter's Beautiful Daughter during 1988 and The Father of Stones in the following year.

h Doris Lessing

Doris Lessing, a major novelist of the mainstream, produced five excellent novels between 1979 and 1983 collectively entitled Canopus in Argos: Archives, dealing with two mighty galactic empires trying to influence Earth (Shikasta), now a degenerate wasteland. Aldiss (1986:433) describes Lessing as a distinctly different writer compared to all others, due, in his view, to her experience of growing up in Africa:

She is less central, more visionary. Visionary, that is, not simply in providing us with vast perspectives of time and space, but in creating in us a sense of multi-dimensional cosmos, of worlds alien to our senses. She is a mystic ... The history of Shikasta parallels the Biblical Story of the Fall of Man and the expulsions from Eden, but Lessing's is no simple Adam and Eve story dwelling on guilt and free will. Hers is a very modern, almost existentialist

version and depicts not disobedience but a loss of harmony and balance; a pantheist's vision of the Fall, but with a very Von Daniken-like twist. Man, it seems, was an experiment in accelerated evolution which went wrong.

6.3.2 Further noteworthy authors

Excellent novels appeared during the nineteen eighties such as Keith Roberts's 1980 novel Molly Zero, Riddley Walker in the same year by Russel Hoban and Alistair Gray's Lanark in 1981. Mary Gentle's novel Golden Witchbreed of 1983 is a lyrical, fascinating tale of an alien race. During 1984 Sharon Baker's novel Quarrelling They Met the Dragon, painted a gritty and realistic novel of an alien planet.

Several other authors published work of high quality in the nineteen eighties, notably John Calvin Batchelor with his The Birth of the People's Republic of Antarctica in 1983 which depicted the Western world descending into chaos, and Julian May's The Man-coloured Land of 1981, which is an epic of the near future. Other noteworthy authors were Michael P. Kube-McDowell with Emprise in 1985 dealing with an alien invasion of Earth, and Kit Reed's The Revenge of the Senior Citizens ** Plus, published in 1986. Aldiss (1986:423) expresses the view that Gene Wolfe is a major author of the nineteen eighties with his 1980-83 series of post-Gothic novels of mankind in decline, entitled The Book of the New Sun. David Brin produced an excellent Progenitor series space epic between 1980 and 1985, and went on to write his poignant and moving post-catastrophe novel The Postman which appeared in 1985.

Two of the most significant books of the decade were John Crowley's Little, Big of 1981 and Alasdair Gray's Lanark in the same year. They provide complex symbolic structures of understanding. In both the inner life of the protagonists and the outer world mirror and echo one another: the deeper the reader goes into these two books, the more complex the world becomes. Science fiction is increasingly brooding about the meaning of existence (Clute 1995:192).

Further fine science fiction novels continued to appear in the second half of the decade. Noteworthy examples of science fiction are Richard Grant's Saraband of Lost Time, Kurt Vonnegut's Galápagos in 1985; both requiems for human culture at the end of time. Iain Banks wrote a rousing space adventure, Consider Phlebas in 1986, and Margaret Atwood produced The Handmaid's Tale of 1986 a chilling tale of the future, while Michael Swanwick's Vacuum Flowers and Jack Womack's Ambient, both published in 1987 present a future which is "immensely, imponderably complex" (Clute 1995:194). David Brin gave the genre an outstanding novel, The Uplift War in 1987, in which an galactic experiment to seed life on several planets goes wrong and leads to large-scale conflict.

C.J. Cherryh wrote Cyteen in 1988, a fast-paced space adventure which stretches across a galaxy and millennia. A brilliant new light arose on the genre's horizon when Nancy Kress produced An Alien Light in the same year, a complex, vividly-characterized novel of aliens experimenting on humans. Two excellent alternate histories appeared in 1988 in Terry Bisson's Fire on the Mountain and Brian Stableford's The Empire of Fear. Dan Simmons provided the novel Hyperion during 1989, a multi-faceted novel of alternate universes and the origin of intelligence and life (Clute 1995:233).

6.3.3 Advent of cyberpunk

The most exciting literary ground swell was the complex and exciting sub-genre called 'cyberpunk' which first manifested itself in William Gibson's Neuromancer of 1984. This is a new kind of cybernetic science fiction extrapolating contemporary technology, especially computer technology, into a decaying future of urban decline and equally decaying societal values and mores (cf. paragraph 4.6). Killheffer (1993:70) documents that Gibson was heavily influenced by the New Wave in the science fiction of the nineteen sixties. Gibson has a vision of a cybernetic future in cyberspace, "... an artificial universe created through the link-up of tens of millions of machines" (Aldiss 1986:411), and he rejects the prevailing spirit of science fiction in order to bring it back to street level and ordinary people. Gibson's stories centre on outlaw computer hackers, evil multinational corporation-states and social near-anarchy. He uses a *film noir* technique. Gibson's vision

of the future is one where the national states of the world rot away beneath a new triumph of corporate feudalism (Walker 1995:16).

Gibson's Neuromancer (1984) is a hard-boiled tale of computer theft featuring, as Gilmore (1986:77) describes:

... desperadoes like Case, a washed-up computer cowboy with an appetite for speed, and Molly, the cold-blooded assassin in mirrored shades who sports surgically implanted razors beneath her fingernails. Gibson's dissolute, violent heroes, though unlikely for the science fiction genre, are also frayed idealists, struggling to retain their humanity in a dangerous high-tech terrain.

Gibson's next work was Count Zero of 1986, which features a ruthless enforcer for a major and evil corporation and is superbly and darkly evocative. The dissolute and desperate characters are seemingly unconnected but are inevitably drawn together toward a common fate in the Sprawl, an urban complex stretching from Boston to Houston.

Bruce Sterling (1988:12-13) himself a highly-respected author in this new sub-genre states that Gibson was dissatisfied with the conventional science fiction of his youth, which did not evoke a credible future and had behind it a perceived proliferation of post-apocalyptic novels, space operas and sword and sorcery epics. Gibson provides a new set of literary co-ordinates away from the shopworn conventional formulae of robots, spaceships and nuclear energy:

In Gibson's work we find ourselves in the streets and alleys, in a realm of sweaty, white-knuckled survival where high tech is a constant subliminal hum, like a deranged experiment in social Darwinism ... Gibson's extrapolations show, with exaggerated clarity, the hidden bulk of an iceberg of social change. The iceberg now glides with sinister majesty across the surface of the late twentieth century, but its proportions are vast and dark.

Gibson published Mona Lisa Overdrive during 1986 to complete the loose trilogy of a future world shaped by high technology, impersonal multinational corporations and enigmatic artificial intelligences serving as background to the lives of real people.

Another noteworthy cyberpunk work by Gibson is Virtual Light of 1993 which is set in the California of the twenty-first century where a small group of the underclass of that society combat a ruthless conglomerate and its mindless law enforcement satellite called the Death Star. It is a brilliant and vividly multi-layered *coup de force*, auguring well for the future of the genre.

Bruce Sterling, another major new author, first came to notice with his novels Involution Ocean of 1977, a good first novel, followed by The Artificial Kid in 1980 dealing brilliantly with political intrigue and longevity. Sterling's Schismatrix drew much attention during 1985 as it very stylishly and vividly-evoked future solar system where two major human cultures, the cybernetically human Machinists and the psychologically and genetically-altered Shapers compete for hegemony. Islands in the Sun followed in 1988, a sophisticated meditation on the future of the Third World in an electronically-linked modern society. The novel raises fundamental political, economic and moral dilemmas.

Sterling and Gibson collaborated on the creation of a masterly-written alternate history, The Difference Engine which appeared in 1991, in which Charles Babbage, the master mathematician of the nineteenth century, succeeds in building a wood and brass computer which totally alters the course of history.

The third shining light of this exciting new movement proved to be Greg Bear whose 1985 novel Blood Music depicted a biochip (an organic means of storing information) entering a scientist's body and spreading like wildfire through humans, changing their very organic structure and mental being. Bear's complex novel Eon, of the same year, told with style the history of a mysterious asteroid appearing close to Earth, apparently created by a superior human race. Aldiss (1986:417) is fully justified in judging that it is as complex and audacious a work as Schismatrix, being

... one of those novels we read with the feeling that we *almost* understand what is being shown to us of higher maths and physics - an enjoyable *frisson* that modern-day SF all too rarely provides. Gates in space and time, bow waves of relativistic forces, alien philosophies, incomprehensible technologies - Bear presents these to us with just the right amount of explanation, awe and bluster to convince us that he knows what he's up to even as we flounder in culture shock, relishing every moment.

Neal Stephenson added a brilliant novel to the cyberpunk movement with his vividly evocative clash of cultures in Snow Crash in 1993. In this future society much of America has ensconced itself behind the gates of walled complexes guarded by vicious cyborg dogs. Nation states have all but dissolved, leaving scattered collections of neo-tribes with the most successful being those that have retained a sense of internal discipline and community responsibility (Schwartz 1995:18). Stephenson followed this success with The Diamond Age of 1995 which touches on children's educational programming and "... by extension how we build a culture that works and societies that last. How do we make smart people who think for themselves and civilizations that are indeed civil?" (Schwartz 1995:18).

Other notable authors forming part of the cyberpunk school are Lewis Shiner, Rudy Rucker, John Shirley, Marc Laidlaw, Pat Cadigan and Larry McCaffrey.

The emergence of the cyberpunk school (the New Wave of the nineteen sixties) ignited a furious debate in science fiction circles between those who saw this movement as the genre's only hope, and other critics convinced that it betrayed science fiction's traditional principles (Killheffer 1993:70).

On balance, although its vivid, multi-textured and hard-boiled style as personified in the works of Gibson, and its milieu of giant corporation states, anarchic society and its estranged petty thieves, rent-a-cops, computer cowboys, pimps and prostitutes, cyberpunk

has injected vigorous new literary blood into the genre. Gilmore (1986:78) quite correctly emphasizes that cyberpunk is actually reinvigorating a debate older than even science fiction itself: the question of whether technology is a blessing or a curse.

6.4 Nineteen nineties: new challenges

Clute (1995:206-207) presciently judges the future of science fiction:

As the Millenium looms over the horizon, people start to ask what kind of new age we face, and how we will face it. At the start of the 20th century, humanity was full of hopes and fears, and the SF [science fiction] of those long-gone days reflected the enormous changes that we sensed we were going to face. Now, we are at the other end of the century, and there are perhaps more enormous changes to come, over the hurdle of the Millenium. SF has gone from infancy through adolescent traumas to maturity in the course of a century, but it still faces the future with the same sense of challenge that it had at the beginning: face up to the future, or be left stranded. If anything, the situation is now more pressing: the century has brought us to the limits of our planet, and there is a sense in SF today that travel to other worlds is not a bold adventure, but a necessity. The Solar System is our next evolutionary step.

The impression should not be gained that this period from the middle nineteen eighties onwards, was totally dominated by the cyberpunk school. Many high-quality works of the more traditional heart of the genre continued to appear such as Colin Greenland's Take Back Plenty of 1990, a joyous space adventure, the hard science novel Earth in 1990 by David Brin; and Brain Rose of the same year by Nancy Kress. Greg Bear wrote an excellent novel of advanced technology in a future Los Angeles entitled Queen of Angels which was published in 1990. Karen Joy Fowler produced Sarah Canary in 1991, an exquisitely-told tale of a mysterious alien creature. Gwyneth Jones published White Queen

in the same year, a narrative of visiting aliens who do not understand humanity, or perhaps do not want to (Clute 1995:235).

Michael Swanwick gave the genre Stations of the Tide in 1991, a fine mixture of hard science and myth. John Varley published Steel Beach during 1992, in which humanity has been exiled from Earth by an alien race.

C.J. Cherryh's 1992 novel Hellburner is a fast-paced hard science space adventure novel of interplanetary conspiracy and intrigue, power politics and renegade space pilots fighting for survival. Vernon Vinge produced a well-written and intriguing novel A Fire Upon the Deep during the same year, in which all intelligence in the universe is governed by strange rules and intergalactic war rages on a cosmic scale. In 1992, David Wingrove produced a finely-crafted novel The Broken Wheel, on the China of the twenty-third century.

Connie Willis, an author of impressive literary style and finely-crafted characterization who had given notice of her talent with Lincoln's Dreams in 1987, wrote the outstanding 1992 time-travel novel Doomsday Book. Her literary style and fine characterization strongly balance the scientific elements in her fiction. She is an outstanding example of the necessary balance between the elements of science and fiction itself. It is not surprising to note that Willis has won more awards than almost any other author in the genre (Sargent 1995:7).

Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle wrote a good sequel to their classic The Mote in God's Eye of 1974 entitled The Gripping Hand in 1993, also published as The Moat around Murchison's Eye, in which humans struggle to contain the alien people known as 'Moties' from being driven by their terrible biological heritage to overrun the known universe.

Paul Park's tragic novel Coelestis appeared in 1993, telling of love between a human and an aristocratic alien who has been subjected to severe medication in order to appear human. The novel is set on a desolate planet colony and is haunting in its atmosphere and plot. David Zindell wrote The Broken God in 1993, a huge, complex novel dealing with

many subjects such as philosophy, science, religion and alien cultures. In the same year Jeff Noon wrote an excellent debut novel Yurt which immediately won a major literary award. Other fine debut novels in the genre in 1994 were Queen City Jazz by Kathleen Ann Noonan, and Gun, with Occasional Music by Jonathan Lethem.

Cyberpunk master William Gibson supplied yet another very impressive 1993 novel in this sub-genre, Virtual Light, a tense thriller of future law enforcement in an alienated highly technological society controlled by grant corporations.

Kim Stanley Robinson produced Red Mars in 1993, and subsequently Green Mars during 1994 in which the human colonists on Mars rebel against large-scale planetary engineering. The prolific and respected veteran author Poul Anderson produced yet another fine novel of lunar settlement, future history and human evolution entitled The Stars are also Fire in 1994.

Iain Banks wrote a fine novel Feersum Endjinn in 1994 which takes place in the far future when even the sun is dying. Brian W. Aldiss wrote Somewhere East of Life in the same year, set in a future where human memories can be recorded in cassette form and sold. Octavia E. Butler supplied a fine novel Parable of the Sower in 1994 which depicts a ravaged California in the twenty-first century in which a Black teenager becomes the leader in a new religion. Nancy Kress wrote a brilliant novel Beggars in Spain in the same year, dealing with genetic engineering on humans which creates *homo superior*: people who never sleep and are thus able to outperform ordinary humans as far as knowledge and skills are concerned. Kress would follow this success with another excellent novel on the same subject matter, Beggars and Choosers during 1995.

During 1995 Harry Turtledove produced a fine alternate world novel In the Balance, and David Brin furnished a fine volume of short stories entitled Otherness. Neal Stephenson wrote a thoughtful novel The Diamond Age in 1995, depicting the Western society to come, and a posthumous Isaac Asimov anthology titled Gold: The Final Science Fiction Collection also appeared in the same year. Brian Stableford wrote a chilling novel, The

Carnival of Destruction in 1995. Other noteworthy novels published during 1995 were Robert Charles Wilson's Mysterium, Lisa Mason's Summer of Love, and Allen Steele's The Jericho Iteration.

The year 1996 would witness further excellent new works in the genre such as Encounter With Tiber by Buzz Aldrin & Jack Barnes, a fine novel of space exploration, societal intrigue, and Julian Mary's Magnificat. Other noteworthy novels of this year were K.W. Jeters' Blade Runner: The Edge of Human, a continuation of Philip K. Dick's theme in Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep, in which genetic engineering has reached such perfection that artificial replicants are undistinguishable from human. Richard Powers also published a thoughtful novel on the same theme, Galatea 2.2. George R.R. Martin published an excellent science fantasy, A Game of Thrones. Sharon Shinn produced a fine novel, Archangel depicting a degenerate space colony, and Patrick Tilley wrote Star Wartz, a wickedly funny space adventure.

6.5 Conclusion

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 have depicted the growth of science fiction as a successful and ever-growing genre of popular fiction from its inception to the present day. Science fiction was the literary progeny of the age of modern science and technology, born in the crucible formed between popular fiction and science. After an auspicious literary beginning at the hands of such gifted authors of the quality of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley and H.G. Wells, the emerging genre found itself mainly confined to popular magazines in the nineteen twenties and thirties, which fell under the sway of Hugo Gernsback initially, who overemphasized science to the detriment of literary quality, originality, intellectual structure, characterization and descriptive quality.

By the nineteen fifties science fiction authors were starting to express the genre in good, sometimes even stylish, workmanlike literary fashion, and increasingly featured engrossing religious, philosophical and political themes. Major authors such as Asimov, Clarke, Heinlein, Herbert and Miller appeared, and their works infused great originality and

vitality into the genre. The prevailing literary dominant of science fiction was still that of realism, whilst mainstream literature had already been influenced by the literary and cultural dominant known as modernism.

The nineteen sixties witnessed a New Wave of authors, for whom literary style and thematic pessimism were the guiding stars. This period brought welcome added literary sophistication and polish to the genre. Major authors such as Ballard, Delany, Ellison and Zelazny contributed much to the genre, and left an indelible imprint of literary elegance and originality on the genre. The science fiction of this period was in the literary sense, close to and dominated by the modernist open context, innovative techniques and self-referential texts and verbal structure. By the late nineteen sixties post-modernist mainstream literary influences and techniques such as flatness, lack of mimetic depth, loss of discrete subjectivity, *pastiche*, jargon, jumbled *collage*, and the hysterically sublime were evident.

From the nineteen fifties onwards many original, individualistic and inventive authors refused to conform to any established group, school or style, and continued to write in their own inimitable mode. Notable here are Anderson, Dickson, Farmer, Martin and the visionary and mystical Dick.

The seventies evinced a synthesis and maturity concentrating on societal issues such as the ecology, feminism, computer science, drugs, nuclear power and the potential of new advances like biotechnology and cloning. Major talents like Le Guin, Silverberg, Benford and Martin came to the fore in this decade. The cyberpunk movement would be viewed by influential critics as the supreme literary movement of late capitalism, if not of post-modernism itself.

The nineteen eighties and the early nineties thus demonstrated new advances, swiftly and superbly supplied by Gibson, Sterling, Bear, Shiner, Rucker and many other new talents in the 'cyberpunk' sub-genre, which features hard-boiled plots and frightening corporate dictatorships in a milieu of social decadence and urban near-anarchy and decay. The

protagonists are mostly desperate and disenfranchised people, petty thieves, computer cowboys and hackers.

Other major talents to come to the fore were Bear, Shepard and Wolfe each of whom supplied imaginative and hauntingly evocative additions to the genre, Bear's hard science approach yet with soaring imagination, Shepard with his strong element of magic realism, and Wolfe's brooding post-Gothicism.

Special mention should be made of the many excellent woman authors who have contributed much to the genre, once an almost exclusively male preserve. Noteworthy, to name but a few, are Charnas, Cherryh, Henderson, Kress, Russ, Tiptree and Wilhelm, all of whom brought thematic renewal, much-needed feminism perspective and fresh insight into the human condition and society itself, as well as gender relations.

Ursula K. Le Guin (1993:18-19), a foremost author in the genre, deftly summarizes the great advances made in the genre over the last few decades by stating that without belittling earlier authors' works, it would be fair to say

... that science fiction changed around 1960, and that the change tended towards an increase in the number of writers and readers, the breadth of subject, the depth of treatment, the sophistication of language and technique, and the political and literary consciousness of the century ... Metafiction, self-reflexive narrative that openly draws not only on 'reality' and 'imagination' but also on the body of existing fiction, is a major element in contemporary literature, including magical realism and all post-modernist narrative. Science fiction during the three decades of our collection has increasingly shared in that reflexive movement, using the mature body of science fiction as poets use the tradition of all poetry, to explore and test the possibilities and potentialities of form, emotion and significance.

The genre has thus achieved a high degree of literary sophistication, and is unmatched for sheer thematic versatility and evocative mood among the popular genres.

This overview of the development of the genre has been confined to a concise outline, whilst, still seeking, to provide a balanced picture of the principal authors and the best works in this rich and multi-dimensional genre. Knowledgeable critics and literary historians in this field will undoubtedly be able to point to certain omissions as far as important authors and works are concerned. Such exclusions were unfortunately necessitated by the constraints mentioned.

Having established the cultural and literary origin of science fiction, described the development of the genre, the cultural-literary determinants which influenced it, and identified the most prominent authors and works within the genre, this study will devote the next chapter to determining the essence of the genre (i.e. its dominant and recurring themes, prevalent literary characteristics, myths, symbolism and formulae) which would influence its evaluation. The essence thus established, will in turn serve as basis for the design of criteria for the evaluation of individual works of science fiction

Science fiction is certain to be as societally relevant, thought-provoking and entertaining for the coming twenty-first century readership as it has proved to be since Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus, published on 11 March 1818.

CHAPTER 7

LITERARY ESSENCE OF SCIENCE FICTION AND THE EVALUATION OF INDIVIDUAL WORKS

7.1 Introduction

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 have described the literary origins of science fiction as a genre, traced its distinct phases of literary development and identified its principal authors and their most prominent works. The purpose of this chapter will be to determine what criteria should be used to evaluate science fiction, as evaluation will form an integral part of the selection process itself.

This chapter will examine the essence of science fiction as a genre in order to determine those elements which would affect the evaluation of works of science fiction. Aspects which will be studied will be, *inter alia*, its generic tradition, thematic core, conventions, formulae and megatextual character. Having identified these salient generic characteristics, the next step will be to study conventional literary criteria as utilized to evaluate mainstream fiction. A choice will be made as to whether science fiction should be evaluated by means of conventional mainstream literary criteria, or whether these criteria should be adapted for science fiction or even replaced in certain instances, by criteria based on the salient characteristics of science fiction. The final part of the chapter will be devoted to drawing up a list of criteria judged most suitable for determining the inherent value of works of science fiction, and arranging them in order of importance for later utilization in the projected model of the selection of science fiction at micro-level, which will be presented in Chapter 12.

Any discussion of science fiction as a genre should proceed from the dictum of the Roman poet Horace that the purpose of art is to delight and instruct (Delany 1984:136). Science fiction is the popular *ars poetica* of the twentieth century (and quite likely of the twenty-first century). The genre has attained a formidable literary sophistication and prominence in commercial publishing since its origins in the nineteenth century. Spinrad (1990:55), a foremost critic and leading author in the genre, reports five hundred science fiction novels appearing in the United States per annum at the beginning of the final decade of the twentieth century (Spinrad 1990:7).

Science fiction as a discrete, popular genre has been recognized as a significant literary form, viewed, as demonstrated in paragraphs 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6, as being on the cusp of post-modernism and late capitalism. It is noticeable that most of the serious works of criticism dealing with these cultural and social phenomena prominently recognize and specifically comment on science fiction often devoting separate chapters to the genre, e.g. Everman (1986) in Postmodern fiction: a bio-bibliographical guide, edited by the eminent critic Larry McCaffery.

Science fiction is the one genre which addresses the human condition within the revelation that humanity has, in the second half of the twentieth century acquired truly awesomely destructive powers, which would conceivably destroy its habitat. The reverse is also equally true, as humanity, collectively, first set foot on the moon in 1969, and is dispatching unmanned probes to explore the planets in the solar system in which this planet is situated. The future is thus palpably being experienced on humanity's doorstep (cf. paragraph 3.7).

The world has indeed become science fiction and collectively humanity is increasingly suffering from technological trauma and cultural shock. Bruce Sterling (1986:ix-x), *avant*

garde post-modernist author of science fiction, declares forthrightly and unassailably that mankind in the West is living in a science-fictional mode, indeed “living out the existences predicted by earlier generations of SF [science fiction] authors”. The noted science fiction critic Bukatman (1993:6) concurs with Chtcheglov’s (1981:2) assessment that science fiction is the genre that has represented since the onset of the Space Age, the most sustained attempt to identify and narrate the ambiguities that mark the technological contours of contemporary culture.

J.G. Ballard (1985:2-3), a leading *avant garde* author of science fiction, firmly believes that science fiction, far from being a minor literary offshoot, in fact represents:

The main literary tradition of the 20th century, and certainly its oldest - *a tradition of imaginative response to science and technology that runs in an intact line through H.G. Wells, Aldous Huxley, the writers of modern American science fiction ... No other form of fiction has the vocabulary of ideas and images to deal with the present, let alone the future.* The dominant characteristic of the modern mainstream novel is its sense of individual isolation, its mood of introspection and alienation, a state of mind always assumed to be the hallmark of 20th century consciousness. Far from it ... Among those areas neglected by the traditional novel are, above all, the dynamics of human societies (the traditional novel tends to depict society as static), and man’s place in the universe ... science fiction at least attempts to place a philosophical and metaphysical frame around the most important events within our lives and consciousness. [Emphasis added].

The unique premise of science fiction is to be found in the fact that, as Daniel Bell, the eminent sociologist stated “... technology governs change in human affairs while culture guards continuity. Hence technology is always disruptive and creates a crisis for culture” (McDougal 1985:12). Science fiction is the literary response to this cultural shock, and elucidates humanity’s new and marginal position within the cosmos (Rose 1981:37).

The genre is suited *par excellence* to defining and illuminating humanity's confrontation with the inhuman, whether the latter is to be found within time, space, machine or monster. An ever-present possibility in this genre is that humanity will, through its own inability to control and psychologically master and internalize the rampant and radical scientific/technological *coup de force* being experienced in contemporary, post-modern society; itself become the inhuman.

Science fiction has enduring literary and societal value inasmuch that it can simultaneously entertain and construct, and quite often even horrify the reader with future extrapolation or visions. This is the unique literary virtue of the genre which, arguably, exceeds that of all fiction, mainstream or popular. Mainstream authors such as Russell Hoban, Thomas Pynchon, Doris Lessing and Italo Calvino are now plundering science fiction's treasure of symbols and icons as they now fittingly embody what these authors wish to project. Northrop Frye has argued that the future directions of mainstream fiction are generally to be found already extant in popular literature (Hume 1982:26).

It is the considered opinion of this researcher that science fiction surpasses, in its scope, the majority of serious fiction which concentrates mostly on inner psychological characterization, insight and self-knowledge. Science fiction furthermore exceeds, in its general depth and sophistication, the all-encompassing formulae of such popular genres as detective fiction, Western novels, social melodramas and popular romances. Science fiction addresses itself to the problems caused by industrialization, urban squalor and overcrowding, genetic engineering, the threat of nuclear holocaust, a crisis of faith in general and a pervasive perception of alienation from society, in far greater measure than any other genre, mainstream or popular.

Science fiction as a genre exhibits certain salient characteristics, the identification of which will assist in determining criteria for the evaluation of works of science fiction.

7.3.1 Conventions of science fiction

Science fiction is a genre or branch of speculative fiction which deals with human response to changes on the level of scientific knowledge and technology (cf. Brewis 1992:71-72). It is a genre whose necessary conditions are the prescience and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and of which the main formal device is an imaginative framework, alternative to the author's empirical environment, and typified by the narrative dominance of a fictional *novum* validated by cognitive logic. It contains elements of older literary influences such as Romanticism and the Gothic (cf. paragraphs 1.4.5 and 4.3).

A genre, the term taken from the French, is used in literary criticism to denote a literary species or form. Genres, Todorov (1976:161) reminds us, come from other genres (cf. Brewis 1992:40-43). Mention has been made of the Romantic and Gothic influences on and in this new and vigorous genre (cf. paragraph 4.3). Science fiction is a highly self-conscious genre. It has, in the past two decades especially, been the focus of much serious and intensive literary criticism and debate, and many critics differ sharply on various facets of the genre.

A genre can be said to be a group of themes and literary conventions (devices, principles or forms). There is a school of thought holding that there should be a poetics of narrative in which a series of vigorous structural models could be shown to generate all existing and future texts. Yet another approach is that of viewing a genre as a set of linguistic practices (Parrinder 1980a:xviii). One could also characterize a genre as a set of texts sharing certain rhetorical similarities, although this taxonomy would not account for borderline cases or the overlapping of texts of different genres (Delany 1984:218).

This study follows the approach that science fiction is to be seen as a living and dynamic literary mode or genre sharing certain central themes, formulae and characteristics with a distinctive fictivity and subjunctivity (that which is imagined or wished or could come to pass), and crucially, as Culler (1975:136) notes "... a function of language, a particular relation to the world which serves as norm or expectation to guide the reader in his or her encounter with the text". The only proviso set by this dissertation is that any of these generic elements should fall within the confluence of the following parameters: there must of necessity be the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, an imaginative framework, and the introduction of a *novum* validated by cognitive logic (cf. paragraphs 1.4.5 and 1.4.6). These generic limits are wide enough to permit a wide spectrum of science fiction and include all its discrete sub-genres. Modern genre theory does not, as noted by Wellek and Warren (1956:225), limit the number of possible genres, or prescribe rules to authors.

7.3.2 Thematic core of science fiction

The ultimate theme of the genre is, in the words of Woodman (1979:114), man's attempt through science to come to terms with the cosmos he inhabits. The same core theme is correctly identified by Spinrad (1990:221), if couched in more dramatic terms, when he describes science fiction as:

... a literature peculiarly relevant to the transformation crisis our species is presently attempting to negotiate, to wit the question of whether or not we will be able to handle the cosmic powers we have seized in our ... hand long enough to evolve into a space-going culture with long-term survivability. Or whether we will destroy ourselves and our planet before we grow up.

In essence the core thematic concern of science fiction is to define and relate humanity in and to the universe. Science fiction is also the transformation of the unknown into the

known, the changing of chaos and orderly cosmos by breaching a symbolic barrier, aspects which form the central action of many science fiction short stories and novels (Wolfe 1979:15).

Religion is an important and pervasive theme in the genre. Mackey (1984:112) finds that all science fiction is a metaphor for transcendence. Science fiction has from its inception understood itself as a genre destined to usher in the view age. It evinces a visionary and a missionary spirit and demands, in the words of Gunn (1975:225) "... an opportunity to urge salvation, a change in ethics or morals or religion, a new way of thinking or a new way of life itself".

Further themes often found in the genre are those of ungovernable manifestations of change in the technological, social, economic and political fields incorporating new machinery, artificial intelligence, cyborgs (partly artificial humans or partly human robots), super computers and changes in the global climate and even the human organism, both genetically, physically and mentally.

Another theme is that of the human being acquiring strange new psychic powers such as telepathy, telekinesis and other paranormal attributes and forms of extra-sensory perception.

Science fiction is also thematically much influenced by the fascination of *homo sapiens* with the concept of war. Many works of science fiction deal with war: planetary, interplanetary and intergalactic with the accompanying stellar and galactic empires and spacefleets. The latest science fiction novels and stories of the post-Vietnam War era show a creditable disillusionment with the futility, waste and immorality of war.

The sweeping magnitude and breadth of vision caused by contemporary science fiction has given the genre an epic quality. It is perhaps because of these sweeping, epic themes, that modern science fiction mostly depicts characters who have become representatives or even

carriers of a wider collective, often the entire human race (Manlove 1986:6). This characteristic will be further elaborated upon when discussing the stylistics of and criteria for the evaluation of individual works.

7.3.3 Mythical aspect of science fiction

Myths originated as archetypal stories and fictions in primitive societies to express their laws, rituals, societal institutions and structures: these collective narratives, as civilization developed, divided into two branches, one branch providing the metaphorical patterns of literature and the other the conceptual ideas underlying the culture as a whole (Frye 1982:4-5). In Western Europe an encyclopaedic, closed myth, mainly derived from the Bible, dominated both the literary and cultural mythic traditions until the advent of Romanticism, which created a new, open mythological system, which allowed anyone who was capable of world-building to construct an own myth system. Lomax (1989:243) comments that this was the secular equivalent of Luther's priesthood of all believers. This mythic fragmentation also inspired a proliferation of new literary forms and genres, of which science fiction is one, designed to express these new systems (Lomax 1989:244).

Like dreams, myths are productions of the human imagination. Their images, although derived from the material world and its history are, like dreams, in the view of Campbell as cited by Walter (1993:9):

... revelations of the deepest hopes, desires and fears, potentiality and conflicts, of the human will ... every myth, whether or not by intention is psychologically symbolic. Its narratives and images are to be read, therefore, not literally, but as metaphors.

Stories, whether of ancient or contemporary origin only become myths when they are accepted by those who believe that they express some already perceived truth about the meaning of life, and as O'Flaherty (1989:23) illustrates, the ideas and myths of science

fiction have in some cases begun to function as general myths. The most pervasive myth in Western culture is the myth of the sacrificial killing of the king, often a fisher king, in times of infertility, social turmoil or crisis. Versions of this can frequently be found in science fiction, whenever a socially-representative character dies for the good of society (Scholes & Rabkin 1977:165).

Many mythical archetypes can be recognized such as the god in disguise, the invasion from outer space, doomsday, the war between good and evil, and much of science fiction deals with great cosmic and ethical questions. The element of transcendence is also frequently found. Science fiction is a modern-day form of mythology (Prothero 1990:32-34), and provides a body of literature in which great mythological classes take refuge in a demythologized age; with science fiction seeming to be the only form of adult literature able to handle mythology with panache (O'Flaherty 1989:28-31).

7.3.4 Formulae of science fiction

Although contemporary science fiction is still often regarded as a formulaic genre, several respected academic critics have found that the formula found in the genre is not explicit. Larson (1981:38) finds that science fiction writers and critics have traditionally celebrated the genre's freedom from set conditions. Science fiction has been seen as different from other types of popular literature, such as Westerns or detective fiction, because its works are not bounded by preset formulae within which an author must work. Parrinder (1980a:54) illustrates that science fiction's formulaic basis is not all explicit, whilst Rose (1981:2) points to the fact that although:

Most popular literature is formulaic; science fiction is not, at least not in the same way. The crime, the perpetrator, the investigator: the plot formula of detective fiction is capable of marvelous variation, but is always recognizable as the constant factor of the form. There is no comparably explicit formula to which one can readily point as characteristic of science

fiction. Rather, there is a fairly large vocabulary of simultaneously-available formulas from which a science-fiction writer can choose ... The alien-encounter story (the alien may be malevolent, benevolent or neither); the time-travel story; the fable of the questing scientist, mad or otherwise; the dystopian satire, the postapocalypse story; the evolutionary fable - each of them is a recognizable science-fiction category with its own formulaic characteristics, and there are many other categories as well. Western stories, too, employ a variety of plots, but Westerns are readily definable in terms of the symbolic landscape, the peripheral region midway between civilization and wilderness, in which the action is always set. The settings of science-fiction stories, however, range even more widely than the plots. They may be as commonplace as contemporary New York or as exotic as the vicinity of a neutron star. Indeed there is some question of whether science fiction is a popular genre analogous to detective fiction or westerns. [Emphasis added].

The respected critic Wolfe (1979:229) cautions that science fiction may well have its formulae, but it is doubtful that these formulae can be expressed as simply as those of the western and the detective story, as the formulae of science fiction could be based on idea rather than narrative, and are possibly bound up with the use of certain symbols. Broderick (1993:26) adds further impetus to the justified view that science fiction is not a simplistic formula genre, by pointing out that science fiction textuality escapes the truly formulaic in its capacity and dynamic need for linguistic play and innovation. Samuelson (1993b:192) agrees that the accretive model of the genre is too amorphous for a single formula to categorize. Wolfe (1979:225) finds that the themes, images and structures of science fiction take on a cultural and psychological significance far deeper than mere formulae and reveal patterns of belief by means of recurring icons which are embedded in contemporary culture.

These views and considerations will be of value when discussing criteria for the evaluation of individual works in the genre.

7.3.5 Megatextual quality of science fiction

Mention has been made (in paragraph 7.3.1) of Culler's (1975) thesis that a genre should be conceived of as a conventional function of language, a particular relation to the world which serves as a norm of expectation for the reader in his or her reading of the text. Delany (1981:235) adopts a similar approach by stating his view that the best way to distinguish between genres is not to base such distinction on rhetorical similarities, but instead to regard the distinction between genres as differences between reading protocols. Delany (1981:235) notes that the genre is not a set of texts or rhetorical figures, but rather a reading protocol complex: ways of reading and responding to sentences, ways of making various sentences and various texts make sense.

In an earlier article, Delany (1978:35) had already commented that to read science fiction as if it were mundane (i.e. mainstream) fiction, would be a literary betrayal of the former, as the reader of science fiction needs a certain imaginative facility. Such reading energy is in Delany's (1978:35-36) view the element which changes the structure of the science fiction text and determines the imaginative trajectory of the reader through it.

Science fiction is therefore in the view of Delany (1984:156-157) primarily a way of reading, as science fiction is the "... only written form that consciously and conscientiously *misrepresents* the world in a potentially infinite number of ways that remain, nevertheless, lucidly readable". Delany (1984:88) illustrates this reading protocol or mode by using three sentences:

Her world exploded.

He turned on his left side.

The door dilated.

The first sentence could, in mainstream fiction, be a metaphor for the emotional shock of a fictional character. In science fiction it could be a planet exploding. The second sentence would in mainstream fiction most probably mean a person turning in his sleep. In a science fiction text it could be a person or robot activating electronic circuitry in a space suit. A door "dilating" could only be found in science fiction. Warrick (1980:7-8) notes that the science fiction imagination is "... a specialized form of the literary imagination", by reason of its catalytic idea or image which differs from that of mainstream fiction. Science fiction furthermore acts out its drama in a time other than the present and, in addition, postulates a dimension of the unknown new technology, new settings, new creatures. Science fiction thus creates a new cosmos. The reader must overcome humanity's present limitations in space, time and being to mentally transport himself or herself to a new world.

Most of the technical difficulties in the writing and reading of science fiction derive from the fact that the culture upon which the fiction's verisimilitude rests is itself a fiction, an imaginary construct and thus unfamiliar to readers (Spencer 1983:40). *Autrement dit*, the fiction of science fiction is doubly fictive. McKay (1994:52) describes science fiction as being predicated on

... a *doubled difference*. Not only is it different because - like all fiction - it is "written" and not the real world, but it also seeks to displace or problematise the real world with its own imagined one. Its opening gambit is fictionality, its difference is a fictional construct, in a range of contents. This is science fiction's innovation, if you like, by my argument. A textual *novum* to use Darko Suvin's term ... *That's* its difference from other fiction, that it visibly offers a constructed fictional world. All fiction does this of course, but it is largely science fiction (or rather forms of non-realist fiction, including sf [science fiction] and fantasy) that opens with the text positioning the reader within the knowingly fictional framework of an imagined world.

The writer therefore has to ensure that description does not unnecessarily delay the plot and narrative progress. One method of avoiding this is, as Spencer (1983:40) elucidates, the use of an oblique approach in which unfamiliar things are briefly alluded to as if the reader were familiar with these social, technological, political and other customs and practices. The technique allows for literary economy as a single word can suggest a great deal about this fictional, strange society.

In effect the author of the science fiction text and the reader thereof are conceived of as inhabiting the same literary culture. Angenot (1979a:9-19) has effectively demonstrated that all science fiction texts suggest, in the course of the reading act, a fictive paradigm in the semiotic sense. Angenot (1979a:16) states that

In a fiction set on an alien planet, what represents for the 'terran reader' the utmost strangeness must be perfectly trivial and banal for the Alien narrator. It would therefore be totally abnormal for the narrator to stress this obvious feature at the outset. It seems more 'realistic' that such data be given *en passant*, late in the narrative, and in a rather indirect way.

The result of this oblique literary technique is that the reader must approach a text almost as if it were couched in code. The reader reads in an alert, detective style, collecting data which may (or may not) be significant. The reader is, in fact, constructing the salient features of the culture from the clues which the author provides (Spencer 1983:41). Delany (1981:235-236) views genres as reading protocols with the difference between genres as being a set of distinctions between reading protocols, between ways of responding to sentences and making various sentences and texts make sense. The texts which are central to the genre become those texts that were clearly written to exploit a particular protocol complex.

One crucial factor identified by Broderick (1995:xiii) is that this code must be learned by reading. The coding of each individual science fiction text depends to a large extent on an

unusually concentrated *mega-text or encyclopaedia* "... of imaginary worlds, tropes, tools, lexicons, even grammatical innovations borrowed from other textualities. The enormously ramified intertextuality of s.f. [science fiction] makes it a specialised mode" (Broderick 1995:xiii). Attebery (1992:107) has demonstrated that science fiction also uses science to help create its megatext. The nourishing medium, the origin of the imagery, the motive of the narrative is to be found in the contents, assumption and *Weltanschauung* of modern science and technology.

The semiotic code and intertextual mode in which science fiction is read should be borne in mind when evaluating science fiction.

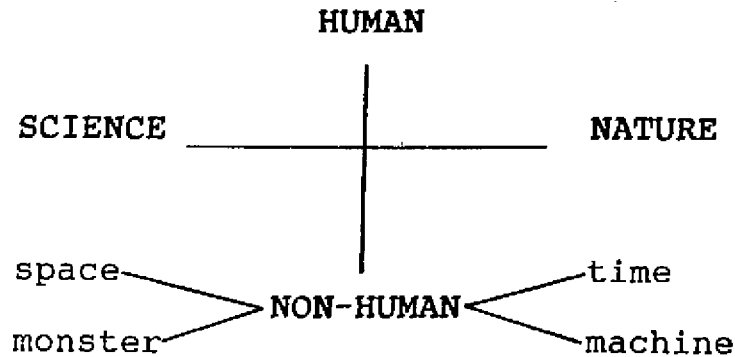
7.3.6 Literary paradigm of science fiction

Science fiction has a distinct general literary paradigm or characteristic pattern, correctly identified by Rose (1981:26) as the effect of estrangement (or defamiliarization) as well as that of being launched into an unfamiliar world (cf. paragraph 1.4.5). Rose (1981:29) notes that science fiction and its literary progenitors, the Gothic narrative and the romantic tale are concerned with the relationship between the ordinary and the extraordinary. Especially science fiction typically involves a struggle between science and nature as well as the conflict between the human (which can in some cases be represented by science itself) and the inhuman. The pre-occupation of the genre with the inhuman is correctly judged by Rose (1981:37) as being in large part a response to the cultural shock created by the discovery of humanity's marginal position in the cosmos.

Perusal of the available subject literature does not indicate a more inclusive, enlightening paradigm than that advanced by Rose (1981:29-38), who postulates that the paradigmatic opposition between the human and the non-human is bisected by a secondary opposition between science and nature as illustrated in Figure 7.1, which has been amended in order to add the sub-divisions of the non-human motif as discussed elsewhere by Rose (1981:32-33).

FIGURE 7.1

Literary paradigm of science fiction



The paradigm of the genre, as suggested by Rose (1981) thus shows science fiction existing as a result of the tension between humanity and the non-human, further influenced by the opposition between science and nature. Rose (1981:49) summarizes that "... the space that the genre inhabits is not a prison, rigid and unyielding, but a flexible and dynamic field of semantic tension. It is this condition that makes a living genre possible".

Science fiction, in general, is a mode of romance with a strong inherent tendency towards myth, although it is not a nostalgic genre, being primarily concerned with alternative possibilities. The subject matter of science fiction is romantic, being in Mary Shelley's words, not concerned with "ordinary relations of existing events" (Parrinder 1980a:51). Modern science fiction has been instrumental in conveying the sheer excitement and sometimes horror of societies created by science and technology (Parrinder 1980a:51).

Science fiction has the unique value of structural fabulation: fiction that offers us a world clearly and radically discontinuous from the one the reader knows, yet it requires that the reader confront that world. In works of structural fabulation the tradition of speculative fiction is modified, as Scholes (1976:54-55) points out, by an awareness of the nature of

the universe as a system of systems with the insights of the science of the past century accepted as fictional points of departure. Otherwise stated, science fiction shows the reader that rationality can be made consistent with the wildest imaginings of new environments and new forms of life. It lets the reader experience the wonder that was once available only through fantasy and fairy tales, without sacrificing the hard edge of reason that connects the human being to this world (Wolfe 1979:225). The scientific element in science fiction provides a sense of ground rules by virtue of which the narrative will be intelligible. The scientific elements allow the fictional world, however strange, to be accessible to the reader “offering it up to meaning as well as setting it apart from these other secondary universes of fantasy and the marvellous, which answer to quite different controlling principles” (Mathieson 1985:24).

Science fiction is heterotopic and incorporates estranged, supernatural or non-empirical elements in its discourse, but grounds these elements in a fictivity which takes for granted the explicability of the universe (Malmgren 1991a:10). Science fiction exerts a fascination because of its estranging effect, whilst still retaining the element of cognition (cf. paragraph 1.4.5).

Science fiction generally permits the freedom to actualize situations which could only otherwise be metaphorical or symbolic: it extends the range of fictional events that can be made literal within the fictional world of the text (Mathieson 1985:23).

7.4 **Relationship between mainstream fiction and science fiction**

Fiction is the art of contriving through the written word, in prose narrative, representations of human life that instruct or divert, or both. Science fiction, it will be recalled, (cf. paragraph 1.4.5) is defined as a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of *estrangement* and *cognition* and of which *the main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment, typified by the narrative dominance of a fictional novum, validated by*

cognitive logic. The factors of estrangement and an imaginative framework alternative to the author's quotidian, empirical framework thus differentiate it from the realistic literary mainstream of the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. (The element of cognition also differentiates science fiction from fantasy narratives which are inimical to the empirical world and its laws, as explained in paragraph 1.4.6.)

Fundamentally, in literature, realism is the portrayal of life with fidelity, and is not as a rule concerned with the presentation of the supranormal or transcendental. The use of the literary terms 'real' or 'realistic' clearly implies their antitheses, like 'unreal', 'unrealistic', 'fantastic' or 'improbable'. 'Realistic' thus by implication excludes science fiction (Cuddon 1985:553-554).

Mainstream or serious literature is also described as mimetic literature from the classical Greek *mimetikos* meaning 'imitation'. Mimetic would thus be a fiction narrative in which the experiential, realistic, quotidian world of the writer is evoked (Broderick 1995:24).

Mainstream, realistic or mimetic literature is generally seen as 'serious' literature which generally resists imitation and replication as in the words of Cioffi (1982:8):

... the subtle tones, moods, nuances, and multifaceted characters it employs are difficult to describe and define, and even more difficult to imitate. Though certain examples of serious literature will inspire imitation that eventually mushrooms into a popular genre, serious literature does not as a rule, contain scenes, characters and plots that have appeared regularly in large numbers of work. Whereas serious literature emerges without easily recognizable antecedents, popular literature seems to feed upon itself.

Cioffi (1982) is referring to the science fiction of the nineteen thirties and forties. Contemporary science fiction does not have the explicit formulaic basis that characterized the science fiction of the first half of the twentieth century, in fact there is in present-day

science fiction no comparably explicit formula to which one can readily point as characteristic of the genre, only a large vocabulary of simultaneously-available formulae from which a science fiction author can choose.

The literary topography in which science fiction criticism operates has long been established. There has been the literary territory known as mainstream fiction (which excludes science fiction) within which the literary-institutional determinants of the category of acceptable taste and the constitution of canons are situated. Outside of this territory lies the fictional area known as science fiction; in the words of Luckhurst (1991:358):

The “ghetto”, the site of the containment of the “impoverished” genre of SF [science fiction], imposed either by external pressures of canon-formation or by the internal waywardness of SF’s twentieth-century history (condensed into the much reviled name of Gernsback). Between these two sites lies the border and its policing; a line of inclusion/exclusion which from the point of view of the literary institution, marks the absolute divide between “high” and “low literature” ... the strategies for legitimizing SF as genre worth studying have either been to validate SF in terms of categories perceived to constitute acceptance by the “mainstream”, or else to argue a specificity for SF, its peculiar virtues and meaning-effects, and thus establish for it a value independent from the categories of the “mainstream”.

Even since the nineteen sixties and the advent of the New Wave in science fiction (cf. paragraph 5.4), there has been an interaction between mainstream fiction and science fiction, initially between high-modernist fiction and science fiction, followed by the incorporation of post-modern poetics in science fiction. This interaction eventually became a feedback loop, with elements cycling from science fiction to mainstream post-modernist fiction and back to science fiction; or via the opposite direction (McHale 1992a:229).

The attraction of post-modernist mainstream fiction for science fiction critics lies in the former's transgressive aesthetic, its erasure of the borders between disciplines, discursive regimes and crucially for science fiction, the boundary between the high and the low, in the words of Luckhurst (1994:37):

With postmodernism, it would appear, the ghetto walls of the popular can be dismantled and SF can (re)join the "mainstream" of fiction, no longer being equated with the embarrassing and degrading label of popular genre fiction. The longing for (re)entry to the "mainstream" is the enduring central element of SF criticism.

This dissertation has demonstrated (cf. paragraphs 7.3.4, 7.3.5 and 7.3.6) that science fiction has unique characteristics as regards *inter alia* its formulaic essence, its reading protocol and its megatextual and paradigmatic qualities. This researcher concurs with Jameson's (1982b:149) view that "... it would be a mistake to make the 'apologia' for SF [science fiction] in terms of specifically 'high' literary value ...", as science fiction has a complex and interesting literary history of its own, with its own dynamic, which is not that of high culture and mainstream fiction.

Not all the criteria applicable to the evaluation of mainstream fiction need necessarily apply to science fiction, or if applicable may be less (or more) important than with mainstream fiction. These aspects will be examined in paragraph 7.5.

7.5 Conventional literary criteria as utilized in the evaluation of mainstream fiction

Traditionally certain broad, generally-accepted criteria for judging fiction have been utilized, which show a large degree of overall similarity even if not always utilizing exactly the same component criteria.

Altenbernd and Lewis (1966:55-80) stipulate the following criteria:

- Plot and action
- Characterization
- Setting
- Theme
- Subject matter
- Language
- Atmosphere and tone
- Allegory and symbolism
- Point of view of the author

Scannell (1986:21-35) proposes the following criteria:

- Plot
- Characterization
- Language
- Dialogue
- Imagery and symbolism
- Entertainment
- Atmosphere

Oosthuizen (1991:304-313) stipulates the following criteria as determined by Cloete, Botha and Malan (1989) for all level of fiction, i.e. serious fiction ('complex text'), solid novels ('accessible text') and light fiction ('genre fiction')

- Characterization
- Narrative point of view
- Plot
- Chronological treatment

Setting

Language

Oosthuizen (1991:304-313) find that these criteria can be utilized for each level of fiction, from serious to light fiction by qualifying the criterion for each level, e.g. as far as characterization in the serious fiction novel (complex text) is concerned the critic would examine the techniques used to depict characters as well as the function of these characters within the structure of the novel. For solid fiction (accessible text) characters need to be well-rounded, interesting and possess a certain identity. Characters in light fiction (genre fiction) must be acceptable within the culture of the reader in order that the reader may be able to identify with them. Characters at this level of fiction are stereotyped.

Brace (1969:42-124) concentrates on the criteria characterization, plot, theme, setting, dialogue, style and theme.

The most balanced and composite group of conventional literary criteria is provided by Fadiman (1992:117-128), who lists the following:

7.5.1 Plot

The device known as the story or scheme which propels the work of fiction and is the nucleus of the narrative. In serious mainstream fiction the plot need not necessarily be raw action, or even be interesting. It can consist of the hidden syllogism of the mystery story, be prolonged solipsism, or even desultory or depend on coincidence, provided the actualities (or potentialities) of human life are credibly expressed with a sense of illumination or some mode of artistic satisfaction on the part of the reader. In science fiction the plot is of importance as it is one of the devices to help the reader's attention.

7.5.2 Characterization

In the evaluation of serious mainstream literature the novelist is seen as occupied with the convolutions of the human personality under the stress of artfully selected experience, whereas the inferior author tends to be preoccupied with plot. There is, as Fadiman (1992:119-122) illustrates, an *avant garde* tendency in the *nouveau roman* to deliberately demote character. True novelists of serious fiction are still seen to remain creators of character, with characters that seem to readers to have a life outside of the bounds of the book containing them, earning their creators the most regard.

Science fiction was, in its earliest phases often accused of not presenting credible, sentient characters and relying on flat, unmotivated characters. Malmgren (1991a:56) cites the observation that science fiction in the view of some critics, given its grounding in the epistemology of science and its acceptance of a value-free universe, is generically inimical to the explanation of character “... in the twentieth century science fiction is centrally about the disappearance of character in the same sense in which the eighteenth and nineteenth century bourgeois novel is about the emergence of character”.

7.5.3 Setting

The makeup and behaviour of fictional characters depend on their environment quite as much as on the personal dynamic with which their authors endow them. It is possible that the main locale of a novel can assume an importance in the reader's imagination comparable to that of the characters, and yet somehow separable from them. Fadiman (1992:118) points to the Wessex region as a gigantic, brooding presence in the novels of Thomas Hardy, the memorable settings found in H.G. Wells's science fiction novels, as well as Aldous Huxley's Brave New World. The science fiction author therefore has a doubly challenging task as an imaginary setting in the future has to be invented in

convincing detail. Mainstream fiction is the mimetic depiction of the real world, whereas science fiction has to convincingly depict a world which will never exist.

7.5.4 Narrative method

Traditionally where there has been a narrative, there is a narrator who acted as intermediary between the fictional characters and the reader, and who could impose own attitudes and points of view on the reader. Innovations in modern fiction have sought more objectivity so that characters appear to work out their own destinies without undue prompting by the author or overt imposition of the author's point of view (Fadiman 1992:118-119). It is worth noting at this point that the science fiction author Robert A. Heinlein's generally highly-acclaimed works have been criticized for what some critics perceive as an overt pre-occupation with military power and right-wing philosophy (Aldiss 1986:267). The narrator in a work of science fiction may be a person of the future or even an alien, which again would be a different perspective than that found in mainstream fiction.

7.5.5 Myth, symbolism and significance

The aesthetic value of an author's work is often determined by subliminal currents that invest the property of the surface story with a deeper significance. A novel will then approach close to myth with characters turning into symbols of permanent human states or impulses, particular incarnations of general truths perhaps only realized for the first in the act of reading. This desire to give a work of fiction a significance beyond that of the mere story is frequently conscious and deliberate (Fadiman 1992:120). Science fiction novels and short stories symbolize the future of humanity, and this aspect will be a significant criterion in evaluation of individual works in the genre, as science fiction is a form of modern day mythology.

7.5.6 Style

The manner of expression in a work of fiction is important and involves evaluation of the author's linguistic approach, choice of words, figures of speech and structuring of sentences to name a few salient elements. Style, as Cuddon (1979:663) correctly points out, defies complete analysis because it is the unique tone and voice of the author.

Mention has been made in paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4 of the literary and cultural dominants of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which have inevitably influenced science fiction as a genre. Two strong elements of overall literary style influenced and still influence science fiction: the romantic and the Gothic. The aim of romantic fiction is less to present a true picture of life than to arouse the emotions through a depiction of strong passions, or to fire the imagination with exotic terrifying or wonderful scenes and events (Fadiman 1992:123). Science fiction is the genre which often transports its reader to strange, exotic planets, and contact with often terrifying aliens and dramatic events; the romantic influence therefore complements science fiction's subject material (cf. paragraph 4.3).

The Gothic novel bequeathed its distinctive literary atmosphere to science fiction. This atmosphere was expected to be dark tempestuous, ghostly, full of madness, outrage, superstition and the spirit of revenge, all of which were very much evident in Frankenstein (1818), Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's seminal work of science. Edgar Allan Poe developed the Gothic style brilliantly, and early science fiction such as H.G. Wells's Island of Dr Moreau (1896) contained a strong Gothic element (cf. paragraph 4.3).

These elements are still present in much of contemporary science fiction and they help to set the atmosphere (descriptive detail, tempo of action, dialogue and language), as well as the literary tone (authors' attitude towards his subject matter and the reader as well as the moral outlook), and how the author perceives man in the giant design of nature (Altenbernd & Lewis 1966:72-73). Style as criterion will differ when applied to science

fiction, as science fiction with its Gothic/Romantic roots is much more dramatic than mainstream fiction. Modern mainstream fiction is forbidden the fallacy of earthquakes announcing the assassination of rulers, or drizzles accompanying the sadness of the heroine (Suvin 1972:377).

Science fiction poetics would be these of the realist school, and would lag behind the new modernist poetics which became the literary dominant during the first half of the twentieth century. Modernist poetics would reflect aesthetic self-consciousness, juxtaposition, *montage*, paradox, dehumanisation and the demise of the integrated subject (cf. paragraph 4.4.1). The New Wave of science fiction of the nineteen sixties would emphasize literary style, symbolism and attitude rather than plot; and would be stylistically allied with modernism. Post-modernist science fiction would be characterized by elements such as a certain literary flatness and lack of mimetic depth, a loss of discrete subjectivity, the abandonment of unique style in favour of *pastiche*, jargon; as well as schizophrenic *écriture*, jumbled *collage*, a breakdown in reality-testing and the hysterically sublime (cf. paragraphs 4.4.2 and 4.4.3).

Further elements which should be taken into account are the qualities of the language and dialogue employed in the individual work.

7.5.7 Entertainment

The provision of laughter and dreams has been for many centuries a legitimate literary occupation, Fadiman (1992:121) stating that:

... any reader of fiction has a right to an occasional escape from the dullness and misery of his [or her] existence, but he [or she] has the critical duty of finding the best modes of escape ... The fiction of entertainment and escape frequently sets itself higher literary standards than novels with a profound social or philosophical purpose ... Ultimately all good fiction is

entertainment, and if it instructs or enlightens it does so through enchanting the reader.

Scannell (1986:34) concurs that the value of pure entertainment in fiction should not be minimized, as the novel which does not offer an enthralling narrative of some kind is unlikely to find its place among the finest examples of fiction.

This aspect is strikingly relevant to science fiction, which during the early decades of the twentieth century was confined to pulp magazines, but later developed into a sophisticated genre of great versatility but which is still, however, primarily read for entertainment. Entertainment as criterion would rate a higher priority in a popular genre such as science fiction than it would in mainstream fiction.

7.5.8 Language and dialogue

This criterion is not mentioned by Fadiman (1992), but is prominently discussed by other critics such as Altenbernd and Lewis (1966) and Scannell (1986). The use of language is important when judging all fiction, as its meaning, associations, sound, colour and texture, which as Scannell (1986:23) finds, reflects the scrupulous care taken by the author in presenting and exploring emotions. Language is the vehicle of imagery in fiction, and this imagery is the production of mental responses invoked in the reader's mind (Altenbernd & Lewis 1966:74), which would be of especial value in science fiction, as science fiction is a unique type of fiction which is doubly fictive. The fictive world in which the fictitious narrative takes place, is not based on or associated with the real world the reader is familiar with, but must be conjured up in the reader's mind.

Dialogue is equally important as skilfully written conversation contributes a great deal to the impact of the fiction narrative, and should read and sound like natural speech, appropriate to the speaker's socio-economic circumstances, generation and psychological type. It should mime the rhythms, vocabulary and syntactical patterns of conversation

(Scannell 1986:23). It should be emphasized again that the science fiction author has to construct convincing dialogue for persons of an imaginary socio-economic class and generation, or pertain to extraterrestrial aliens. The key criteria is that such invented dialogue should be convincing and not just be artificial-sounding or contrived gobbledegook.

7.6 **Unconventional criteria for the evaluation of science fiction**

Many science fiction authors, editors and critics are of the opinion that science fiction should be judged strictly according to conventional literary criteria as applied to mainstream serious literature. Knight (1980: xiii) is fully representative of this traditional school of thought when he states that:

Science fiction is a field of literature worth taking seriously and ... ordinary criteria can be meaningfully applied to it, e.g. originality, sincerity, style construction, logic, coherence, sanity, garden-variety grammar.

Other critics, like Freedman (1987:184) are in agreement with Knight (1980) that much of science fiction clearly possesses the purely formal attributes such as intellectual complexity, stylistic felicity and narrative sophistication, which are generally held to characterize great literature. Spinrad (1990:31-33) advocates a return to literary standards as old as literature itself. In his view the strict application of standards in plotting skills, thematic depth, characterization and mastery of prose is essential.

Other leading critics and authors of science fiction differ very markedly from this traditionalist approach, and strongly advocate the use of unconventional criteria.

An examination of these views on unconventional criteria will be of value in identifying and choosing criteria for the evaluation of science fiction.

7.6.1 Reasons for the use of unconventional criteria

In the course of the past two decades it has become increasingly evident that critics and researchers of science fiction, do not agree with the above-mentioned approach that science fiction should be regarded, and evaluated as akin to conventional mainstream fiction. This view is exemplified by Warrick (1980:xiv) who declares that

The literary scholar who undertakes a critical judgment of SF encounters another problem. It is generally agreed that the criteria used to evaluate mainstream fiction are not entirely appropriate for SF, **but no consensus has been reached about the proper criteria.** [Emphasis added].

The acclaimed author and theorist of science fiction, Samuel R. Delany has formulated some innovative and challenging ideas on this subject. Delany (1984:91-95) argues that science fiction is distinct from mainstream fiction inasmuch as the literary values of mainstream literature cannot be applied to science fiction, using the example of the quartet of literary values formulated by the French scholar Michel Foucault: unity of value, theoretical unity, stylistic unity and historical unity. These values cannot as Delany (1984) demonstrates, be applied to science fiction as science fiction is imaginary and not historically-oriented. Science fiction has a range of stylistic expressions, therefore no stylistic unity as such, and the lack of general agreement on the very definition of the genre indicates theoretical plurality and plurality of value.

Delany (1984:53-54) argues that science fiction differs significantly from other categories of fiction:

Does science fiction work in the same way as other, literary categories of writing: Here the answer is no. Science fiction works differently from other written categories, particularly those categories traditionally called literary. It works the same way only in that, like all categories of writing, it has its

specific conventions, unique focuses, areas of interest and excellence, as well as its own particular ways of making sense out of language. To ignore any of these constitutes a major misreading - an obliviousness to the play of meanings that makes up the SF text.

Scholes (1975:47), a respected theorist in the field of modern literature, who has devoted much serious attention to the science fiction genre, concedes in general that the characterization and the use of language in the genre is often not as elegant as that found in mainstream fiction. Scholes (1975:47) states with justification that science fiction is a distinct literature and should therefore not be judged according to the same principles applicable to mainstream fiction:

In SF ... it is the new idea that shocks us into perception, rather than the new language of the poetic text. And it is precisely because of this that our old formalistic methodology seldom works well as a critical approach to SF. This approach itself has functioned as a great block to our perception of the richness and beauty of a new fictional mutation. **The analytical tools fashioned to deal with Flaubert and James will not work so well with writers operating from a quite different set of premises.** [Emphasis added].

Scholes (1975:39-43) points to the undeniable fact that science fiction has other valuable qualities despite the fact that it may not always match up to the standards set for mainstream fiction. Certain forms of popular literature came into being because of the movement of serious fiction away from plot, and specifically cater for the reader's need for gripping storytelling and narrative.

McCaffery (1990:1-8), a foremost commentator on post-modern fiction and science fiction argues with justification that science fiction writers are producing some of the most significant contemporary literature, with science fiction exercising a pervasive influence on

other fictional forms also on television, the cinema, advertising, contemporary rock music; as well as numerous hybrid forms. In his view science fiction can, in fact, be seen as representing an exemplar of post-modernism because it is the art form that most directly reflects back to us the cultural logic that has produced post-modernism (McCaffery 1990:3).

A significant factor is identified by McCaffery (1990:5), when he documents that:

Implicit in post-modern aesthetics has been the sense common to every artistic movement that specific changes in historical, cultural and philosophical/scientific outlooks require new aesthetic orientations ... the post-modernist fiction of Donald Barthelme, Thomas Pynchon, Robert Coover, Don DeLillo, Ronald Sukenick, Raymond Federman and others has energetically sought a formal means more suitable than traditional realism to describe our world today. The same can be said of the science fiction created ... today. ... **The nature of and motivations for stylistic innovation in SF are dauntingly complex and frequently misunderstood by readers who bring to SF the assumptions of mainstream fiction.** Samuel Delany, Joanna Russ and Gregory Benford all emphasize that SF cannot be analyzed and evaluated as if its governing assumptions were those of “mundane fiction” [as Delany describes mainstream or mimetically-oriented fiction]. Details, metaphors, narrative conventions, and characters in an SF work do not function as they would in a work that is attempting to render a believable illusion of our world. [Emphasis added].

The motivation for judging and evaluating science fiction differently clearly shows that critics such as Scholes (1975), Warrick (1980), Delany (1984) and McCaffery (1990) have clear, well-founded motivations for viewing science fiction as *sui generis*.

7.6.2 Critics' proposals

The above-mentioned critics (cf. paragraph 7.6.1) have advanced concrete proposals regarding unconventional criteria to be used in the evaluation of science fiction.

Science fiction is a genre of ideas, and the theme as such is important. Scholes (1975:47) stresses the importance of the idea in science fiction, and the theme as criterion should therefore feature prominently in evaluation. Characterization and the use of language are not always as elegant in science fiction as in mainstream fiction, but should not be viewed as crucial criteria as science fiction is a distinct literary genre where the theme or idea is more important (Scholes 1975:47). Characterization in science fiction does not function in the same way as it would in mainstream fiction (McCaffery 1990:5).

Plot as a criterion would be important as science fiction, like other genres of popular fiction, caters for the reader's need for gripping storytelling and narrative.

Delany (1984:50) finds that the author of a science fiction text must create a new world by using devices of language to lay out, sketch in and colour his or her alternate worlds as well as designing the verbal constructs which determine the play between the world and the story. These devices constitute the major distinctions between a science fiction text and that of a mainstream fiction text. Regular readers of science fiction understand the *fabulata* of science fiction, e.g. a fragment of text such as "... monopole magnet mining operations in the outer asteroid belt", or "... he inserted his credit card in the purchasing slot; his bill was transmitted to the city accounting house to be stored against the accumulated credit from his primary and secondary jobs". To the science fiction reader such a sentence implies a whole reorganization of society along lines of credit, computerization and labour practices. These *fabulata*, in the view of Delany (1984:53-54), and other hints, suggestions, throwaway phrases and other constructs mean something to regular readers of science fiction.

Warrick (1980:81-88) finds that although literary criteria like plot, character, setting, symbols, narrative techniques and other traditional elements of fiction also play a role in science fiction, these conventional criteria are secondary to other elements which are central concerns of the genre. Warrick (1980) concedes that a work of science fiction can be judged as disappointing in the literary sense if evaluated by means of conventional criteria. Warrick (1980:82-88) argues convincingly that certain other intrinsic elements of science fiction can, if used as criteria, be used to demonstrate that a work of science fiction has inherent value:

The work succeeds because the writer has effectively incorporated those elements, or the work fails because the writer has disregarded them or handled them poorly. Although SF [science fiction] uses characters involved in an action in a particular place, these elements are not ends in themselves but vehicles to accomplish other purposes. Characterization, narrative technique, style, structure are often disappointing when an SF novel is judged by the criteria used in traditional criticism. Then what elements lead to a novel's recognition as a good SF novel? A number of elements are present in successful SF. They work a dynamic and accelerating process, culminating in the reader's experiencing a sense of wonder.

Warrick (1980:82-88) proceeds to identify the following unique criteria:

- (a) *Grounding in scientific knowledge*: the work must appear plausible because of the possibility of some future scientific development. The work can violate one or two aspects of reality as defined by contemporary science but it cannot ignore scientific knowledge or else it becomes fantasy.

- (b) *Incorporation of a sense of novelty*: it may treat but not duplicate the ideas that another work has used: the new work on the same idea develops another permutation.

- (c) *Some dislocation in space or time from present reality*: the fiction creates a moment surpassing the usual perception of time and space. This element differs markedly from mainstream fiction as the reader must see in his or her mind's eye the new alien setting on planets and in space. The creation of a believable setting is thus essential and more important to the success of the work than the creation of convincing character. In its treatment of time and space the genre thus becomes highly imaginative as it borrows from the world of dreams and is almost a form of conscious dreaming.

- (d) *Awareness of unity*: in the world and towards a higher level of abstraction. This element is clearly present in the genre, as a result of which characterization does not acquire the same importance as in mainstream fiction. As a consequence characterization does not assume the same important dimension as in mainstream fiction.

- (e) *Addressing the mind*: science fiction is the literature of ideas. Science fiction often has the idea as hero. It is didactic in the sense that it seeks, albeit informally, to teach about scientific knowledge and possibilities, and suggests implications for humanity. The extent to which the literature sparks an intellectual and imaginative response in its reader is a measure of the work's excellence. When it succeeds, the work leads its reader to experience a purely mental structure that nonetheless illuminates the whole world. The idea is of primary importance in science fiction, and is another reason why the tools of mainstream criticism, concerned as they are with form, are not appropriate for science fiction.

- (f) *New awareness*: Should the above-mentioned five elements be successfully present, the reader surpasses his previous perceptions of time and space, and in the words of Coldridge (Warrick 1980:84), achieves “a willing suspension of disbelief”. The reader is grounded in the reality of this world and knows that the imaginary science fictional world is not true, but nonetheless true for the duration of the reading act itself. This mode of reading is essential in science fiction. The creation of a credible alternate setting is thus one of the major tasks of the science fiction author.

7.7 Choice of criteria to evaluate science fiction

Evidence has been presented in this chapter (cf. paragraphs 7.3.2 - 7.3.6) to illustrate that science fiction is a unique genre with a distinct thematic core, literary paradigm, unique megatextual qualities and structural fabulation. Science fiction differs significantly from both mainstream literature as well as all other genres of popular fiction. Unlike other popular genres, science fiction has no comparably explicit formula to which can readily be pointed as characteristic of science fiction. Several critics and authors of science fiction caution that the literary criteria and assumptions of mainstream fiction cannot automatically be utilized to evaluate science fiction (cf. paragraphs 7.6.1 and 7.6.2).

No consensus has been reached about the proper criteria for the evaluation of science fiction. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to the identification of criteria judged suitable for the evaluation of science fiction. Both conventional and unconventional criteria will be identified and discussed, not necessarily in order of importance.

7.7.1 Theme

Science fiction has, as elucidated in paragraph 7.3.2, a unique literary premise: it examines and elucidates humanity’s new and marginal position in the cosmos due to the changes brought about by technology: the genre therefore has a unique and sweeping thematic

character far broader than mainstream fiction's mainly inward, psychologically-oriented direction. Theme is therefore an important factor, more so than in mainstream fiction, and should be accordingly weighted as criterion. Science fiction is the literature of ideas and the central theme or idea can be the hero. Theme as criterion is mentioned by mainstream critics such as Brace (1969:42-124), but would assume even greater importance in science fiction where the theme or central idea could be the hero.

7.7.2 Characterization

Characterization as criterion is universally mentioned by critics as an important factor, cf. Scannell (1968:21-35), Oosthuizen (1991:304-313) and Fadiman (1992:117-128). Because of the sweeping magnitude and breadth of vision evinced by science fiction, characters tend to become representative, and are not always as individually defined as in mainstream fiction. Contemporary science fiction authors often exhibit more adequate characterization, but character has nevertheless a lesser importance than themes, and should be accordingly weighted as criterion (cf. paragraph 7.7.8 hereunder which also addresses the question of characterization's importance relative to setting). In science fiction characters can also become mythical, as mentioned in criteria 7.7.3.

7.7.3 Myth and symbolism

Mythology and symbolism as criteria are listed by Fadiman (1992:117-128). Myths are often present in science fiction and this genre seems to be the only form of adult literature able to accommodate myths with ease, as science fiction is modern-day mythology (cf. paragraph 7.3.3). A work can sometimes come close to myth with characters becoming symbols of permanent human states. Many critics see science fiction as the mythology of the space age. This criterion will be of considerable importance in the evaluation of works of science fiction.

7.7.4 Formula

Formula, as criterion, is not mentioned by any of the mainstream critics cited above. There is no one constant explicit formula in science fiction but a series of simultaneously-available formulae, each a recognizable category with own characteristics, and it has been suggested that the themes and images of science fiction take on a far deeper psychological significance than mere formula. Science fiction's characteristics are continually in flux and too amorphous for a single formula to categorize, as science fiction unlike other popular genres has no comparably explicit formula to which one can readily point as being characteristic of the genre (cf. paragraph 7.3.4).

7.7.5 Megatextual quality and fabulata

Megatextual character and fabulata are not mentioned by any of the mainstream critics cited above. Science fiction cannot be read like mainstream fiction as the reader needs an added imaginative trajectory. Imagination as encountered in science fiction, is a specialized form of the literary imagination because of its catalytic and estranging imagery. Science fiction because it is doubly fictive, uses an oblique, concise approach by alluding briefly off-handedly to major changes, and in effect creates a science-fictional culture often couched in code. Science fiction texts are part of an encyclopaedia or megatext of imaginary worlds, tropes, tools, expressions and grammatical innovations. It is thus a specialized mode for the initiated. Science fiction utilizes *fabulata* which can be hints, suggestion, throwaway phrases or even broad suggestions which would be understood by the habitual reader of science fiction, but would confuse mainstream fiction readers. *These criteria will be very important as criteria for evaluating science fiction as they relate to a unique characteristic of the genre* (cf. paragraph 7.6.2).

7.7.6 Sense of wonder

Sense of wonder is emphasized by Warrick (1980:84) as a criterion unique to science fiction. Science fiction is structural fabulation and lets the reader experience the sense of wonder once only available through fantasy and fairy tales, without sacrificing the reader's hard edge of reason connecting him to the real world. It thus exerts an estranging effect without neglecting the cognitive.

7.7.7 Grounding in scientific knowledge

Scientific knowledge in a work of science fiction is emphasized by Warrick (1980:82-88). The work must appear plausible as a result of scientific developments and can even violate one or two aspects of reality as defined by present-day science but it cannot ignore scientific knowledge (in which case it is a work of fantasy). *This criterion is important in view of science fiction's scientific-cognitive basis.*

7.7.8 Setting

Setting is mentioned by critics and researchers such as Altenbernd and Lewis (1966:53-80), Brace (1969:42-124) and Oosthuizen (1991:304-313). The work must dislocate the reader from present time and space and make the reader see, in his mind's eye, the new, alien setting on planets and in space: *The creation of a believable setting is more important to the success of a work of science fiction than convincing characterization.* Setting is an important criterion in the evaluation of mainstream fiction, but is of cardinal importance in the evaluation of science fiction. Mainstream fictional settings mimic the present-day or historical world, whereas science fiction settings must believably present a future world and society, often set on alien planets or spaceships.

7.7.9 Abstraction and universality

The unconventional criterion of an awareness of a higher level of abstraction and unity in the world is emphasized by Warrick (1980:81-88), in paragraph 7.6.2. A consequence is that *characterization does not assume the same dimension as in mainstream fiction*: humanity at large in the universe, and not the fate of a sole unique individual, is the burning issue in science fiction.

7.7.10 New awareness

Warrick (1980:84) postulates that, should a work of science fiction be grounded in scientific knowledge, incorporate a sense of novelty, create a believable setting, create a higher level of abstraction and spark an intellectual and emotional response in the reader, a new awareness will result, and the reader will surpass his or her previous perception of time and space. A willing suspension of belief for the duration of the reading act and at the end of it, a moment of illumination, are therefore also important criteria for the evaluation of works of science fiction.

7.7.11 Plot

Plot is an acknowledged mainstream fiction criterion as cited by Scannell (1968:21-35), Oosthuizen (1991:304-313) and Fadiman (1992:117-128). Mainstream fiction plotting need not be interesting, and can be desultory or solipsistic. Science fiction is rooted in Romanticism and the Gothic, and is therefore inclined to hold the reader's interest and provide tempo of action. Causality and logicity should also prevail in view of the genre's cognitive-scientific base.

7.7.12 Entertainment

Not all critics of mainstream fiction mention entertainment as a criterion. The principle of entertainment has, however, for centuries been a legitimate literary occupation. The genre of science fiction is one which addresses very serious questions relating to the future of humanity on one hand, whilst still doing it playfully and most entertainingly. Entertainment value would therefore be an important criterion in the evaluation of science fiction.

7.7.13 Language and dialogue

Language and dialogue are acknowledged and important criteria in mainstream fiction, as determined by Altenbernd and Lewis (1966:55-80), Scannell (1986:23) and Oosthuizen (1991:304-313). The linguistic associations, sound, colour and texture are important, especially because they are also the vehicles which must conjure up alien planets and the depths of the cosmos. Dialogue is equally important and should be appropriate to the fictional speakers in all respects. Language and dialogue are important principles in view of the fact that science fiction is doubly fictive: they must describe imaginary alien images and provide dialogue appropriate to persons, socio-economic classes, nationalities, aliens, accents and vocabularies which do not exist. Language and dialogue would therefore be criteria of the first order of priority where the evaluation of works of science fiction is concerned.

7.7.14 Style

Style can be described as the unique tone, presentation, and voice of the author. In mainstream fiction each individual author has his own unique style which could be judged fairly in terms of conventional stylistic criteria. The nature of and the motivations for stylistic innovations in science fiction are frequently misunderstood by readers who wish to judge this genre in terms of mainstream criteria. Science fiction's metaphors and narrative

conventions do not function as they would in a mainstream work of fiction which seeks to render a believable illusion of our world. In contrast to this, science fiction seeks to establish a fictional narrative based on a further fiction: a non-existent future or alternative world. The analytical tools designed for serious mainstream fiction do not work as well with works created on a quite different set of literary premises.

Science fiction has, like all categories of writing its own specific conventions, a unique focus and own areas of stylistic excellence, interest and innovation.

7.7.15 Narrative method

In mainstream literature objectivity is sought so that characters are not unduly and overtly prompted by the author. The author's views should also not intrude unduly on the work itself. Science fiction as a genre tends to be didactic: it warns of dangers and developments and the author's preferences can sometimes be discerned.

7.8 **Comparison between conventional mainstream literary criteria and those specifically suited to science fiction**

Fifteen literary criteria were identified in paragraph 7.7 above as being suitable for the evaluation of science fiction. Several of these criteria are conventional literary criteria normally utilized in the evaluation of mainstream literature: Theme, Characterization, Mythology and symbolism, Setting, Plot, Entertainment, Language and dialogue, Style and Narrative method. Unconventional criteria as suggested by Warrick (1980) are the following: Grounding in scientific knowledge, Treatment of formula, Sense of wonder, Megatextual quality and fabulata, Abstraction and universality and New awareness. Together these conventional and unconventional criteria, if applied rigorously to the evaluation of works of science fiction, will produce a reliable induction of the inherent value of such works.

The objective of this identification of evaluative criteria, is to utilize them at a later phase of this study (cf. chapter 12) in the design of a scorecard format for the evaluation of science fiction. The scorecard itself will also form part of the model of the selection of science fiction at microlevel, which will also be presented and explained in paragraph 9.3. It is thus necessary to place these identified criteria in order of importance and in categories of primary and secondary importance. Table 7.1 provides a concise summary of the relative importance of each criterion for the evaluation of science fiction, by comparing the importance of each criterion for both mainstream fiction and science fiction itself, e.g. whether a criterion such as Characterization is as important in science fiction as it is in mainstream fiction. Such findings tabled here in concise form will assist in ordering the criteria.

TABLE 7.1

Juxtaposition of conventional and unconventional criteria for the evaluation of mainstream fiction and science fiction

CRITERIA	MAINSTREAM FICTION	SCIENCE FICTION
Theme	Central idea, e.g. jealousy in Othello or any other <i>leitmotif</i> chosen by author.	Central idea is always humanity's new, precarious or marginal position in the cosmos: quality of presentation of theme, originality, idea as hero.
Characterization	Very important: mark of a great author.	Not as important: setting is more important, characters abstract and representative. Fate of humanity at stake - not always individuals.

CRITERIA	MAINSTREAM	SCIENCE FICTION
Myth and symbolism	Work can be invested with deeper significance approaching myth symbols of permanent human state.	Science fiction is modern-day myth, symbolizes future of humanity.
Formula	-	No explicit formula: series of simultaneously-available formulae: treat but not duplicate. Genre is too amorphous for a single formula to categorize.
Megatextual quality and fabulata	-	Individual texts form part of encyclopaedia of imaginary words, tropes, tools, expressions, grammatical innovations. Mainstream readers would not always understand; specialized mode for initiated reader.
Sense of wonder	-	Reader has sense of wonder previously only available in fairy tales , without sacrificing hard edge of reality.
Grounding in scientific knowledge	Incidental.	Must be plausible and respect present-day science (can violate one or two aspects but cannot ignore science).
Setting	As important as characterization.	Very important: must make reader <u>see</u> alien planets, space, the unknown. More important than characterization.
Abstraction and universality	-	Fate of humanity at large at stake: as consequence characterization does not assume the same importance as in mainstream fiction.
New awareness	Possibly present.	Moment of illumination and suspension of belief.

CRITERIA	MAINSTREAM FICTION	SCIENCE FICTION
Plot	Need not be interesting (can be desultory).	Must be exciting, interesting, logical, causal.
Entertainment	Important.	Probably more important : science fiction is a playful genre.
Language and dialogue	Important vehicle for imagery and meaning, association, sound, colour, texture. Appropriate dialogue for speakers, socio-economic origins, generation and psychological types. Mimes rhythm of real-life conversation.	Language and imagery more important as these must reflect and conjure up alien planets and space. Dialogue especially important: must convincingly mime socio-economic classes, nationalities, alien dialogue and accents and vocabularies which do not exist.
Style	Expression, presentation, choice of tone, structuring of sentences, rhetorical devices, figures of speech.	Own conventions, focuses, details, metaphors, competent literary craftsmanship, unique expressiveness, cannot be judged by mainstream assumptions, but must be stylish.
Narrative method	Should be more objective letting characters work out own destinies without imposing author's point of view.	Tends toward didactic (warn humanity of future developments/dangers). Author should however not preach or instruct indirectly.

7.9 Primary and secondary criteria

The criteria as identified in paragraph 7.7 and summarized in Table 7.1, are clearly applicable to science fiction. These criteria were researched and identified for a specific purpose, namely the compilation of a scorecard for evaluating works of science fiction (cf. paragraph 12.3). The scorecard will of necessity have to be in a concise format. The envisaged scorecard will be overly long if all fifteen above-mentioned criteria were to be utilized. The solution to this problem would be to identify those criteria of primary

importance, i.e. those viewed as focusing on the most important characteristics of science fiction. Criteria of secondary importance could be combined, and would comprise 10% of the total points awardable by the scorecard.

Setting is a criterion of primary importance as the creation of a convincing future world, often set on alien planets, is a *sine qua non*, and the foundation of any successful work of science fiction. Allied to this would be Language and dialogue as science fiction must believably describe non-existent worlds and societies of the future, and construct convincing dialogue for non-existent persons and aliens.

A third very important criterion is *Theme*: the central idea of science fiction is always humanity's precarious position in the universe. Weak treatment of science fiction's central idea would therefore compromise the inherent value of the work.

A fourth important criterion is *Megatextual quality and fabulata*: a work must fit into the general megatextual encyclopaedia of words, tropes, expressions and grammatical innovations. A work must fit well into this specialised literary culture in order to be a good quality science fiction. *Entertainment* is an important criterion as science fiction is a popular playful genre even if its theme is to be taken seriously. *Plot* is a further priority criterion, because science fiction is dependent on an exciting and interesting plot in order to keep reader interest. Science fiction cannot ignore scientific plausibility, and *Grounding in scientific knowledge* is therefore an equally important criterion.

Myth and symbolism is a further criterion of the first order. Science fiction is the present-day mythology of humanity, and symbolizes the future of mankind in a rapidly changing world. *Style* is the final primary criterion. A work of science fiction is judged in terms of its own conventions, metaphors, vocabulary and innovations, and must exhibit original and competent literary craftsmanship, expressiveness and stylishness.

Six other criteria remain which, although most certainly applicable to science fiction, on the whole deserve to be ranked as secondary criteria in view of the characteristic they test, e.g. *Characterization*. *Characterization* is not as important as a criterion for science fiction as it would be for mainstream fiction. In science fiction the idea is the hero, not a person. *Formula* is likewise a secondary criterion as science fiction does not rely on one explicit formula as is the case in detective stories, romances or novels of the American West. Criteria like *Abstraction and universality*, *New awareness* and *Sense of wonder* are judged to be secondary criteria, as is *Narrative method*.

The criteria established in Table 7.1 have thus been divided into primary and secondary categories, which are listed in Table 7.2 in descending order of importance in terms of the above-mentioned motivation. These criteria will be accordingly weighted in the proposed scorecard for the evaluation of individual works.

TABLE 7.2

Primary and secondary criteria for science fiction evaluation

PRIMARY CRITERIA	SECONDARY CRITERIA
1. Setting	1. Characterization
2. Language and dialogue	2. Formula
3. Theme	3. Abstraction and universality
4. Megatextual quality and fabulata	4. New awareness
5. Entertainment	5. Sense of wonder
6. Plot	6. Narrative method
7. Grounding in scientific knowledge	
8. Myth and symbolism	
9. Style	

7.10 Conclusion

Chapter 7 has studied the essence of science fiction in order to identify its salient characteristics, and the best criteria for evaluating this genre. The applicability of

conventional mainstream literary criteria to science fiction was investigated and it was evident that science fiction differs significantly in some respects from mainstream fiction. Science fiction has a unique premise and thematic core, strong mythical and symbolic elements, and a very distinctive reading protocol and megatextual quality. These unique characteristics in turn necessitated the formulation or use of criteria such as Megatextual quality and fabulata, Grounding in scientific knowledge and Abstraction and universality. Some conventional criteria such as Setting, Characterization and Language and dialogue were identified but in some cases assigned lower orders of priority, for example characterization and formula were both relegated to the status of secondary criteria. A set of primary and secondary criteria specifically-tailored to the unique literary identity of science fiction was accordingly designed on the basis of the principles established in this chapter, for use in the envisaged scorecard for the evaluation of works of science fiction. It was judged expedient to utilize the primary criteria for the bulk of the scorecard's maximum awardable points (90%), and to allot the remaining 10% to the secondary criteria.

Chapters 8 and 9 will study conceptual frameworks relating to the selection of fiction within the context of the public library, and will culminate in the design of a model of the selection of science fiction at micro-level in Chapter 9, in which the evaluative criteria identified in this chapter will play a prominent role.

CHAPTER 8

TWENTIETH-CENTURY THEORY RELATING TO THE SELECTION OF FICTION IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

8.1 Introduction

This dissertation has thus far examined the use of popular culture and the concomitant advent of popular fiction which, *inter alia*, culminated, in the year 1818 AD, in the nascency of the genre which would be known as science fiction. The rise and proliferation of this vigorous new genre has been elucidated, together with its distinct literary phases of development into its present-day sophisticated and, in some instances, its post-modernist state. Science fiction has indeed come to be viewed by some critics as the quintessential literary expression of late capitalism and the technology-driven post-modern era itself.

This chapter will be devoted to the examination of theory regarding the selection of fiction as advanced by researchers within the broad context of the collection development process.

8.2 Historical perspective on the problem of fiction selection in the public library: nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century

The question of the appropriate role of fiction in the public library has been debated since its advent, as documented by Curley and Broderick (1985:40), who cite the 1875 report of the Examining Committee of the Boston Public Library in this context:

There is a vast range of ephemeral literature, exciting and fascinating, apologetic of vice or confusing distinctions between plain right and wrong, fostering discontent with the peaceful, homely duties which constitute a large portion of average men's and women's lives, responsible for an immense

amount of the mental disease and moral irregularities which are so troublesome an element in modern society and this is the kind of reading to which multitudes naturally take, which it is not the business of the town library to supply ... Notwithstanding many popular notions to the contrary, it is not part of the duty of a municipality to raise taxes for the amusement of the people, unless the amusement is tolerably sure to be conducive to the higher ends of good citizenship. The sole relation of a town library to the general interest is as a supplement to the school system; as an instrumentality of higher instruction to all classes of people.

From the earliest years of the public library movement in the United States, its users had evinced a preference for the reading of fiction in the form of novels, to which there was much opposition. By the end of the nineteenth century the reading public had increased appreciably as greater numbers joined the ranks of the readers of novels, and fiction itself became the dominant form within the public library (Carrier 1985:2).

An examination of the average fiction lending of 25 English and Scottish libraries for 1890 revealed that fiction represented 74% of total loans but only 37,5% of library collections (Sturges & Barr 1992:24). Other figures for library circulation in Britain document that even before the year 1900, it was not uncommon for fiction issues to adults to constitute 80% of a public library's total issues (Snape 1995:4). This was a matter of concern to all but a small minority of librarians, and provided critics of public libraries with a ready avenue of attack. The whole question was to become known as the 'Great Fiction Question', and was in essence not one question but two: Should public libraries provide fiction, and, if so, what type and standard of fiction? Public libraries split into three groups, in the period leading up to the First World War (1914 - 1918): those who wished to ban fiction from the public library altogether, those who favoured only a restricted stocking of serious fiction, and an open-minded faction which advocated providing the fiction the public wanted (Snape 1995:4).

Carrier (1950:3) comments that those American public libraries supporting a generous supply of fiction to the public, emphasized that public libraries were established and supported by taxation and should therefore provide material to meet the needs of all members of the public. The working class needed recreation, and for some librarians fiction was viewed as the best and least harmful source of entertainment. The whole question of recreation raised problematic questions for public libraries, most especially in the area of the provision of popular fiction. The 'Great Fiction Question', as the debate upon the provision of fiction was to become known, was the single most controversial issue in public library development of the last half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Many of the unresolved aspects of the fiction question are found in present-day debates about questions such as the provision of fiction, the recreational function of public libraries, professional autonomy and stock selection (Snape 1995:6).

Public librarians of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century often, as pointed out by Sturges and Barr (1992:28-32), failed to develop an adequate definition of public library objectives in the matter of popular fiction reading:

They simply did not have the kind of background which would encourage them to feel able to stand apart from received opinion and construct an original approach to a contentious issue such as fiction. When critics and other opinion formers either ignored popular fiction and its readers or sneered at its literary qualities and recoiled in horror at its moral standards, librarians quite understandably accepted the authority of the views. The evidence for the usefulness of such material [popular fiction] was before their eyes much more clearly than it was before those of the critics, but they did not have the arguments or the confidence that would be required to use it.

By the early years of the twentieth century, the prejudice against fiction that had existed in the minds of some public librarians and other critics, had almost disappeared, and the

novel itself had assumed a place of paramount literary importance in the Anglophone library world, in contrast with its uncertain literary status in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. By the second half of the nineteenth century, writers like Dickens, Eliot and Thackeray had given the novel respectability. Novels also became much cheaper as a result of cheaper processes (Sturges & Barr 1992:27).

In the year 1903 a prominent public librarian informed the annual meeting of the American Library Association that both fiction and public literary taste were superior to those of an earlier time (Carrier 1985:16). A senior American public librarian went on record in 1935 to state that whilst modern fiction was interesting to some people purely for its literary values, others were drawn by its human value and relationship to the changing world (Carrier 1985:16).

The fiction question persisted into the first half of the twentieth century, as the great preponderance of fiction among books chosen from public libraries was a cause of much concern to librarians, educators and others interested in the intellectual and cultural state of society. During the nineteen twenties to fifties prominent selectors such as Haines (1950) were advocating that the reading of fiction was to be encouraged, and is cited by Carrier (1985:79) as saying that:

The reading of fiction requires no apology. On the contrary, it is the person who never reads novels who should apologize, who must be ranked as outside the fair domain of literature. There are far more people who need to read novels, to come under the imaginative spell of creative literature than there are people who read novels to excess.

8.3 **Contemporary perspective on fiction selection in the public library: second half of the twentieth century**

The question of fiction selection in the public library and the way in which it was sternly contested among public librarians, was illustrative of the strongly-held convictions of the nineteenth and early twentieth century public librarian.

Pankake (1984:186) comments judiciously that, in contrast to contemporary subject literature, the older literature on book selection conveys an appealing sense of certainty and confidence:

The older literature suggests that librarians knew what to select and why. It suggests that the use of books was an absolute, if unexamined value. That literature also suggests that librarians believed they knew how and for what purpose books would be used. Librarians would direct readers to suitable materials, for they knew which were suitable, and then they would guide readers from one book to another better book, for the education of individuals and ultimately the overall improvement of society ... in the past, librarians felt that patrons should not use library materials accidentally. Librarians saw it as their responsibility to guide readers in their use of books.

Cutter (1901) is cited as saying that the selector should select as Shakespeare wrote his plays, with the highest poetry and the deepest tragedy side by side with the comic and the vulgar. An unused book in his view could not be described as a good book and a library should be a practical thing to be used, not something to be admired (Pankake 1984:186).

Other pioneering librarians of the late nineteenth century such as Winsor (Pankake 1984:186) felt that use of books was the main principle, rather than collecting as such,

when selecting material. Cutter (1901) after him was likewise to see the task of librarian as that of ministering to user needs (Pankake 1984:186-187).

Book selection has therefore been viewed as being central to the mission of the public library since its advent and the librarians of the nineteenth century and the first three-quarters of the twentieth century reflects this commitment to selection. One of the great selectors of the twentieth century, Haines (1950:xi), would succinctly ground her philosophy of selection on books as the basis of public library service and

... librarianship as the only calling that has direct public responsibility for the exercise of discriminating judgement among conflicting book values and for the widest possible application of the potencies of books to the enrichment of life ... They are principles that demand wider recognition and have more immediate vital significance today.

By the middle of the twentieth century, however, no agreement on the popular fiction question had been reached. The same issues regarding the selection of popular fiction which had been forcefully presented by the early leaders of public librarianship, were precisely those still not decided. The debate would be continued into the second half of the twentieth century (Carrier 1985:29).

A grudging, uneasy attitude towards the question of popular fiction in the public library has persisted into the latter half of the twentieth century. This has hindered clear perceptions of the role of fiction, and even current demand-driven public library service styles "still treat fiction with a certain detached contempt" (Sturges & Barr 1992:31).

Dixon (1986b:vii-viii) concurs, illustrating this neglect of fiction which appeals to at least seventy percent of public library users, by pointing out that

It lacks everything the librarian is looking for; it has no special jargon; the subject can be read by anyone and not just by specialists. It is a subject everyone has an opinion on, which everyone thinks they know all about and which is anyway unteachable. There is nothing challenging about cataloguing the stuff: it is difficult to classify; it can easily be acquired; it is produced *en masse* and no item has any rarity value; it is barely collectable; it is often bought in multiple copies and can be easily dispense with. Most titles anyway 'just choose themselves' and the stock in general can be left to 'tick over', nicely roping in the issues for the minimum of attention: The librarian is thus free to waddle off on some crusade that affect 0.1 percent of the issues, 0.01 percent of the stock and 0.001 percent of the membership. Such a glaring anomaly needs investigating even as a phenomenon - how did we reach this situation? - as well as in righting an injustice.

Book selection was to become part of and evolved into a sub-division of collection development, also referred to as collection management. The complexity involved in the process of collection development would bring with it a sense of uncertainty (Pankake 1984:187).

The sense of crisis surrounding selection and collection development was stated by the president of the Association of College and Research Libraries who labelled collection development as a major problem of the nineteen eighties (Stoffle 1982: 232). Edelman (1979:33) documents that by the close of the nineteen seventies very little scholarly work had been published on the subject of book selection. This problem is not only confined to Anglo-American public librarianship. Japsen (1993:20) reports that a heated debate regarding selection in the public library has been in progress in Denmark since the mid nineteen eighties.

Pankake (1984:186-187) is therefore justified in stating that contemporary library literature conveys a spirit of crisis, quite unlike the positive quality of earlier librarianship,

especially the literature on selection theory. Shearer (1983:73) argues convincingly that the theories of selection within the field of librarianship are woefully inadequate and cannot guide selection practices effectively. Moore (1982:37) and Kohl (1988:6) both concur that, in general, the number of collection development studies in public libraries lag far behind those carried out in the context of collection development in the academic library. McGrath (1985:242-246) states bluntly that there is no general theory available regarding library collections which is capable of supplying viable hypotheses.

The problems in selecting the best items for any library collection are correctly viewed by Shearer (1983:79) as being a complex task requiring assessments of the intellectual and aesthetic properties of each item to be considered for selection, an assessment of each item's merits in light of the set library objectives, as well as the calculation of the intellectual relationship of the item to the existing collection. Even in libraries which rely heavily on approval plans, selectors must still review titles individually to ensure an effective collection development plan. Selecting materials for the public library is a process with few instruments to hand that offer practical assistance for the performance of this intellectual task (Rutledge & Swindler 1987:123). Dixon (1986b:vii-viii) documents that fiction is generally neglected in textbooks on librarianship, bibliographies and guides, and that textbooks and guides on the librarianship of literature devote as much space to poetry and plays as to novels, with the emphasis on non-fiction background sources.

Articles and books on the subject of fiction are rare, seeming to appear in cycles, usually around the recurrent outbreaks of what Dixon (1986b:viii) describes as the 'Light Fiction Question'.

8.4 Twentieth-century theory regarding fiction selection in the public library

Oosthuizen (1991:248-249) records the attention paid thus far to selection in the context of the public library, and cites statistics garnered by Kohl (1988:1-12). In terms of the

number of articles on collection development which appeared in thirty-three core American journals, during the period 1960 - 1983, 32,3 % were devoted to the question of selection in academic libraries whilst only 4,1 % of the published articles concentrated on selection in public libraries.

It is clear from these statistics that little notice has been taken of the question of selection in public libraries. The selection of fiction for academic and public libraries will in any case differ markedly as the mission and utilization of the two types of collections are divergent (Oosthuizen 1991:249).

8.4.1 Objectives of the public library

Wellard (1937) seeks to establish definite principles of book selection in accordance with the objectives of the public library. He proceeds from a historical perspective in order to juxtapose the objectives of the public library with the effect that such changing objectives had on public library book selection. Such deliberations will thus, in his view, assist in enhancing selection theory.

Wellard (1937:xx) finds that the conventional approach to book selection has always placed the emphasis on the book itself, instead of also considering two other important elements: the book/reader relationship, and the library/society relationship. Selectors have concerned themselves with good literature and principles of literary criticism as well as an approximated law of supply and demand in the actual practice of book selection.

The first public libraries in the United States were more easily accepted by society, and multiplied faster in number, than was the case in Britain. No advocate of the early public library movement of either country thought it necessary to satisfy the public need by an indiscriminate supply of popular fiction (Wellard 1937:22-29). By the final quarter of the nineteenth century, the tax-supported American public library had emerged in its modern form, having surpassed its initial stage which was dominated by the policies of academic

and school libraries. The immediate purpose of the American public library was to encourage reading by means of concessions to popular taste, although many public librarians still clung to the educational objectives by which the first advocates of free libraries had justified their proposals. The issue had been narrowed down to that of novels of the day versus works of instruction without a clear, informative examination of either category. It thus remained a matter of personal opinion and thus of little theoretical importance (Wellard 1937:53-54).

The British public library movement had, from its beginnings, been dominated by the concept that its main objectives were those of social and moral reform, e.g. to combat the widespread drunkenness amongst the working class and provide an alternative venue and pastime to those facilities offered by public houses and drinking dens (Wellard 1937:39-42). The educational objectives, efforts and motives of the British public librarians of the nineteenth century were not fully realized as public libraries were used principally as free sources of light fiction. Wellard (1937:45) cites statistics for five public libraries in five different English towns and cities which document that during the year 1894, 75% to 85% of the loans from these libraries were works of fiction.

During the early twentieth century the American public library was affected by a shift in its overall objective from education to that of Americanization which was aimed at teaching the many millions of newly-arrived European immigrants American history, civics, democracy, patriotism and the English language (Wellard 1937:56-59).

Wellard (1937:60-64) finds that the chief motivating forces behind the emergence of the Anglo-American public library were reformatory, philanthropic and educational, all three of these strengthened by the liberal policy characterizing the late nineteenth century. From 1881 onwards the noted philanthropist Andrew Carnegie donated immense sums of money to the public libraries of the Anglo-Saxon countries and colonies, including South Africa. The Carnegie grants played a major role in the financing of the public library movement in the Anglophone world.

Wellard (1937:68) finds that:

... the public library is not simply a popular institution either in origin or development. Moreover, its social implications and objectives are likewise uncertain, largely because of this. However, instead of ignoring the problems by allowing the library to develop in the future as it has done in the past 'as an isolated social phenomenon,' librarians must identify this institution with specific social aims.

In sum, Wellard's (1937:71-72) conclusion is that the socially-reformative and educational objectives predominated in the USA and Britain during the early years of the nineteenth century in varying degrees, the reformative mostly in Britain and the educational largely in America. The next dominant, as objective, was the educational, with the public library regarded as an extension of taxpayer-funded schools and an open university for those layers of society who had been denied much formal education. This theory was in turn displaced by the view that the users of the public library should be given the opportunity of reading the popular books they wished to read before proceeding to read serious literature for intellectual and moral improvement. The emphasis therefore shifted toward recreational reading, with the argument that, in the democratic Anglo-American societies, a taxpayer-funded social institution such as the public library should provide to the citizen-users the popular literature they prefer to read, whether for recreational purposes or otherwise. Wellard (1937:72-75) argues that this view had become wide-spread even before the end of the nineteenth century, although the four aforementioned broad views on the mission of the public library continued to interact in varying degrees. These divergent views caused some confusion in the approach of the public library selector.

In Wellard's (1937:75) view the educational and recreational objectives are fundamental. It is by virtue of the educational objective that the public library includes a considerable proportion of informative books in its collection such as basic texts on science as well as

classical literature, whilst also including, even in Wellard's era, large amounts of popular fiction for recreational reading. The public library should, in addition to these two main objectives also be reformative (i.e. socially progressive) and democratic, both of which are very valid for South African public libraries at the close of the twentieth century.

The next element, after the book itself, which is of cardinal interest in selection, is represented by the reader. Wellard (1937:92-101) stresses that the selector should study the needs of the reader from the point of view of the disciplines of sociology, psychology, economics, political science, history and geography in order to gain a better understanding of the user and the factors which influence the common behaviour such as motives, reading ability and reading problems, the economic environment of the user, publishing and publications, political issues influencing reading, social trends and movements and the geographical distribution of readers and libraries.

The final element in Wellard's (1937:103) theory is the library itself:

Even if we knew what was intrinsically a "good" book, or, in the terms of this study, the standards which constitute literary excellence, and if to this knowledge were added data concerning readers' actual requirements, our theory of book selection would still be incomplete if it had not defined which standards were to be followed, which requirements were to be met, and the relation of one to the other.

It is therefore necessary to construct social objectives which are criteria of social value by which to judge, prefer or reconcile standards of taste and community reading needs. The librarian should look outside the library to see what the relationship of the library is with other social agencies and activities. It will be necessary to effect a community analysis in order to classify readers into homogeneous groups, and determine reading requirements and interests. These facts, once evaluated by standards inherent in the library's social (and

local) purpose, will represent the desirable objectives of book selection (Wellard 1937:104-111).

In conclusion Wellard (1937:112-113) argues that objections against the formulation of a general theory of book selection as impractical, have been refuted by referring to other problems in librarianship which have been refuted by analytical methods and knowledge drawn from other disciplines. The theory of book selection has limited contact with disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and literary criticism but mostly disregards the theory of aesthetics, political philosophy and the history of scholarship.

Judged from a contemporary point of view Wellard's (1937) theoretical views which develop within the framework of the library's overall objectives, yet are connected to the values and behaviour of the community, have been proved by recent research to be the most generally-supported position (Oosthuizen 1991:262). In this regard Oosthuizen cites research by Childers and Van House (1989), who found that the most preferred models for the evaluation of organizational effectivity are the goal model, in terms of which an organization is designed to achieve certain objectives, and the open system model, which emphasizes the interdependence of the organization and its environment. Wellard (1937) wishes to utilize and formulate the overall objectives of the public library as operational value standards within the context of the selection process (Oosthuizen 1991:263).

Haines (1950:xi-xii) whose Living with books: the art of book selection (1950), perhaps the most well-known treatise on selection, is written in graceful language and erudite fashion, views the public library as the great community agency of informal self-education. Books are the instruments of intelligence, the expression of all the qualities and defects of the human spirit and the purveyors of the historic sense of progress through the ages and the comprehension of the great societal undercurrents that run through human experience, past and present. Poetry, drama and novels are potent agents in background-building, and the weaving of colour and personality into the fiction of history and social progress (Haines 1950:4-5).

Haines (1950:15-28) views the overall objective as the provision of informal education by means of reading, an ideal which has inspired the American public library since its founding.

Bonk and Magrill (1979:89) point out that selection will always depend on the view librarians take of the purposes of the library:

If they are convinced that it has an important educational purpose, that it should attempt to stock serious materials for the sober student of life and society, they may well reject light, ephemeral popular fiction.

Katz (1980:108) comments, regarding the public library's objectives, that those who see the public library's objective as the provision of only serious literature and culture are being essentially anti-democratic. Katz (1980:106-107) finds that the public library should offer a wide variety of materials, that which is viewed as the best of its kind, and of necessity, also perhaps the worst. The public library should have the objective of being an institution where people can find touches of everything at various quality levels. In this context Katz (1980:107) cites Gans's (1974) summation that

... it would be wrong to expect a society ... to choose only from taste culture requiring a college education, or for that matter, to support through public policies the welfare of the higher cultures at the expense of the lower ones. Moreover it is wrong to criticize people for holding and applying aesthetic standards that are related to their educational background, and for participating in taste cultures reflecting this background.

Broadus (1981:25-26) finds that the educational objective of the American public library has become less urgent due to the long formal schooling afforded youths in general. (This is not the situation in South Africa where, from the general point of view of the public

library, the need for education and development is both substantial and urgent, as will be discussed hereunder).

The public library in South Africa has up to now been modelled on the traditional Anglo-American public library, geared to meet the informational, educational and recreational reading needs of the mostly educated middle-class user from the developed sector of South Africa, because of historical societal and political reasons. In order to further explain the factors included in the proposed model which relate to public library objectives, it is necessary to consider the present and projected future objectives of the public library in South Africa. (Spiller 1986:6-7) describes the five classical objectives of the traditional Anglo-American public library as being:

- (i) Information: common to public, academic and special libraries, with information needs in public libraries being more diffuse and less clearly defined than in academic or special libraries.
- (ii) Culture: the provision of cultural reading is a major function of public libraries: it involves the pursuit of knowledge, truth, beauty or goodness, even though it is always mixed up with other motivations such as the search for social importance, status, self-realisation and the comfort of a dream world. Such reading is judged to include works of literature, art and philosophy and may also cover history, biography and topography.
- (iii) Education: in the sense of informal self-education or self-development, the provision of educational material has always been very much part of the Anglo-American public library's brief. (The provision of educational textbooks is not normally seen as part of the public library's terms of reference in Anglo-American public libraries).

- (iv) Recreation: most Anglo-American public library users read recreationally at one time or another, and large numbers of people read almost exclusively in this way. In Britain, well over half of public library issues are of material which can be termed recreational: popular fiction and some popular non-fiction. The provision of recreational material has thus become an increasingly important function.
- (v) Research: the use of public libraries for research material varies a great deal according to the size and quality of the individual public libraries collection, but will be unlikely to form a significant part of the collection.

Spiller (1986) has delineated and described the generally-accepted objectives of the public library from the perspective of the Anglo-American public libraries which function within developed societies. The perspective on the general objectives of South African public library would differ in some respects in respect of the informational objective. Apart from traditional information services for the user from the developed sector, specially-designed services for the user from the developing community would be needed such as information service, repackaging of information in other easily-accessible formats and a referral service to assist enquiries from citizens. The educational objective would ideally be seen as including support for users engaged in formal and/or informal education. The initiation of and support for literary programmes would be called for as well as the provision of study areas, in the library, for students at secondary and tertiary level (Oosthuizen 1991:281).

The justified view of Spiller (1986:7) that the Anglo-American public library does not normally see the provision of educational textbooks as falling within its terms of reference, would not hold true for the South African library where public libraries in developing communities could quite conceivably be faced with such needs, especially in the case of part-time students or students from developing communities approaching their local public libraries for material for assignments. Shillinglaw (1990:115) finds that the need to provide

literary training and to provide for those with deficient education with a school for the masses is a great opportunity for the public librarian.

Zaaiman and Roux (1989:9) have determined in an extensive study of the possible use of libraries for the development of South Africa, that librarians in South African public libraries are becoming aware of the cognitive needs of developing communities, especially the desire for formal and informal education in these communities. Oosthuizen (1991:282-283) makes the telling point that the general cultural objective of the public library gains even more importance in a multi-cultural society, such as that of South Africa with its manifold ethnic groups, cultures and languages. The knowledge gained by reading can lead to understanding of other cultures and ways of life existing in the same multi-cultural society, and contribute to the present-day South African concept of a nation-building process to unite the many existing and diverse ethnic groupings and cultures. Oosthuizen (1991:282) refers in this respect to the American public library's successful efforts in creating a common sense of nationhood during the mass influx of many millions of new immigrants into the United States in the early years of the twentieth century.

Lor (1994:134) comments in general regarding public library objectives, that public libraries could provide focal points or at the very least logistic support for information, education and promotional programmes aimed at the general population. Oosthuizen (1991:263) finds that the community-bound status of the public library reinforces her opinion that the overall objectives of the public library (such as being informational, educational, recreational and acculturative) should be realized at the operational level by community-oriented objectives. The introduction of community information services for the developing communities in South Africa is therefore a realization of the principle of the public library as a responsive service organization. Shillinglaw (1990:115) takes a more inflexible view of the future of the South African public library by stating that if the South African public library profession should continue to see its future in terms of the classic Western formula of educational, informational, cultural and recreational objectives, it could be "buried in the stampede for scarce public funds". Shillinglaw (1990:115) does,

however, qualify his statement by saying that great importance will be placed on skilled and educated manpower, and that:

A developing populace will coexist with an educated and prioritized elite. In a non-racial society, there will be a non-racial elite, but whatever the form of government, their special contribution will be in demand and rewarded. Public library services for this group will be different in nature from popular educational and informational services and more like the leisure services currently mainly available to white communities. They might have to be wholly or partially funded from private sources, and it may be that there will be a return to the subscription library in some communities, or that some of the public library's services may be provided on a subscription basis, or for a fee. There is likely to be a call for free services where these are broadly cultural, educational or informational, and aimed at the masses, and for subscription services where they are perceived as elitist or aimed at the economically privileged.

This researcher foresees that the eventual mission of the South African public library will be a medium between the two extremes of the traditional Anglo-American public library catering mostly for the recreational, educational, informational and cultural needs of the educated middle classes on the one hand, and the concept that these objectives have become irrelevant and obsolete in a developing country and should be replaced by the objectives of informing and educating the masses of the other. It is foreseen that the public libraries in the metropolitan and suburban areas of South Africa will have a large and ever-growing proportion of educated and professional middle-class users in need of the traditional informational, educational, cultural and recreational services of the public library. Public libraries in developing and disadvantaged communities will quite likely, in view of the pressing needs of the community for educational upliftment and community-oriented services, not have the same need of recreational reading.

The educated middle class, the traditional patron of the public library, is growing rapidly, as more and more South Africans from historically-disadvantaged ethnic groups achieve secondary and tertiary educational qualifications. The University of South Africa is a glowing example with 127 000 students in 1996, the majority being black or from other historically disadvantaged communities. South Africa has twelve other universities and at least the same number of technicons (scientifically and technically-oriented tertiary, degree-conferring institutions), which all have over the past decade gained dramatically in student numbers from the historically-disadvantaged majority population.

It is furthermore of interest to note that Lor (1994:128) finds that the present government's Reconstruction and Development Programme, which constitutes cardinal and vital planning elements in the projected socio-economic upliftment of all historically-disadvantaged communities, makes no specific mention of the role of the public library:

Nowhere are libraries and information referred to in the same context. There is no evidence that the compilers of the document have any appreciation of the role LIS [library and information services] can play in national reconstruction and development. The word 'information' occurs quite frequently, but is used loosely, with various connotations. The document offers no coherent treatment of information as national resource. This indicates that LIS [library and information services] are well down on the list of national priorities.

The retention of the recreational reading function is in any case a *sine qua non* for the selection of and continued provision of works of science fiction by the public library. The preceding remarks and views by experts in this field have, however, been deemed necessary in justifying the inclusion of the recreational and informal education objectives in the micro-level model for the selection of science fiction in the public library. These observations may be of use in the observation of the continuing and very necessary debate regarding the future objectives of public libraries within the South African context.

Oosthuizen (1994:86) concisely formulates the objectives of the ideal public library from the point of view of the cognitive, affective and informational needs of the user, as being to

- fulfil the cognitive and affective needs of individuals on all levels of existence, concerning both the theoretical and practical aspects of their religious, social, political, cultural, educational, aesthetic and economic lives; and
- present the opportunity to all persons in the community of accessing public knowledge for the sustenance and improvement of their quality of life.

8.4.2 Determining the inherent value of fiction

Drury (1930) proceeds from the basic selection premise that the inherent value of a book is the *raison d'être* for a book's inclusion in a collection. Selection in his view is, as summarized by Evans (1987:86):

... the best quality reading material for the greatest number of patrons at the lowest possible price. Certainly this is a highly desirable goal for any library
... The best of any type of reading, according to Drury, is characterized by four qualities: truth, clarity, good taste and literary merit.

Drury (1930) suggested several guidelines to be adopted to create a value system or the selection of books. The most important of these guidelines stipulate that suitable standards for judging items should be established, that criteria be applied intelligently and that the book should be evaluated to determine its inherent worth. Fiction should be selected for the collection because of its educational and recreational value. A ranking system should be developed by the librarian.

Wellard (1937:92) correctly views the main issue of selection as that of being concerned, unlike pure literary criticism, with both the reader and the book:

If it were not, a public library would be full of highly commendable books from the literary standpoint, but books suited to only a bare minority of readers, a situation which would be no more justifiable than the subjection of standards of taste to vulgar preference. The great problem - it is not a dilemma - of the book selector is to observe a balance between the utilitarian principle as it is expressed by the actual reading needs, interests, and abilities of the whole library clientele and between the humanist principle based on literary standards ... if the province of book selection is identified with that of literary criticism, the intrinsic value of the book is likely to be emphasized to the neglect of the actual needs of the reader.

Haines (1950:522-530) has definite principles to put forward for the evaluation of individual works of fiction:

- (i) The test of time: art which gives lasting pleasure to the greatest number of people. This test of permanence of appeal is the decisive and enduring test of creative art. Unfortunately this cannot be applied to contemporary fiction, but does assist in deepening perspectives.
- (ii) The test of compensation: does this book warrant the time spent in reading it instead of a different book?
- (iii) The test of significance: what is the value of the book as an interpretation of life?
- (iv) The test of effect on the reader: does the book leave any kind of fine or wholesome feeling?

- (v) The test of comparison asks: how does the book measure up, quality by quality, in relation to works of the same kind which have passed the test of time? This test demands a broad background knowledge of fiction.

Katz (1980:89) defined evaluation and selection as the former being the judging of the intrinsic merits of materials, whilst selection is the determination of whether the materials meet the needs of the individual user. The traditionalist view of selection would be to judge a work primarily on its intrinsic value with works not judged suitable in this respect, rejected out of hand. The liberal approach would be to primarily judge on the grounds of popularity, although liberals also believe in the traditional core collections of classics in all fields. Pluralists, Katz (1980:90) argues, weigh both intrinsic merit and potential popularity against each other in an attempt to strike the correct balance. Oosthuizen (1991:274) disagrees with Katz's thinking, as she is of the opinion that evaluation includes both judging the intrinsic merit of the work of fiction as well as its utility in the collection, as evaluation encompasses both the quality and demand factors. Oosthuizen (1991:273) sees the evaluation process as a three-layered intellectual process of evaluation which is composed of

- (i) The valuation of the text in terms of such criteria as literary merit, readability, degree of difficulty, subject, ability to hold the readers' attention.
- (ii) The evaluated text is then considered in terms of its utility within an existing collection and in the context of library objectives, reader needs and publication production.
- (iii) The availability of funds is then considered, as well as the possibility of cooperation with other libraries.

These three phases all represent succeeding phases of the selection process.

The evaluation of a text should, as pointed out by Oosthuizen (1991), be done purely on merit and independent of any potentially negative factors influencing this, such as availability of finance or possible utility. Once the intrinsic merit of the work of fiction has been established, the selector proceeds with the selection process, which is the weighing up and balancing of the intrinsic merit of the work of fiction against all other factors involved in the selection decision: objectives, reader needs, existing library collection and budget.

It is conceded that the evaluation of the literary text itself could possibly be affected by the selector unconsciously factoring in elements such as budget constraints and the existing collection as well as user needs. The theoretical ideal would however be to have the evaluation of the text effected in isolation, so that the intrinsic merit enters the selection decision process without having been pre-influenced by other factors and is thus weighed as an independent factor to compete against the above-mentioned other factors.

Oosthuizen (1991:274) suggests a further important consideration: the selector of fiction should be cognizant of the different literary theories and their underlying philosophical points of departure. Popular culture and genre literature should also be studied so that the selector can devise and utilize a merit scale. These aspects are both addressed in this dissertation.

Spiller (1986:154-157) finds that fiction tends to be difficult to evaluate. The selector in the public library must nevertheless choose, as he or she has a professional responsibility to identify merit. The selector must discover what has merit in the different categories of fiction published, and relate these findings to a knowledge of readers' fiction needs.

8.4.3 The enduring debate: quality versus demand

The role of fiction in the public library has been sternly debated (cf. paragraph 8.3), and the 'Great Fiction Question' as this debate came to be known, was the single most controversial issue in public librarianship of the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. The fiction question would persist into the present day and would resolve around two basic camps: those traditionalists who maintain that the public library should only provide the best quality fiction in order to uplift the literary awareness of the community; opposed by the literal view that the public library is funded by the taxpayer and should provide the fiction the user prefers and wants, regardless of perceived inherent literary value.

McColvin (1925:9-10) views book selection as the first task of librarianship, arguing with justification that the ultimate value of a library depends on the way in which the collection has been selected. A body of theory is necessary, in his view, in order to provide a scientific basis for selection.

McColvin (1925:14-16) stresses the importance of the selector's ability to make the right decisions, the view that libraries have to meet the demands of the users as well as the fact that the main function of libraries is to provide service. Book selection thus resolves itself into a consideration of two opposites: demand and supply: McColvin (1925:18) argues that:

The first of these two factors, demand, is for all practical purposes quite beyond our control, whereas the second, supply, is not. We cannot alter, create or abolish demand, we cannot fashion it or mould it, whereas supply is a matter to which we can devote all our knowledge and experience. In other words unless we apply ourselves to the question of making supply meet demand we can have no need for any science of book selection whatsoever,

since we cannot make **demand** meet **supply**. If our supply is not, therefore, closely related to demand, it is, roughly speaking, of no importance what it consists of or how it is provided and arranged.

The *raison d'être* of the public library flows therefore from the demand evinced by the user.

McColvin (1925:27) postulates that the demand for a book arises from the need or desire of the user, and that the demand for the satisfaction of this need will be approximately equal to the need itself:

The only justification for the provision of any book is the existence of need or desire for it, and accordingly the value or importance of that need is equivalent to the value of the book, and *vice versa*. Roughly speaking the evaluation of demand resolves itself into the evaluation of needs and desires.

McColvin (1925:19-20) argues that the public library collection should be comprehensive as regards both subject or demand. The first category, that of subject would in his view therefore mean that the subject is selected *per se*, whether in demand or not, and could therefore be an item in which very few people, if any, are interested. Items should be selected, for the public library, in proportion to demand and not subject.

Referring to the desirability of providing fiction, and if so, to what extent, McColvin (1925:26-30) states that the fiction question forms part of the wider question: if the public librarian accepts that all those human activities which foster human development and happiness are legitimate, all such activities could lay just claim to be included in the collection, including fiction. Popular fiction should in McColvin's (1925:31-32) view be provided, much as the public librarian deplores the fact that thousands read popular novels and very few the Greek tragedians.

A large part of reading is to some extent recreative or to some degree purely recreative (McColvin 1925:41), and standards for the selection of fiction should be aimed at determining whether it is meritorious if compared horizontally with other works of the same nature. McColvin (1925:143) finds that

What we need is an appreciation of the essential differences between different types of fiction and a realisation that qualities which we should seek in one type might be quite out of place in another.

Undesirable or immoral works of fiction should be negatively evaluated irrespective of the volume of popular demand for such works, although McColvin (1925:142-149) concedes that not every book dealing with matters one would not discuss in one's drawing room, or using language not utilized in polite society, need necessarily be disqualified from selection. Undesirability is relative, and what is harmful to one reader could be beneficial for another. Novels selected only for restricted circulation should be acquired only if they are of exceptional literary or ethical merit.

McColvin (1925:144-146) divides novels into four main, but not mutually exclusive categories:

- (i) Novels depicting a particular section of society or life which should be realistic and true to life with concomitant characterization, such as the works of Sinclair Lewis and Gustave Flaubert.
- (ii) Novels of characterization, telling the story of men and women with the semblance of life, like the works of Joseph Conrad and Thomas Hardy.
- (iii) Novels of plot interest such as mystery and detective stories, romances and action narratives, wherein unlikely or impossible initial premises are accepted. Original and ingenious plots are preferable in this category. (This

plot category as McColvin describes it, would later come to be identified as formula literature).

- (iv) Novels of 'idea' interest in which the philosophical or moral idea is the central element, e.g. the science fiction of H.G. Wells.

McColvin (1925:147) summarizes his theory of fiction selection as one in which the public librarian

... should aim at securing the best of each type and class ... only a very small percentage of the writers of novels attempt or desire to stimulate or inspire ... only a very small percentage of the readers of novels have the slightest wish to be stimulated or inspired. They read novels, as a general rule, simply to be 'merely amused', and if a novel can do this, it is in nine cases out of ten fulfilling its purpose ... The main purpose of fiction is, however, recreative. Anyone who argues from this that the library should not, therefore, supply light fiction, must be referred to our initial contention that the library should answer as far as possible and proportionately, all the needs of the community, one of which, and a most important one, is recreation.

McColvin (1925:183-186) views selection as a neglected subject, and advocates that it should be approached by means of scientific methods. He again emphasizes the service function of the public library, and admits that he has not dealt with the question of attracting non-users to the public library, pointing out that growing numbers of users would increase the library's funding which in turn would improve the service. McColvin (1925:186) concludes that:

Good book selection will help to increase the use made of the library. Above all, the conception of our work as the rendering of definite service closely related to demand will remove many misconceptions and prejudices and

bring about a closer, more friendly, more fruitful relationship between the institution and its public.

McColvin's theory of fiction selection emphasizes the need to meet demand and the necessity of meeting this demand with good quality fiction of all categories. His views on fiction selection are remarkably progressive considering that they were formulated in the first quarter of this century. His emphasis on service to the user is likewise important, as is his view that selection is the first and most important task in librarianship, and his firm conviction that the predilection of the majority of users for recreational reading should be accepted and catered for.

Oosthuizen (1991:254) identifies the main and enduring elements of McColvin's theory as being his emphasis on public library objectives, the principles of supply and demand and evaluation by virtue of the merit of the text itself.

McColvin's approach emphasized that the user demand for popular fiction is legitimate, and that user demand is the priority in selection.

McColvin's (1925) resolute advocateship of the satisfying of user demand, is supported by Bostwick (1929) who views recreation as a general need and emphasizes the provision of fiction. Bostwick (1929) postulates that the average taste of users should be used in selection. Evans (1987:86) comments that the approach would necessitate research into community needs. Drury (1930) supports the quality school and proposes a value system for the selection of books, and his views can be summarized as the provision of the best quality reading material for the greatest number of patrons at the lowest possible price (Evans 1987:86).

Bonny (1939) published a manual on selection. He did not add anything new or original to theory of selection, but did provide excellent practical advice on selection for public libraries. In Bonny's view input into the selection process is desired from the selector, the

user and a committee of specialists. Users should be able to suggest titles as well as volunteer to serve on the selection committee of the public library in order to encourage community participation and input, to assist the selector. The committee should, however, be advisory, with the final responsibility for selection firmly in the hands of the public librarian (Evans 1987:90-91).

Wellard (1937:79-80) concedes that, due to what he considers as the cultural limitations of recreational reading, even the most banal of fiction or the cheapest thriller cannot be excluded from selection as such works could meet "the requisites of healthfulness and intelligence". This concession expressed in the nineteen thirties is indicative of a remarkably progressive spirit, if one bears in mind the prominence that the provision of popular literature such as thrillers and best sellers including works of science fiction would later acquire.

Wellard (1937:81) does, however, caution the indiscriminate provision of such works of fiction would represent a failure to recognize or observe "better standards of taste". In this sense Wellard (1937) is exhibiting the classic dilemma of the selector of fiction for the public library: satisfying demand whilst still wishing to maintain certain perceived standards of literary taste.

Wellard (1937:85-91) is of the opinion that standards of quality should be the basis for the selection of all works of fiction, but that the selector should not concentrate too long on the subtleties of aesthetic appreciation. The demands of the actual reader should be taken into consideration. The book selector should prefer the book review which is concerned solely with current literature and the practical evaluation of actual readers, to scholarly literary criticism which is concerned with the acknowledged literary stars of the past.

In Haines (1950) the traditionalist, quality school would find a formidable supporter. She has an abiding faith in the positive value of fiction, and emphasizes the great responsibility resting on the shoulders of the selector.

Haines (1950:22-33) elucidates several key concepts:

- Haines concedes that the greater part of the demand placed on the public library by its users is for popular literature whether for motives of pleasure or edification.
- Buried in the mass of users is a select group of users who prefer intelligent and purposeful readers who know and love literature and fine spiritual inspiration and sustenance therein.
- The public library is an integral part of community activity and the social body: it functions in anticipation of or in response to the whole range of community needs which are made evident by public demand.
- The library's purpose is triangular in nature, encompassing three factors: supply versus demand; a determination of the value of the demand *per se*, and finally the resources (existing collection and budget) of the public library.
- The public library's immediate objective or task is to provide for the mass demands of its users as effectively as possible, whilst, at the same time, catering for the minority of readers who read more intelligently and purposefully than the great mass of readers.

Haines (1950:32-42) approves of McColvin's demand and supply approach and his theory that demand should be differentiated into volume, value and variety expressed in quantifiable terms. In general she finds McColvin's (1925) theory a contribution towards a more scientific perspective on book selection, one which other researchers can use as a basis for further progress in this field. She distinguishes between 'classics and fine fiction,

'good standard fiction', 'light fiction', and specifically 'detective and western fiction'. Oosthuizen (1991:265) comments, with justification, that these categories of fiction are not mutually exclusive, as detective fiction could fit into others amongst the aforementioned categories, such as 'fine' or 'good standard fiction'. Haines's comments should be judged in the context of her time, when detective stories were mostly not seen as part of acceptable fiction or even the lighter side of the fiction spectrum.

Haines (1950:32-33) criticizes Wellard's (1937) theory because of his over-emphasis on sociological/psychological factors in order to classify readers in homogeneous groups as focal points for selection. Oosthuizen (1991:264) refutes this criticism by pointing out that Wellard (1937) did include the book as well as the reader and library objective in his tripartite concept.

Haines's emphasis is on the provision of quality works of fiction, as she is strongly of the opinion that the great literary works should form the core of the collection, although the demands of readers for popular fiction should also be catered for.

Katz (1980:17-20) attempts to steer a middle course between the traditional view that the library selector should give priority to quality, and the liberal view that demand should predominate. Katz argues for a pluralistic approach incorporating both poles of this continuum, one which borrows from both poles and should thus be wide in scope and generous in purpose. Katz (1980:97) argues that demand should override the librarian's negative decision, unless a highly unusual decision prevails.

Katz (1980:101) finds that not all people want to read the best of fiction, indeed that even the most avid literary elitist will at times find pleasure in a well-written work of popular fiction. In the case of popular fiction the essential question is to differentiate between inferior and superior popular (genre) fiction. Katz (1980:103) cites a survey which found that fifty-three percent of university graduates avidly read the mystery/detective genre and argues that much the same results would hold true for science fiction, romances and

horror novels, as audiences for these genres cross all educational and even interest lines. In the light of these considerations it would be difficult to decide who is likely to read specific categories of fiction based on such factors as education, age and experience.

Katz (1980:105-106) is emphatic in his view that the selector should not select on the basis of what people ought to read, or reject what the user ought not to read, as a person's reading habits cannot be changed by pronouncing that they are terrible or morally reprehensible:

The demand usually is for one of two types of book: (1) a best seller or a book headed for the best-seller list because it has been extensively reviewed or mentioned in the press and on television, or (2) a book in a certain general subject area - from gothic novels and science fiction to popular biography. Normally the individual knows the name of the best seller, or at least has a hint as to the author. In the second category there may be a favorite author, but more often it is a sweeping demand (some call it an insatiable hunger) for anything of a given type.

Broadus (1981) steers a middle course, finding the first rule of selection to be that the public library user is pre-eminent. Regarding the enduring debate on demand versus quality, Broadus (1981:41-42) emphatically declares that:

It is fundamental that, in a free society, the public library exists to render a service to the people. It takes account, then, of what the citizens themselves want. The people judge. In a closed or totalitarian society libraries may still avow that their major purpose is doing good for the people, but this assertion generally means meeting "needs" in a way beneficial to the leaders ... One of the prime ways of relieving the people of their freedom is to do for them what government knows to be the best. The rulers judge, ultimately for their own benefit ... The people themselves should be given the opportunity

to improve their knowledge and tastes voluntarily. Changes for the better need not be imposed from above. Demand for library material is to be assessed in terms of what the people will prefer if presented with quality works along with the commonplace.

The public library should also make available the best quality literature for the small number who will appreciate it. The librarian should learn to live with the tension between quality versus demand (Broadus 1981:44). Public libraries should have a core collection of classic fiction, but the popularity of certain works of fiction is not always a sign of poor quality (Broadus 1981:393).

Broadus (1981:394) devotes specific attention to science fiction:

Having long since outgrown its reputation for trashiness, science fiction has been studied seriously in universities since the early 1960s and claims great numbers of learned people as readers. Says astronomer Carl Sagan, "I find that science fiction has led me to science." Like the other arts, observes James Blish, it adds to our knowledge of reality, "... but unlike any other art, science fiction also evokes for the non-scientist the basic scientific emotions" the thrill of discovery, the delight in intellectual rigor, and the sense of wonder, even of awe, before the order and complexity of the physical universe.

Gardner (1981:180:185), like Broadus (1981), believes that selectors should be resigned to live in a state of tension between the demands of their patrons and their own concepts:

Most library material selectors *today must usually make some compromise between the theories of demand and value*. Most feel that the library is there to serve its customers and that collections should be built around their needs rather than some theoretical needs which exist only in the mind of the

selector. Most selectors, of whatever persuasion, feel that all aspects of a question should be represented in a collection, although it is difficult sometimes to obtain works of equal value or worth on both sides. Demands need to be faced with the realization that patrons do not always have as much knowledge of what is available as the librarian, and if they did, they might prefer something else. Just as most selectors believe in providing a wide range of materials on topics in demands, they feel that some attempt should be made to serve the few patrons who have specialized interests or needs (although in times of tight budgets this is becoming increasingly difficult to do) [Emphasis added].

Gardner (1981:194-195) takes a rather unsympathetic view of genre fiction such as science fiction, westerns, mysteries and romances, stating that the public library selector should decide how much time and effort should be devoted to the acquisition of these types of fiction.

Gardner (1981) is to be faulted for so lightly dismissing user needs. The public library selector should seek to select the best in every category of fiction to effectively satisfy public demand, and not only depend on paperback books and rental or leased libraries as Gardner (1981:195), so blithely suggests.

Gardner (1981:195-198) concedes that the evaluation of fiction, including popular fiction, is problematic. Apart from the selector's judgement of literary taste and aesthetic response, the reputation of the author, or sometimes also the publisher, can be of use. Selectors who are uncertain could also wait for reviews and critical articles if necessary. Gardner (1981) seems to lose sight of the cardinal fact that the final responsibility rests with the selector and only the selector. Reviews should not be used as a surrogate for personal judgement, and his suggestion that the selection of popular fiction be substituted by rental or leased libraries to solve the problems of public libraries is professionally short-sighted.

Curley and Broderick (1985) clearly favour demand over quality as far as fiction provision in the public library is concerned.

Spiller (1986:160-163) finds that there are strong arguments in favour of providing public library users with a generous measure of good popular fiction, as public libraries are supported by the taxpayer, and representation of all tastes is therefore warranted. At its lowest level light or popular fiction is concerned with sustaining literacy, although a substantial number of mystery and romance readers are from the middle socio-economic classes. Science fiction is once again an exception, which, as Broadus (1981:394) points out, has been studied seriously in universities since the nineteen sixties, and has great numbers of learned people (e.g. eminent astronomer Carl Sagan) as readers.

Selectors should be decisive in deciding the selection of fiction. Spiller (1986:161) argues that:

The fundamental problem is the *degree* to which recreational fiction should be provided in relation to 'serious' fiction. User surveys have shown that approximately 80% of fiction issues fall into the 'recreational' category. Few librarians would advocate the funding of recreational reading on this scale. The element of 'sameness' in much of the genre [popular] fiction means that librarians can consider limited provision of genre novels without serious loss to the overall content of the fiction stock. Genre [popular fiction] novels that are 'bad of their kind' can be eliminated altogether. The point about 'serious' fiction is its attempt to achieve *originality*, and although the attempt may in most cases be deemed a partial failure - a failure accordingly reflected in reduced provision - there is a good case for providing at least one copy of every attempt ... It is suggested ... that such decisions must in the last analysis be based upon value judgements, and that librarians have shown themselves reluctant to make such judgements. There is no scientific way

that the 'right' proportion of light fiction can be decided. The librarian must impose an arbitrary solution, based both on the library's objectives and on the amount of demand, but with the former a predominating influence.

Oosthuizen (1991:276) illustrates that Spiller (1986) has thus, in effect, realigned selection theory with McColvin's (1925) three main theoretical principles: the intrinsic value of the item, demand and library objectives. Oosthuizen (1991:276-277) furthermore identifies a questionable aspect of Spiller's (1986) theory of selection, as the latter is not convinced that the selector should evaluate fiction, or is capable of doing so. He advises that selectors should use aids such as reputation of the publisher, prizes awarded to the author, press reviews and standard fiction lists. Oosthuizen (1991:277) has identified a major principle of selection at micro-level: the selector has the final say in the inclusion of a work of fiction in the public library collection, and the supplementational elements such as press reviews and the reputation of the publishers, are there to render technical support and not to substitute for the selectors: Such aids in the supplementational context will in any case not always be present, as in the case of first novels or some formulaic fiction (Oosthuizen 1991:277).

Oosthuizen (1991:278) further comments that intrinsic value cannot be excluded as one of the three main principles of selection. If intrinsic value should fall away, demand on the one hand, and library objectives on the other, cannot both simultaneously be maintained as principles, unless the objectives should be to provide unconditionally for any demand made by the user.

8.4.4 Community studies to determine user needs

Authors and researchers in this field are, in spite of diverging views on the question of demand versus quality, remarkably unanimous regarding the need for studies to determine user needs.

Drury (1930) stipulates that the community should be studied to determine its needs and demands, and a selection programme developed accordingly to satisfy the reading needs and demands of the community Evans (1987:87).

Haines (1950:22-33) emphasizes that discovery of the community's needs is the first priority, after which selection to satisfy these needs follows, which in turn implies the ability to judge the inherent value of the individual book. In this regard, the readers' advisory service of the public library is a valuable instrument for building up knowledge on both users and books, within the context of the selection process.

In this context Gardner (1981:189-190) stresses that selection never occurs in a vacuum. It is made in the context of the users of a library, the existing collection, and in terms of other collections in the area that can be drawn upon. The communities of academic libraries, special collections and school library and media centres have an easily-identifiable group of users, and there is clarity about what subjects should be covered in the collection, and at what depth and level. The public library is unlike any of the above-mentioned libraries as the range of people within the community usually varies greatly. It is never the homogeneous body that one finds in a campus or school setting. It is therefore of cardinal importance that the public library selector knows what the community is like. Often communities change and libraries, as established bodies, may be removed from community needs (Gardner 1981:189-190).

Spiller (1986:157-158) illustrates that regarding general research into the sociology of fiction reading:

Not a great deal is known, however, about the fiction people read, and how they come to choose it ... Peter Mann's books [1969, 1971, 1974 & 1981] on the borrowing, buying and reading of books include some valuable material on fiction. His specialized study of romantic fiction reading is also useful. (It is a pity that there are not similar studies for other genres of

recreational reading). A survey which came out in 1978 by the present writer, looks at how and why readers select fiction from public libraries. It is apparent from this that a very high proportion of public library fiction issues (up to 80%) are for recreational reading rather than what might be termed 'serious' reading. 'Mysteries' (thrillers, murders, etc.) comprise by far the largest grouping - about 25-30% of total fiction issues. Other genres - romances, adventure novels and family sagas attract regular and substantial clienteles, each accounting for approximately 10% of fiction issues. Science fiction attracts a smaller but more vociferous group of readers. Looking at the issues of 'serious' fiction, the most surprising aspect is the low proportion of classics loaned - only 5% of total fiction issues if all the works of 'serious' writers (no longer living) are included.

Evans (1987:84) finds that McColvin's approach (like that of others who emphasize the user demand concept) places a very heavy emphasis on community analysis in order to determine changing demands:

... community analysis is an ongoing project. Unless the library has enough funding to hire a resident sociologist, librarians need to learn how to combine this activity with other library functions. The socio-economic emphasis in American and British public librarianship was very strong during the 1920s, 1930s and late 1940s. Considerable emphasis was placed on community studies and on developing programs and services, and in particular, book collections, which were designed to meet local community needs. During the 1950s and 1960s this emphasis faded somewhat: the economic picture was bright and there was an increasing flow of funds to libraries. For many American academic libraries and a few large public library systems there seemed to be no concern with selecting, just with collecting - everything in sight. We have now come full circle. Selection is again the keyword.

These remarks by Evans (1987) illustrate that the views of McColvin (1925), *inter alia* on the importance of selection still hold true.

8.5 Conclusion

In essence book selection is, as Broadus (1981:5) so rightly states, one of the most fascinating tasks in the intellectual world. The selector's is a special and very responsible function, and selectors should live with books in both spiritual as well as material contact, and share intellectually in the many-sided relationship between books, people and life. By means of this approach the selector will acquire reasoned judgement (Haines 1950:568-569).

The provision of popular fiction for recreational reading has been accepted as part of the functions of the public library, albeit somewhat grudgingly in some cases where the selector is of the opinion that only classical fiction or serious fiction should be selected. Researchers have found that there is a sense of crisis and heated debate regarding selection for libraries and collection development, and that the conceptual frameworks regarding selection are inadequate. The selection of fiction, especially popular fiction, have been neglected.

The enduring quality versus demand debate is thoroughly reflected in twentieth-century selection theory with some traditionalist researchers and authors favouring quality over demand, and the more liberal view giving priority to demand over quality. There is a movement towards a combination or synthesis of these two approaches, as well as the concept that the selector should live with and operate within the tension formed by these opposing factions.

Existing twentieth-century general theory of selection in the public library has emphasized the fact that the best in each category of fiction, serious or popular, should be included in

the public library collection. There is general agreement that the demands of the public library user of fiction should be catered for, although there is resistance from the quality camp to the indiscriminate provision of fiction to users.

There is also a welcome emphasis that the democratic principle should be reflected in public library selection practice. It is also encouraging to view the general conceptual emphasis on the need for community studies in order to determine user needs. The community-based status of the public library is therefore viewed as a priority factor at the operational level of the selector. A definite conceptual link is therefore to be discerned between the process of selection in the public library on the one hand, and the fiction reading needs of the community on the other.

The great responsibility of the selector is quite rightly emphasized, as well as the fact that the final responsibility rests with the selector, who cannot abrogate his or her responsibility and substitute selection aids such as press and literary reviews, the reputation of the author and standard lists of good fiction. Selectors should be familiar with literary theories and philosophies, and make their own informed selections, irrespective of whether selection aids such as reviews are at hand.

Surveys cited above have shown that up to four-fifths of fiction issues fall within the realm of popular fiction and any theory of the fiction selection process in the public library must encompass this factor. There is a realization that even highly-educated users often prefer popular fiction for recreational reading.

The relationship between the public library as institution and society (community) is prominent in theory examined in this chapter.

The three cardinal factors in the selection of fiction as reflected in the theory discussed above, are the objectives of the public library, the inherent literary value of the fiction text itself, and user demand.

General theory regarding selection, as examined in this chapter, has in many cases yielded valuable knowledge and insight. On the whole, one must concur with Shearer's (1987:73) assessment that theory of selection is inadequate and cannot always guide selection practices effectively. Theory should present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining *and predicting the phenomena*. In this respect theory of fiction selection is not fully adequate. The question should now be posed as to whether there are any models pertaining to the fiction selection process which may provide further insight.

Having thus examined general theory regarding fiction selection, Chapter 9 will proceed to examine several models pertaining to the selection process, in order to gain further insight into this process.

CHAPTER 9

MODELS PERTAINING TO THE FICTION SELECTION PROCESS

9.1 Introduction

Chapter 8 has examined certain general twentieth-century theory relating to fiction selection, which yielded valuable knowledge and insight regarding the main elements involved in fiction selection, although the theory thus far examined is still inadequate, and not always capable of guiding selection practices effectively.

In the course of the second half of the twentieth-century several useful models of the collection development process, and more pertinently, also models of the selection process itself, have been developed. Although they do not not always directly address the fiction selection process *per se*, these models are utilitarian inasmuch as they identify and illuminate important concepts and elements which can be applied to the selection of science fiction at micro-level.

One study especially worthy of investigation is the doctoral dissertation of Oosthuizen (1991) entitled *Teksevaluering soos gedoen deur die keurder, die literator en die sensor* (Text evaluation as effected by the selector, the literary critic and the censor). This dissertation *inter alia* directly addresses the fiction selection process. Oosthuizen (1991, 1994) presents a pioneering and detailed model of the fiction selection process.

This chapter will, after examination of these relevant models, conclude with the presentation of a model of the selection of science fiction at micro-level.

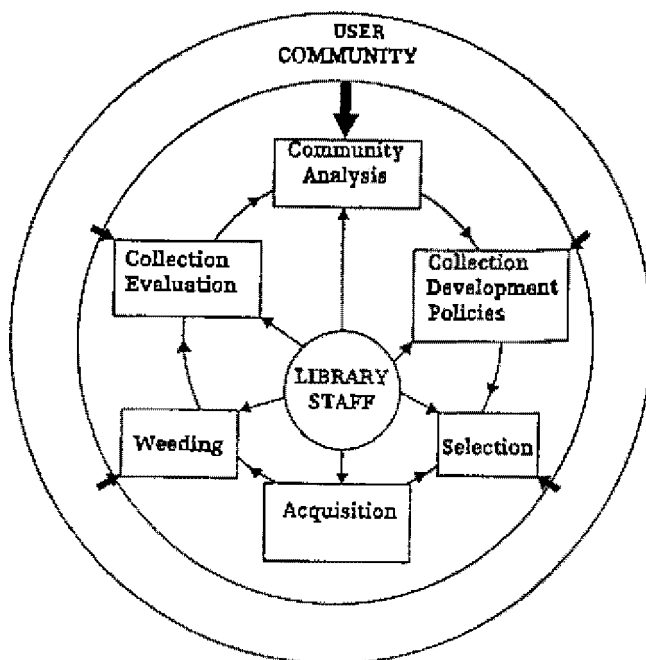
9.2 **Models relating to the collection development and selection processes in the public library**

9.2.1 Evans's model of collection development as a cyclical process

Evans (1987:14) views the collection development process as an ongoing, self-perpetuating cycle, as illustrated by his graphic conception in Figure 9.1 below.

FIGURE 9.1

The collection development process



The collection development process commences with an analysis of user needs, progresses onwards to a formulation of a collection development policy or policies based on the goal of the controlling body which in turn guides the subsidiary process of selecting the correct materials for the collection. Once an item has been selected as suitable, the process of ordering, purchasing or obtaining by other means is carried out. Weeding itself is an

ongoing process by means of which the value of items already in the collection are assessed, and such items as are deemed to have outlived their utility are removed.

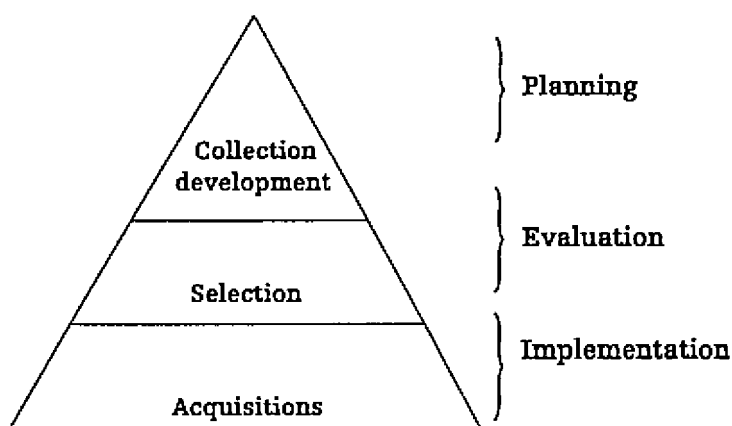
The final phase in the cycle is the evaluation of the collection as a whole in order to determine whether it meets the needs of the user community and whether the service goals and policies are being adhered to. (Such evaluations can be quantitative or qualitative or a combination of both.)

9.2.2 Collection development as a hierarchy of three related functions

Collection development should also be viewed in a different perspective: that of a hierarchy of related functions. This approach has been followed by three researchers, Edelman (1979:33-38), Gorman (1986:40-44) and Jaganathan (1988:285-286), as depicted by Fourie, Gericke and Machet (1996:207) in Figure 9.2 below.

FIGURE 9.2

Collection development as a hierarchy of functions



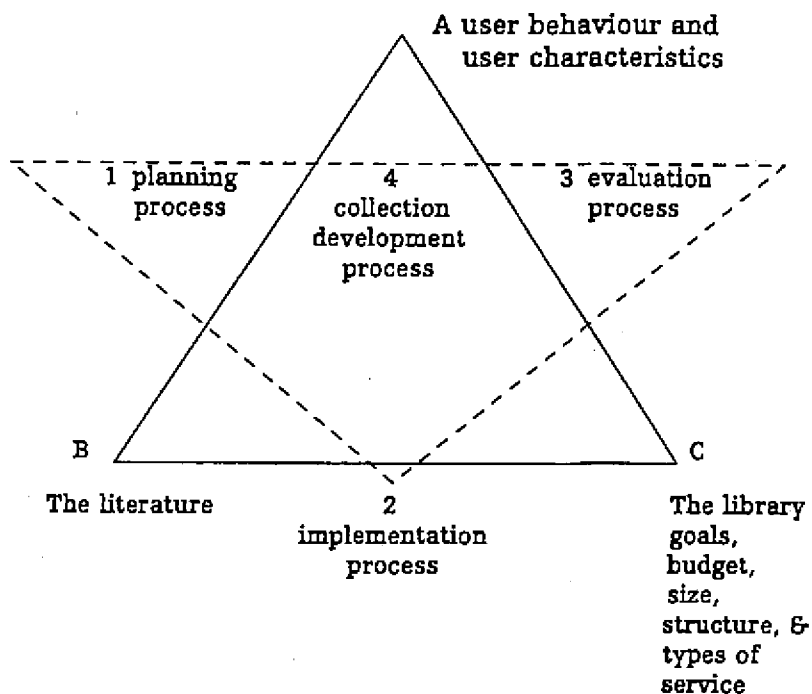
This figure excludes community analyses, weeding and the evaluation of the collection itself, but concentrates on the three core elements and their discrete collection management functions. Collection development is the highest overall strategic level under guidance of which both the more operational selection and acquisition functions are

effected. This hierarchy also illustrates the different management levels, planning being the strategic top management level, with evaluation and implementation being delegated to middle-level management.

9.2.3 Collection development as an interaction between user behaviour/characteristics, the literature and the library as institution

Collection development can also be viewed as result of interaction between the user and his behaviour and characteristics, the literature and the library with its institutional goals, budget, size, structure and types of service. Figure 9.3 depicts this model as developed by Pors (1986:146).

FIGURE 9.3
Collection development as interaction between user, literature and the library as institution



The librarian, in the execution of the planning, evaluation and implementation process must take factors A, B and C into account, and must continually develop the collection by balancing out these factors against each other. Collection development is therefore an ongoing, complex process.

9.2.4 McGrath's model for the evaluation of collections

McGrath (1985) attempts to formulate a model for the evaluation of library collections. In view of the fact that librarianship is lacking in paradigms, which he defines as the extent to which practitioners agree on the laws, theory and method of a scientific discipline, McGrath (1985:242) wishes to examine the theory of library collections and their structure and determine some of the ways in which data on collections can be organized to reveal structures such as the relationships between collections, parts of collections and the users of these collections.

McGrath (1985:243) takes issue with the view that a library collection has a *raison d'être* by virtue of its very existence:

Whether a library or indeed librarianship can function without large collections, however, is not at issue here. Instead, given the basic reality of collections, how can we reconcile them with use and how can we characterize them in a way that the insights obtained would improve the availability, accessibility and ultimately, user satisfaction?

McGrath (1985:244-245) is desirous of discovering whether there are hierarchical, taxonomic and ecological webs, clusters, chains and networks at play within the collection and its components which may help explore and discover the question of how to evaluate a library collection.

... we do know that despite our best efforts, we [librarians] do many things incorrectly or poorly. Why, for example, are less than half of the materials in so many libraries never used? ... Why despite multimillion dollar book budgets are so many users frustrated in finding materials? ... And should we worry about that? Why, in other words, do so many of our precious collections sit on the shelves gathering dust, while so many users cannot find the materials they want?

McGrath (1985:245-246) proceeds to identify the following components within the library collection and its user constituency.

- individual users and user groups
- subjects, sub-topics, larger aggregates of topics (presumably McGrath would include types of literature here)
- forms such as books, films, periodicals
- aggregates: users, subjects and forms may be aggregated in any meaningful way, for example: book > topic > subject > collection > network or scientist > discipline > department > college > university > network.

McGrath (1985:250-250) correctly points to the fact that the vast majority of empirical studies in librarianship in general, and those in collection development and evaluation in particular, have been one-dimensional, without correlating data with points of similarity or difference from related components or classes.

Oosthuizen (1991:224) perceptively identifies the strength in McGrath's model by commenting that McGrath is not satisfied with the mere recording of data, but foresees that the application of the powerfully descriptive techniques developed in statistical research could lead to startling new knowledge when investigating familiar material. The purpose of McGrath's model is to furnish a visible structure of the collection. The models are descriptive by nature and are only hypothesis-generating. The processing of the data

within the frame of these models should according to Oosthuizen (1991:224) project submerged structures which may be explained by means of the formulation (and testing) of new hypotheses.

McGrath's models are in the form of two-way matrices which cross-match attributes in quantitative terms by means of numeric values in columns. McGrath (1985:256-261) proposes eight models:

- A subject structure model to examine in which way subject areas are related to each other
- A model for the user structure which seeks to determine the relationships between individual users or groups of users in terms of common interests
- Subject/user model to determine the relationships between subject areas and users
- A user/formats model to examine the relationship between users and specific formats of library materials
- A subject/format model to determine the relationship between subject areas and specific formats of library materials
- Network model I; examines the overlapping of titles between individual library collections
- Network model II; investigates the overlapping of subject areas between libraries
- Network model III: depicts co-operative sharing of collections.

Table 9.1 serves to illustrate one of McGrath's (1985:257) models in the form of matrices, and examines the use of subject areas by user groups.

TABLE 9.1**Use of subject areas by user groups**

	Biologists	Chemists	Geologists	Physicists
Biology	113	35	8	15
Chemistry	47	153	26	36
Geology	9	13	109	12
Physics	8	14	19	123

This matrix clearly illustrates at a glance which groups of users utilize the literature of other subject areas, e.g. a surprisingly high number of physicists use chemistry texts, appreciably higher than the number of chemists using works on physics texts.

In sum therefore McGrath (1985) has produced a fairly sophisticated and quantifiable method of evaluating collections, the use made thereof, as well as to depict the relationships between the different components within the library structure. His conceptual framework represents an appreciable advance in this field. Whilst not directly applicable to fiction selection, McGrath's (1985) model and its concept of providing visible structure to the process of collection evaluation, can be transferred to depicting the fiction selection process. His principle of quantification of elements is practical and could be utilitarian in the fiction selection process. McGrath's (1985) model emphasizes that the interplay and relationship between elements in the collection should be determined. This innovative approach could also be applied to the elements in the fiction selection process. McGrath's model for collection development, whilst not strictly applicable to the selection of science fiction in the public library is nevertheless valuable for this study.

9.2.5 Atkinson's model of the selection context

Atkinson (1984) has produced a model which unlike the above-mentioned broader models of Edelman (1979), Pors (1986), Evans (1987), Gorman (1988) and Jaganathan (1988), addresses the finer theoretic details of the selection process itself, in essence thus moving closer to the focus of this study.

Atkinson (1984:109) correctly proceeds from the justified observation that descriptions of the selection process tend to consist mostly of "... superficial and self-evident generalities". He is not prepared to accept the usual justification for this lack of theoretical detail, which would have it that the selection process is always a private, cognitive activity, which does not submit to precise observation or delineation, and states that:

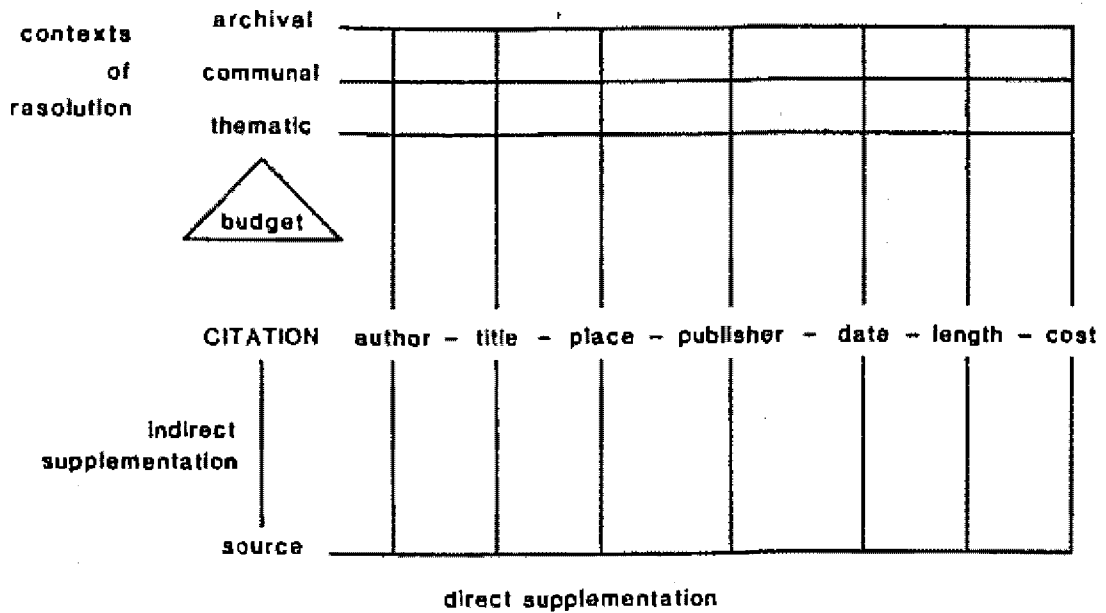
The only answer would appear to be a hypothetical model that can represent the selection process and serve as a basis for future description ... our aim will be to elucidate microdecisions, i.e., item-by-item selection, rather than macrodecisions, not because the latter are less significant but rather because they are derivative: macrodecision criteria consist for the most part of abstractions drawn from previous microdecision experiences.

The smallest meaningful work of bibliography is in Atkinson's opinion the citation, which he uses as representative of all other sources or texts. Atkinson (1984:110-111) explains that as a citation is also a text, the understanding of a text depends on the reader referring in turn to other texts previously encountered, and comparing and opposing those texts to the natural-language text of the citation. To make sense of a text, the reader always has to refer implicitly, and for the most part unwittingly, to texts previously encountered.

Figure 9.4 below represents Atkinson's (1984:114) own graphic depiction of this model.

FIGURE 9.4

Atkinson's model of the selection context



Atkinson (1984:114-118) distinguishes between three discrete contexts in which the selection process takes place:

(a) *The syntagmatic context:*

There is, at the most basic bibliographical level, a contextual relationship within any citation which permits the understanding and use of one element to be influenced by another. This relativity is represented by the connecting lines between the components of the citation: author, title, plan, publisher, date, length and cost in this particular model. Certain conclusions can be arrived at on the grounds of these elements, e.g. the date of publication or any other such element contained within the citation will influence the selector's decision.

(b) *The supplementational context:*

Citations are extracted from a variety of sources which often overlap in their coverage. One source will normally be preferred over another, because of the extent to which it

provides or constitutes a supplementary context for the citations it contains. This contextual level can be divided into a direct supplementational context and an indirect supplementational context.

Direct supplementation most frequently serves to increase the selector's knowledge of the subject matter of the text cited, and can consist of a standard classification system or subject headings as found in national bibliographies. Atkinson (1984:112) cautions that all instruments employing classification, including especially library catalogues, are powerfully subtle censorship devices as they list only a few subjects contained in the text, thus effectively excluding the rest. It is therefore necessary, because of these inherent limitations, to use a variety of overlapping sources. Further direct supplementation sources are reviews, and annotations in subject bibliographies.

Direct supplementation increases the selector's understanding of individual components in the citation, whilst indirect supplementation tends to influence our estimate of the citation as a whole and thus our conclusions about the cited document. A citation in a core list such as Books for College Libraries, or a citation drawn from citation studies of core journals will also provide a context from which the selector can infer certain qualities of the cited documents, more so than a citation in a national bibliography. In some rare cases indirect supplementation can be used as the sole reason for a selection, for instance if a new work of fiction has been reviewed in the New York Times Book Review. In such a case the librarian may decide to select the work without further enquiry into the elements contained in the citation itself. Another example would be that of a work reviewed in an important and respected academic journal.

Atkinson (1984:113) emphasizes that

... the understanding and use of any text always depends on what is not in it - on other texts, on contexts. Thus while the document itself can serve as one useful context to the citation, it plays no privileged role in the selection

decision precisely because its bibliographical value - like its literary or historical value - will depend upon the environment or context in which it is placed.

(c) *The context of resolution:*

The context of resolution is a unique context belonging primarily to the selector and not immediately available for general scrutiny. These contexts are the most crucial to selection and the most elusive, because their individual qualities are ultimately only visible as mirrored in their product which is the collection itself. It is in the exercising of the selector's own choice and judgement that these contexts of resolution are to be found.

The contexts of resolution are a set of three interrelated and competing contexts:

- The archival context is the selector's knowledge of what is already present in the collection.
- The communal context is the selector's cognizance of the users' research needs and interests.
- The thematic context is the selector's awareness of what is being, or has been, published in the specific subject area.

Atkinson (1984:114) remarks perceptively that since no two selectors can have the same combinations of experience, no two selectors can ever fulfil their task within the same contexts of resolution. The contexts of resolution are constantly evolving as the selector increases his or her experience of what the collection consists of, what the users are concerned with, and what the subject is developing into. Atkinson (1984:114) elucidates the selection decision in terms of his model (Figure 9.4) by explaining that:

The final selection decision is, therefore, normally made by relating the linear components of the citation, as influenced by each other (i.e. syntagmatically) and as supplemented directly and indirectly by the source, to the contexts of

resolution. (This process is symbolized in the schematic by these points at which the vertical lines from the citation and the horizontal lines extending from the three contexts of resolution intersect or connect). The configuration of such connections will, of course, vary radically from one citation to another. Some of the connections will not be made at all, others will be of minor - or merely supportive - importance in the decision, while a few will play a major role in judging the document's appropriateness.

It is of cardinal importance to note that such factors as the goals of the library, the nature of the subject, the status of the subject within the library, and the predilections of the individual selector, the three contexts will be prioritized in order of importance. One context will always take precedence over another. The archival context will predominate in selecting for special libraries or collections. The community context will normally prevail when selecting for small or medium-sized public libraries, smaller academic libraries and working collections in large academic libraries. Research collections will for the most part be selected by giving priority to the thematic context in order to construct a collection which reflects what is occurring (and has occurred) in the subject field (Atkinson 1984:115).

A further noteworthy element in the selection process is the library budget, which in practice will regulate the extent to which the contents of resolution are applied.

In general this regulation is accomplished by allowing the natural opposition between the three contexts to become increasingly equal, thus in practice restricting each other. The more generous the library budget, the more one context can achieve dominance. The more limited a budget, the more the selector must allow the contexts to compete with each other, e.g. in thematically-dominated selection, the selector will base cutbacks on the communal criteria that no one is doing research in a given subject in his or her library. Conversely, in a communally-based selection situation, scaling down can be effected by means of the thematic criterion that a particular area in a subject is not currently receiving

much attention from scholars in the discipline and that items in this field would be of little interest to the users of this library.

In conclusion Atkinson (1984:118) again emphasizes that these contexts remain unique to the individual selector and self-justifying. Written policies can be used to provide some regulation and co-ordination between selectors, but such policies even if very detailed must still be interpreted by each selector on the basis of personal experience at the time of each selection decision:

While it is possible to establish certain guidelines that can be more or less automatically applied on the basis of information discernible in the citation and in the surrounding supplementary data provided directly or indirectly by selection sources, there can be no final, impartial, objective determination as to precisely what belongs in a particular collection and what does not; for every citation remains from the standpoint of every individual a single intertext in a vast network of personal and constantly evolving contexts that influence decisively the citation's meaning and significance.

Selection need not necessarily be chaotic, as contexts overlap greatly between individuals, so that most instances of selection involve little dispute. Creativity and interpretation must, however, be accepted, respected and encouraged as essential for effective and responsible selection (Atkinson 1984:118).

Oosthuizen (1991:235) remarks that Atkinson's model was designed for academic libraries, but that the latter expresses the evaluation that this pioneering model could be adapted for use in regard of other types of libraries. Oosthuizen's (1991:235) evaluation of the model is that

Dit ly geen twyfel nie dat die model die eerste een is om keuring op die mikrovlak te probeer verduidelik en te verklaar deur die relativerende

inspeling van die elemente van die verwysing op mekaar aan te dui en te plaas binne 'n teoretiese raamwerk van kontekste wat kontrole uitoefen op die evaluering en interpretasie van hierdie elemente. Vroeër is daar gekonsentreer op keuring van individuele werke sonder om die breër konteks in aanmerking te neem. Met die hedendaagse klem op versamelingsbeplanning, word die kontekstuele faktore so belangrik dat keuring van individuele tekste op die agtergrond geskuif word. Die model bring 'n balans tussen die twee benaderings.

Oosthuizen (1991:235) also raises a few critical questions: if direct supplemental elements are not furnished by the source of the citation, does the selector's decision not, therefore, depend on an evaluation of the document itself, and not the citation? Should not the document also be the primary source for decision-making in the following instances?:

- new authors
- meaningless titles
- many titles from the same publisher where the authoritativeness of the publisher is not decisive
- where date of publication and age of the text do not correspond.

Oosthuizen (1991:236) postulates with commendable insight, that a selection decision is indispensable, whether done by a reviewer, a subject expert or the selector in person. In the case of the public library the syntagmatic context should be complemented by an element which embodies the value of the work be it literary, scientific or ethical. The elements within the syntagmatic sequence within Atkinson's (1984) model cannot distinguish between a scientific approach and prejudice. Intrinsic (or inherent) value can also determine the context within which the text is used, and not the reverse as suggested by Atkinson's model (Oosthuizen 1994:236). Atkinson's model dates back to 1984 and Oosthuizen (1994:85) reports that she has since searched major indices such as *Library literature* and *Library and information science abstracts*, and could find no clearer and

more enlightening discussion of the micro-selection decision. (Oosthuizen herself would proceed to design and produce a finely-balanced and detailed model of the micro-selection process for the selection of an individual fictional text for the public library. This model represents a significant theoretical advance in regard of the selection process, in the same vein as that of Atkinson (1984), and will be discussed in detail in paragraph 9.2.7).

Atkinson's (1984) contribution lies in the concretization of the selection process in a balanced, visible model which greatly improved upon previous superficial descriptions of the process. The model presents the complex interplay between three contexts: library mission (i.e. communal context in the case of public libraries), citation and citational supplementation together with the budget as a fourth, regulatory element, thus creating a balanced, tangible analogy of the selection process. Atkinson (1984) is not, however, unaware of the importance of the selector's judgement and experience, and attaches considerable importance to this factor in the equation of the selection process. Atkinson (1984) demonstrates that the selection process can be represented in the form of a sophisticated model in which the role and importance of important interplaying factors can be clearly elucidated and delimited in order to explain the complexity of this complex process. Atkinson's (1984) model could perhaps be augmented with the end factor of the process, which would be the inherent value assigned to the item at the culmination of the process. Oosthuizen's (1991, 1994) model would indeed incorporate this element, as illustrated in paragraph 9.2.7 and Figure 9.5.

9.2.6 Rutledge and Swindler's model of selection criteria and the prioritization of items in the selection process

Rutledge and Swindler (1987:123) are, quite correctly, convinced that the selection of materials is one of the principal functions of collection development librarians, and that even if libraries rely heavily on approval plans, selectors should review titles individually to ensure an effective collection development programme. The conclusion of these two practising bibliographers is that, despite the importance of selection decision making to the

collection development process, there are few tools of practical utility in the performance of the intellectual process of selection. Guides are not truly comprehensive, and do not offer a practical way of relating selection to the library budget itself:

While a collection development officer may be called upon to select or reject hundreds of titles during the course of the working day and is generally proficient at making these choices, he or she could still benefit from a convenient tool that rationally organizes the factors contributing to an acquisitions decision ... Selection officers typically receive little assistance from their own library when making decisions. Even the best and most widely known collection policies merely state what a library ideally would select in a world without financial constraints, while a few policies also indicate the existing level of collecting.

As an introduction to the presentation of their own model of the selection decision, Rutledge and Swindler (1987:123-125) examine several available selection tools as well as selection criteria offered by researchers. They find that even such unique tools such as the *Bibliographer's Manual* (University of Texas at Austin) and the more general *Guidelines for collection development* (of the American Library Association), do not address the practical selection decision process itself. In the view of these two practitioners the question of selection criteria, although addressed by many writers in the field of collection development, are very general, discursive and incomplete; with selection criteria often tied to the scope and organisation of specific selection tools. Rutledge and Swindler (1987:124) further document that their examination of major works by Curley and Broderick (1985), Broadus (1981) and Katz (1980)

... shows that they all develop some general principles, concentrating, as textbooks must, on broad issues rather than on the intricacies of the decision-making process. When specific selection criteria are discussed, they are treated independently; that is, the authors do not relate the various

criteria to each other. The reader is left wondering which criteria are the most important and when to apply them.

Rutledge and Swindler (1987:124-125) also investigated the following selection criteria advanced by Hamlin (1980) which they evaluate as being helpful in refining deliberation on a particular title, but not conducive to the evaluation of the results of the examination itself:

- pertinence to areas covered
- interest to users
- relationship to existing collections
- cost
- patron objections and threat of theft
- necessity of continuing financial commitment
- duplication of existing material
- bibliothecal convenience or ease of handling

Rutledge and Swindler (1988:125) further examined the criteria put forward by Edelman (1979) and Hazen (1982), finding that the former's decision-making model is very vague and that neither specific criteria nor how they affect individual selection decisions are discussed, as the main focus is on macro decision-making. The five criteria advanced by Hazen (1982) are judged correctly as being more applicable to preservation than acquisitions.

The selection decision model of De Pew (1975:230-246) is, with justification, evaluated by Rutledge and Swindler (1987:125) as a model which does demonstrate the complexity of the selection function, but utilizes inadequate and at times irrelevant criteria, e.g. whether the title itself is a gift.

Rutledge and Swindler (1987:125) express deserved approval for the Atkinson (1984) model of selection at the micro-level, although they point out that the model itself is not *per se* a practical guide to selection. Their point is valid, and the objective of this study will be to complement the theoretical and very necessary perspective on the selection process with practical guidelines for the selection of science fiction (cf. paragraph 1.2 and chapter 11).

Having presented a thoughtful and useful overview of theoretical models in the field of selection, Rutledge and Swindler (1987:126) proceed to explain that their model is based on years of experience and debate regarding the selection of library materials, resulting in the arrangement of selection factors

... into six internally coherent and, insofar as possible, mutually exclusive categories, thus avoiding redundancy. At the same time the arrangement indicates relationships between the criteria. Each of the criteria causes the selector to ask specific questions about any given title; in answering the questions the selector brings objective information to bear on making the decision.

Rutledge and Swindler (1987:126-127) list the following six criteria:

(i) Subject: The selector initially discerns the subject of a work, e.g. science fiction, then evaluates the item in terms of the information or knowledge universe, relates the item to the extent to which it supports institutional objectives and programmes, but always seen in relation to the larger intellectual universe.

(ii) Intellectual content: The authors concede that this is difficult to judge, but that the question should be whether the title is a key title in its field, or a work of literary excellence, or a seminal study. High intellectual content alone, however, cannot determine

the selection process, nor can trivial or polemic works be rejected automatically since they too are sometimes researched.

(iii) **Potential use:** The selector views the title in the light of his or her knowledge of user needs. This is considered only after subject and intellectual content have been ascertained, in order to ensure that appropriate, quality works are selected. The selector must therefore know what a work is about and something of the nature of its contents before being able to predict its expected use.

(iv) **Relation to the collection:** Here an item is examined in terms of its relation to a specific library's collection, in order to fill in gaps in the collection, establish balance and comprehensiveness in collections. The question is how to meet current user demands and at the same time build upon established collection strengths and specialties.

(v) **Bibliographic considerations:** Bibliographic considerations parallel those criteria found under intellectual content. The interrelated issues of publisher and format further refine the selection. Here the selector considers such factors as the reputation of the sponsoring agency or the publisher, as well as the format and type of publication.

(vi) **Language:** Language is a criterion because it affects the issue of potential use, and also relates closely to the topic of the work. Some languages are less important in academic context than others, but user interest could improve a low priority awarded to an item on the grounds of the language it was published in.

Rutledge and Swindler (1987:127) contend that cost is to be disregarded as a factor when it comes to selection as opposed to acquisition. They agree with the view expressed by Atkinson (1984:115-116) that the budget should be viewed not as a criterion for selection, but rather as an influence upon the relative extent to which selection criteria are acted upon. These two writers are quite correct in supporting Atkinson's view, and argue convincingly that high costs will result in more care being taken when arriving at a final

selection decision, but that the priorities of the library do not change because of the budgetary constraints. Conversely, an item which has only been awarded a low priority in the selection phase, should not conceivably become a high priority work because a bookseller offers the item at a discounted price.

Rutledge and Swindler (1987:128-130) accordingly designed a set of six criteria as represented hereunder in Table 9.2, depicted here in this researcher's own format with unchanged content.

The Rutledge and Swindler (1987) model utilizes three levels (or priorities) for each criterion in order to determine the overall priority of selection of each item being considered by the selector. After testing each item under consideration, an overall numeric rating is awarded, as demonstrated below. This model has a practical application in its numeric evaluation of any item under consideration.

Each priority per criterion is fairly extensively described e.g. for subject the first priority would be whether the subject covered by the item under consideration supports the programme of the parent institution; or whether the subject is a major field of research. Should the subject matter be ancillary or a minor field of research, the item would be awarded second priority. Should the subject covered be tangential or a marginal field of research, it would be awarded the lowest priority, i.e. not much chance of being selected.

TABLE 9.2

Selection criteria according to Rutledge and Swindler

	1st priority	2nd priority	3rd priority
Subject	Directly supports programs or institutional emphasis. Major field of scholarship or enquiry.	Ancillary to programs. Specialized topic. Minor field of scholarship or inquiry.	Tangential to programs. Marginal area of scholarship or inquiry.
Intellectual content	Key work in field. Key author. Major critical study. Substantial new contribution to learning.	General essay. Narrowly focused work. Narrow intellectual perspective. Popular treatment.	Raw or unedited material. Marginal or polemical work. Trivial literature. Propaganda.
Potential use	Known research or program interest. Patron request, based on need. Probable need, based on known interest.	General interest. Title recommended by patron, without specific need. Immediate use unlikely.	Presents problems of accessibility. Infrequent use.
Relation to collection	Central to existing collection. Closely related. Provides specialized information about a central strength. Necessary to intellectual integrity.	Develops existing collection strength. Historic collecting strength.	Completes serial, series, or set held. Very specialized material. Assigned to co-operative partner.
Bibliographic considerations	Distinguished publisher. Significant sponsoring body. Specialized publisher of high quality. Major trade publisher.	Specialized publisher. Published dissertation. Popular publisher.	Research report. Unpublished dissertation. Working papers. Pamphlets. Ephemera.
Language	Major language(s) of topic. English and second working language(s) of topic. Major foreign language accessible to users.	Treatment in foreign language of topic not well covered in English. Foreign language treatment of local/national issues.	Foreign language peripheral to topic or user. Treatment in foreign language of material available in English. Language accessible to tiny minority of likely users.

Items qualifying as a first priority are viewed as items the library **must** have as they are essential, the second priority items are those the library **should** add to its collection as they are important, while the third priority items **could** be acquired although they are viewed as peripheral, as a user may be interested. These items are ranked according to a points system, with the overall numeric rating for the priorities being:

Oosthuizen (1991:247) is quite correct in her views on the model designed by Rutledge and Swindler (1987). The model would have to be specifically adapted to accommodate the selection of fiction. Oosthuizen (1994:86) would indeed later suggest that

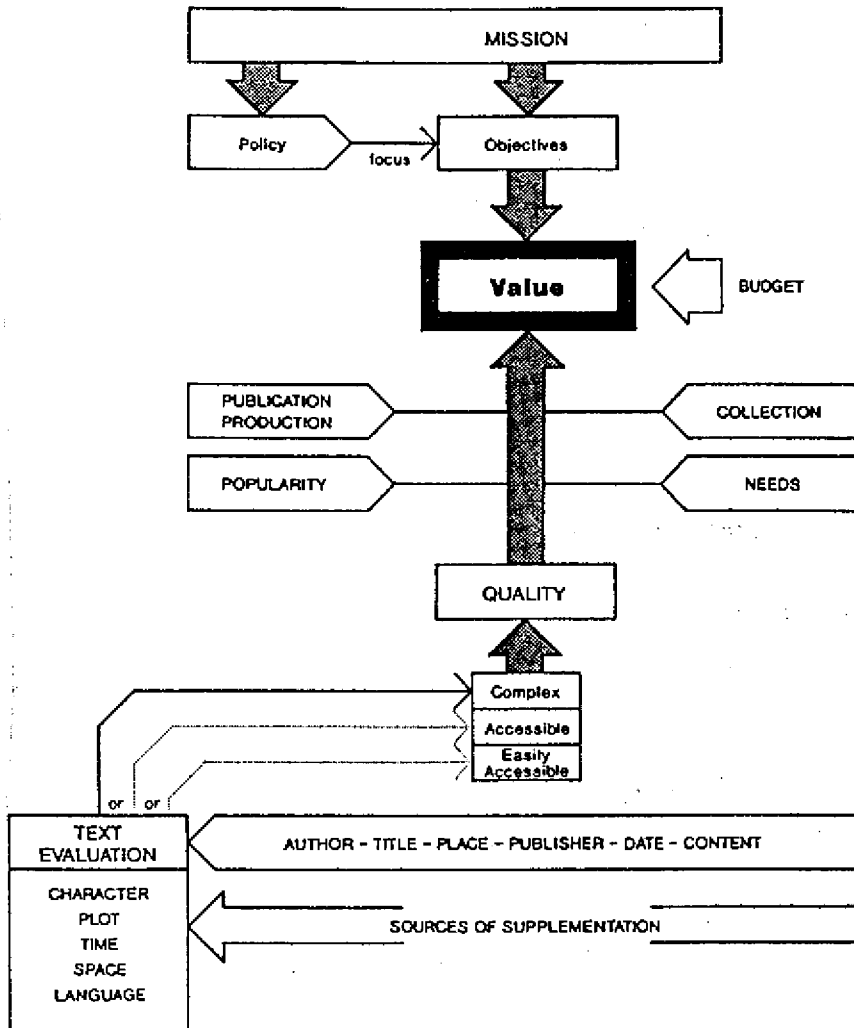
The emphasis on 'subject' and 'intellectual content' in the model of Rutledge & Swindler is particularly relevant for the narrative text ... Instead of interpreting 'subject' as being the factual topic, it can be taken to refer to the theme and plot of the text. The 'intellectual-content' criterion can be used to test the level of structural complexity, insight and craftsmanship displayed in the text. The priority grading of the criteria will have to be determined in relation to other contextual factors. The interplay between the contexts, determining which one should be dominant, will depend on the aims and objectives of the library service. An analysis of the selection decision is naturally dependent on an understanding of the context in which it is made. The public library is a very complex environment and fiction selection in this context presents its own unique measure of problems.

9.2.7 Oosthuizen's model of the decision-making process

Figure 9.5 below represents the Oosthuizen model of the decision-making process in fiction selection, as developed in her doctoral dissertation (1991), and later published as an article (1994).

FIGURE 9.5

Oosthuizen's model of the decision-making process in fiction selection



Oosthuizen (1991:288) after detailed and incisive study of the models proposed by McGrath (1985), Atkinson (1984) and Swindler and Rutledge (1987), found the overall value of these models, all three primarily designed for use in the academic library, to be that they illustrate:

Oosthuizen (1991:288) after detailed and incisive study of the models proposed by McGrath (1985), Atkinson (1984) and Swindler and Rutledge (1987), found the overall value of these models, all three primarily designed for use in the academic library, to be that they illustrate

- (i) The necessity of utilizing scientific methods to evaluate the existing collection and its internal and external relationships (McGrath 1985).
- (ii) The complexity of the context within which a decision is taken regarding the selection of an individual item (Atkinson 1984).
- (iii) The possibility of grading selection criteria in order of priority as well as quantifying such selection criteria (Rutledge & Swindler 1987).

Oosthuizen (1994:85) finds Atkinson's (1984) model particularly useful, and finds after searching the major indices, such as *Library literature* and *Library and information science abstracts*, that she did not find a clearer and more enlightening discussion of the selection process at micro-level. Atkinson (1984) utilizes the bibliographic citation as basis for the selection decision, and considers the elements of the bibliographic citation in three contexts (cf. also paragraph 9.2.5): the syntagmatic context which represents the contextual relationship and interplay between the elements themselves. The second context is the supplementational, referring to sources consulted including, as Oosthuizen (1994:85) notes, the text of the work under consideration. The third contextual element named the contexts of resolution by Atkinson (1984), represents the selector's knowledge and experience of the collection, the user's needs and interests, as well as the specific subject area. Oosthuizen (1994:85) finds that the evaluation of the intrinsic quality of fiction, which is necessary for functional collections like those of the public library, is only present by implication in Atkinson's model when the sources of supplementation are used for additional information on the text (cf. Figure 9.4). In order to render Atkinson's model more suitable for fiction selection, the element of 'content' should be added to the syntagmatic string. By adding content as an element to the syntagmatic string, it is lifted away from the context of supplementation, and as an element of the citation it not only

forces the selector to take it into consideration, but it also influences the relationship between the different elements (Oosthuizen 1994:85).

Oosthuizen (1994:85-86) refers in this regard to the model proposed for the selection decision in academic libraries by Rutledge and Swindler (1987) as illustrated in Table 9.2 (cf. paragraph 9.2.6) which, in contrast to Atkinson's focus on the formal entities of the bibliographic description, emphasizes the content of the text as the most important basis for a selection decision; with the bibliographic details acting as reinforcing and refining factors. The emphasis on subject and intellectual content in the model proposed by Rutledge and Swindler (1987) can be transposed to fiction, as subject can be taken to refer to the theme and plot of the work of fiction. The intellectual-content criterion can be used to test the level of structural complexity, insight and craftsmanship.

Oosthuizen (1994:85-86) thus identifies a crucial element for any model of the fiction selection process in the public library: the evaluation of the intrinsic quality of fiction. An estimation of the intrinsic quality should in Oosthuizen's words "... be an important moment in the decision-making process", a factor which is only present by implication in Atkinson's (1984) model, when the sources of supplementation are used for additional information on the text (Oosthuizen 1994:85).

9.2.7.1 The reading act and the three levels of fiction

Oosthuizen (1994:87) views the reading act as a complex process, fluctuating between a cognitive pole and an affective pole, as a realistic-autistic continuum as well as moving between a projective and a verbalistic mode. The demands made by a text on a reader, the appropriate interpretation modes and reading skills that are called for, can serve as a basis for differentiating between texts (Oosthuizen 1991:300-302). Oosthuizen (1994:87) therefore distinguishes between three levels of texts as depicted in Table 9.3.

TABLE 9.3
Categories of texts

Text	Interpretation mode required	Reader typology
1. Complex	Cognitive/projective/ realistic.	Skilled, intellectual, with interest in literature as such.
2. Accessible	Balanced between the poles: Cognitive/affective realistic/ autistic projective/verbalistic.	Versatile, interested more in content than technique.
3. Easily accessible	Affective (sentimental)/ autistic/verbalistic.	Interested in story for respite and escape.

The complex text is characterized by the author of the text giving an original view of the problems confronting man and the world. The complex text is often experimental in structure and language use. This type of text challenges fixed ideas and attitudes. Action and the story line are less important than analyses of ideas and situations. The reader should therefore have knowledge of literary traditions, theories and techniques in order to be able to fully appreciate the text, and the reader's motives can be to broaden his or her knowledge and to experience the pleasure of the aesthetic and technical qualities of the works as well as to deepen the reader's understanding of life.

The accessible text can have literary merit but will not demand quite as much intellectual input as the novel with a complex text. Accessible texts have an intriguing story line, good characterization, a well researched background, and attract a large variety of readers. Oosthuizen (1994:87) finds that Spiller's (1986:160) concept of a 'solid novel' would fit into this category of text.

The easily-accessible text encompasses most genre (i.e. popular) fiction as the different (popular fiction) genres all adhere to certain formulae which are familiar to the reader. Oosthuizen (1987:87) concedes that there is no barrier preventing some well-written genre fiction from being classed with the accessible-text category, although where in her view texts are typical of the easily-accessible category, they cannot be classified as complex.

It must be remarked here that science fiction as a popular fiction genre, encompasses all three categories of texts. Certain older works of science fiction such as Orwell's 1984 and Aldous Huxley's Brave New World have been studied in undergraduate as well as postgraduate courses in universities, thus having the status of complex texts. Contemporary science fiction has been described as a significant body of work in present-day fiction (McHale 1992:225). Some works of science fiction would also fall within the categories 'accessible' and 'easily accessible' texts, yet others are in the words of Jameson (1991b: 419) to be taken seriously as " ... the supreme literary expression if not of postmodernism, then of late capitalism itself."

9.2.7.2 Evaluating works of fiction

The question preoccupying Oosthuizen (1994:87) at this point is whether all three categories of fiction as depicted in Table 9.3, can be judged for intrinsic value according the same principles, citing Eagleton's (1983:11) remark that no literary work is valuable in itself, as value is whatever is valued by certain people in specific situations in terms of particular criteria and purposes. Oosthuizen (1994:87) remarks perspicaciously that

The problem for the selector is to discern which texts will provide a meaningful reading experience to readers. Reader studies show that readers are motivated by different needs, [have different] reading skills and interpretation modes. The three types of readers [mentioned in Table 9.3] are all provided for in the public library. One person could read texts from all three categories, depending on his purpose and frame of mind. In a collection the three categories are usually represented in various ratios. Literary criteria are and can be used to evaluate complex and to some extent, accessible texts. It is not clear which criteria are being used by selectors to evaluate easily accessible texts. Popularity and not intrinsic value is possibly the main consideration.

Oosthuizen (1994:87) refers to Van Vuren (1988:105), and the suggestion in the latter's dissertation on the popular romance that different formulae be accepted as a basis for selection with the creativity of the author in depicting the characters, background and language being judged within the stereotypical framework, and works being compared to similar works in order to assess the originality, honesty and skill of the writer.

Oosthuizen (1994:87) finds that elements such as characterization, plot, time, situation and language are present in all three categories of fiction, with the questions asked about these structural elements differing from category to category:

The grouping of texts suggested in the new model is firstly based on convergent characteristics and secondly on intrinsic quality. Every category is evaluated according to its own quality scale. This means that a detective story is evaluated according to the criteria for good detective stories and, for example, not according to the literary merit of the classics.

Oosthuizen (1994:86) explains that when evaluating serious literature, selectors tend to attach value to the opinions of literary critics, reviews and the awarding of literary prizes. She concurs with Broadus (1981) that substantial portions of fiction works are however never commented upon by the critics. The selector thus works within the constraints of a system which promotes the selective marketing of texts, one where the publisher selects certain manuscripts which have market potential and where the publisher creates best sellers by means of advertising. The editors of reviewing journals or newspapers in turn select titles for reviewing. The selector is thus limited in choice, because of the uneven representation of book production in reviewing publications.

The evaluation of creative writing is at best a complex exercise, as critics are not free of subjectivity and evaluate works from different theoretical perspectives such as structuralism, Marxism or feminism. The selector in turn needs knowledge of the reviewer's theoretical and ideological perspectives. Quality assessments by reviewers do

not necessarily correspond with the reader's enjoyment of the work itself. Oosthuizen (1994:86) cites the view expressed by Broadus (1981) that selection is also effected in terms of the sociology of the clientele as well as evaluations by literary critics.

9.2.7.3 The mission of the public library

Oosthuizen (1994:86) resolutely believes that the public library should not have a vague and undefined mission.

Every activity in the library should be motivated by the mission; including the selection of fiction. Therefore, the mission and the objectives derived from it should form part of a model of the selection decision. The public library is an open system which interacts continuously with the external environment. Individual public libraries should therefore translate the general aims of the public library into objectives that are specific to its own community. The public library should act as a facilitator between the local community and public information sources. The community with its specific needs will individualize the objectives of any particular library. The scope and use of the fiction collection which is a sub-system of the wider library system should thus be compatible with these objectives (Oosthuizen 1994:86).

A further important consideration is Oosthuizen's (1994:86) view that the value of a text in the collection is the sum of its intrinsic quality, its potential for fulfilling specific reader needs and its popularity. Further important factors influencing the selection decision are the relation of the fiction text under consideration to the existing collection, and existing publishing trends.

9.2.7.4 Reader demands and reader needs

The difference between 'demand' and 'need' is seen by Oosthuizen (1994:87) as arising from needs as basic motives which are seldom articulated and consciously realized by the

reader, whereas demands are expressed requests that do not always reflect deeper-lying needs. Actual demands therefore represent only a part of the users' needs. Actual demands do reflect needs, but not necessarily the inarticulated needs of the silent or potential client. A profile of the community the public library is serving, is the starting point for a needs assessment, and a community survey is an important requisite for determining needs and developing a selection policy. Information on the composition of the community in terms of factors such as language, educational levels, professions, social groups, age, sports, recreation and special interests is considered vital for a user-oriented service. It is not just a question of buying popular titles but also the provision of fiction for newly-literates, the weak-sighted, first-, second- and third-language users and for readers of the identified three categories of fiction (Oosthuizen 1994:87-88).

9.2.7.5 Phases of decision-making and contextual factors

Oosthuizen (1991:316-322, 1994:88-89) elucidates the central phases and factors of her model under the following headings:

a Value

The objective of text evaluation in the library is to determine the *value* of a text for the library collection. By virtue of this reason, value forms the central value of this model. The value of a work of fiction is determined by its intrinsic merit, in conjunction with the influence of a number of other contextual factors as illustrated by the model itself. The process of value assessment consists of a number of important decision-making phases. The first phase is an evaluation of the intrinsic merit of a text.

b Text evaluation

The evaluation is supported by the elements of the citation. Every element communicates information to the selector, depending on his or her previous knowledge of the specific

element and fiction as such. The fame of the author, significance of the title, reputation of the publisher, recency of the date or number of editions: all these bibliographic characteristics, as pointed out by Atkinson (1984), also Rutledge and Swindler (1987), are indicative of the possible merit and status of the text. The selector can use supplemental sources, as postulated in Atkinson's (1984) model, such as guides, bibliographies and reviews for more information on the elements and the content. Reviews are not always available and often contradictory. *It is preferable that the selector read a work and evaluate it according to the criteria for the three categories of fiction* (Researcher's emphasis).

It should be mentioned at this stage that Oosthuizen (1991:303-313) developed detailed criteria for the three categories of fiction centring on the five core criteria: character, plot, time, space and language. Each core criterion has been adapted to the specific level of fiction, e.g. characterization in a complex (serious fiction) text as judged according to its capacity to function meaningfully within the narrow structure as a whole, and convey information to the reader regarding the surface and inner structure of the narrative. The reader pays attention to the techniques utilized to create the characters. In an accessible fiction text, characters need to be well-rounded and capable of attracting the reader's interest. These characters are active and help to create the fictional world, with the reader not always conscious of the methods or techniques used to create these characters. In easily accessible text the characters must be acceptable within the cultural frame of reference of the reader, as identification with the characters is necessary for the desired emotional effect which is an important element in formulaic fiction. The characters are idealized in order to lure the reader away from his or her personal problems, with each (popular fiction genre) having its own stereotyped characters such as the beautiful heroine or the heroic cowboy. Oosthuizen's (1991) detailed and most utilitarian criteria for all categories of fiction are not elaborated upon, as the postulate of this dissertation is that science fiction, owing to its unique literary essence and characteristics, is deserving of specifically-designed, adapted literary criteria. Such criteria were identified and explained

in chapter 7, paragraph 7.7, and will be utilized in the drawing up of a scorecard for the evaluation of individual works of fiction. This will be done at the end of this chapter.

Oosthuizen (1994:88) further explains that the evaluation of a complex text would require knowledge of literary theory and trends in literary criticism, whereas classical and post-modern literature need different criticism skills. This also holds true for certain accessible texts. An accessible text is not characterized by its lack of literary merit, but by its consistency with the general reader's ability of interpretation and reading motives. To evaluate the easily-accessible category of texts, knowledge of popular culture and various story formulae is necessary. The process of evaluation leads to a decision on the **quality** of the text.

c Popularity and need

Keeping quality assessment in mind, Oosthuizen (1994:88) proceeds to explain that the next decision-making phase is to achieve a balance between 'popularity' and 'need'. In this model **demand** is used to indicate the scope of interest for a certain kind of text: thus establishing its popularity. The concept **need** is used for reading motives and the special requirements of the reader (Oosthuizen's emphasis). This context is similar to Atkinson's communal context. Need is interpreted in terms of the possible use of the fiction text to provide for the total spectrum of needs of fiction users. Popularity enhances the priority given to a text in comparison with other texts, and will determine the number of copies to be bought for the library service.

d Publication trends and the existing collection

The third phase in the decision-making process requires the selector to consider the text in the context of the existing collection: Atkinson's archival context. The question to be answered is: To what extent are similar texts represented in the existing collection? Other important questions are: In what way does the collection represent the total fiction output

of publishers? Does the service provide the reader with the widest variety possible? (Oosthuizen 1994:88).

Should the second and third phases of the decision-making process produce positive answers, they serve as plus factors in the quality assessment and indicate the value of the text for the collection. If the score should prove to be negative, it serves as a minus factor and diminishes the value of the text for the collection in spite of its (intrinsic) good quality. Because quality assessment precedes the decisions within the communal and archival contexts, as well as the fact that a distinction is made between popularity and need; it is possible to solve the dilemma of the demand versus quality problem (Oosthuizen 1994:88).

Oosthuizen (1991:318) also pointed out that although the four factors, namely popularity, need, publication trends and the collection itself do influence the selection decision individually, the relationship between the first, second and the remaining two factors are such that they keep each other in equilibrium.

e Mission statement of the public library

A decision on the value of a text for a collection can only be reached in the light of the objectives of the service, which are derived from the mission of public libraries. Because communities are dynamic, every public library should have a policy which focuses on objectives that would best serve its community in a particular time and place. These objectives will determine the weight given to each contributing context in the faceted decision-making process of determining the value of a text (Oosthuizen 1994:89).

f Budget

Those texts that have been selected as valuable are recommended for accession. The more stringent the budget the more acute the policy should be, and the more critical the

decisions will be at every phase of the process. A system of prioritizing the value assessments will enable the service to spend the available funds on the most valuable items.

g Possibility of quantification

Oosthuizen (1991:319) illustrates that quantification can be utilized to solve the problem of quality versus demand. Numeric values could for instance be assigned to quality on a scale of 1 to 10 as well as to the popularity and needs assessments with a cut-off score, below which works are unacceptable. The smaller the budget the higher the cut-off point should be:

Scale : 1 - 10
 Cut-off point : 6
 Ratio : Quality = 60%
 Utility = 30%

Table 9.4 was compiled from the examples furnished by Oosthuizen (1991:319-321):

TABLE 9.4
Quantification of text evaluation (Oosthuizen's model)

TEXT LEVEL	QUALITY	UTILITY	TOTAL
Complex	8 (x 0,6)	3 (x 0,4)	4,8 + 1,2 = 6,0
Accessible	7 (x 0,6)	8 (x 0,4)	4,2 + 3,2 = 7,4
Easily accessible	3 (x 0,6)	8 (x 0,4)	1,8 + 3,2 = 5,0

Oosthuizen's examples clearly illustrate that a complex text with high literary quality and low utility will still be acceptable for selection. The accessible text with fair literary quality and high utility will achieve an appreciably higher score, and will be virtually certain of

selection. The easily-accessible text of low literary quality but high utility will not attain the minimum for selection approval.

Oosthuizen (1991:321-322) found that the possibility of a mathematical-statistical formula designed for selection should not be excluded, even if only utilized for certain decision phases as those demonstrated in Table 9.4.

The example used by Oosthuizen (1991:320-321) is not in the view of this researcher to be construed as implying that works of popular fiction are necessarily so inferior that they will automatically achieve low scoring and thus not be eligible for selection. The fiction novel Pavane (1966) by Keith Roberts, which is generally considered to be of excellent literary quality, and as an acclaimed standard work of science fiction (cf. paragraph 9.3.2.2), will conceivably be highly rated on both its qualities as a cult classic and its inherent almost lyrical quality, as follows:

Quality: $8 \times 0,6 = 4,8$

Utility: $8 \times 0,4 = 3,2$

 Total = 8,0

Further practical examples of how works of science fiction are evaluated in terms of the specially-designed criteria postulated in Chapter 7, will be presented later in this chapter (cf. paragraph 9.3).

One could likewise point to such excellent works to be found in the ranks of crime fiction, Westerns, war novels and other popular genres. Oosthuizen (1994:88) argues effectively that an accessible text is not necessarily characterized by lack of literary merit, and that a knowledge of popular culture and literary formulae are considered necessary in order to evaluate popular genre texts.

Oosthuizen (1994:88) comments as follows on her model of this decision-making process:

The model visually represents the micro selection process for selecting an individual fictional text for the public library. The relationship of a text with user needs, existing collections and publication production is illustrated. The sequence of decision-making stages gives prominence to the intrinsic merit of fiction. Quality is not in a juxtaposition to popularity - popularity adds to the value of the text. The value of a collection is relative to the objectives of a library. The micro selection decision cannot be separated from the macro context of collection development and library services for the advancement of a community.

Oosthuizen (1991, 1994) produced a finely-balanced model of the decision-making process in fiction selection which details certain common criteria valid for the whole fiction spectrum. These criteria together with supplementary sources of information and citational details determine the intrinsic (inherent) quality of the work of fiction. The quality is weighed against the factors of popularity and user needs, fiction publication in general and the existing collection of the public library, as well as the objectives of the public library and its budget. The culmination of this process is a decision regarding the value of the work, and whether it will be selected or not.

9.3 **Conclusion**

McGrath's (1985) model emphasizes the use of scientific methods (typologies and matrices) to evaluate the existing library collection, as well as to illustrate the relationships between structures in the collection. Although primarily aimed at the evaluation of academic libraries, the model is indicative of the way in which scientific methods can be utilized in the selection of items for library collection.

Atkinson's (1984) model is a significant theoretical step forward as it emphasizes that the selector's personal judgement and expertise is important. It is also the first model to view and explain selection at the operational (micro) level by means of illustrating the different

interplaying elements. Earlier researchers concentrated on the selection of individual items without taking the broader context of this process into consideration. Contextual factors have become very important owing to the present-day emphasis on collection planning.

Whereas Atkinson's (1984) model achieves a good theoretical balance between selection of the individual item and the complex interplaying contextual factors influencing this process, Rutledge and Swindler (1987) place emphasis on the necessity for a practical selection instrument. These researchers submit a practical model which assigns a numeric ranking system of six specified criteria, thus quantifying selection priorities.

It was to be the South African researcher Oosthuizen (1991, 1994), who would make a further significant contribution to selection theory with her model for the decision-making process in fiction selection in the public library. The model's central focus is the value of a work of fiction for the public library collection. The evaluation process of the work of fiction is finely balanced with the citational and supplementational elements, which in turn are collectively filtered through factors such as user needs, popularity, publication production and the existing collection, to be weighed, in central focus, against the (evolving) mission and objectives (and budget) of the public library. Oosthuizen's model contains the core elements of the fiction selection process in general, and can therefore, with justification, be seen as a significant theoretical contribution to fiction selection in the public library.

In the course of this study of models it became clear however that no specific model for the selection of science fiction could be found, an aspect which should be addressed at a later stage.

Chapter 10 will examine actual practices in current science fiction selection in forty public library services in the United States of America (and three in Canada), as determined by means of a mail questionnaire survey.

CHAPTER 10

THE SELECTION OF SCIENCE FICTION IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

10.1 Introduction

The researcher has thus far examined the rise and value of popular culture and popular fiction, the literary birth of science fiction and its development as a genre, as well as its literary essence and salient characteristics. Attention has also been given to theory and models pertaining to the selection of fiction in the public library.

In view of the mostly theoretical insights and background gained thus far from the literature, it was deemed advisable to examine the actual selection of science fiction in public libraries. An examination of the literature has clearly shown that contemporary science fiction has largely manifested itself as an American art form (Aldiss 1986:13-14), although many British (and European) authors have provided substantial contributions:

Science fiction is now one of the major literary success areas of the second half of the twentieth century. It is now largely - in emphasis and in fact - an American art form, coinciding with a time of great technological evolution and with the rise of the USA to superpower status.

Cordesse (1975:160) documents that American science fiction burst upon the European scene and carried it by storm. The shattered and war-weary countries of Europe with their collapsed economies and low morale created a vacuum which was to be invaded by the aggressive American culture. Cordesse (1975:160-161) finds that American culture was boosted by affluence, victory and the crusading spirit of the New World coming to the rescue of Old Europe:

... the success of the American system was dazzling: science, with systematic research and development programmes, had insured progress and confidence in the future. Europe, particularly France and Great Britain, had practically stagnated since the First World War, these countries were prone to conservatism and bourgeois caution, whereas the United States represented movement, innovation and adventure. As the future seemed to belong to the United States, it was logical to grant her a monopoly on anticipation literature. This link between science fiction and American success based on science explains partly why American influence was more sweeping in this field than elsewhere.

Mellor (1984:27) documents that science fiction is American when viewed from both a commercial and a cultural perspective. American dominance in the field of science fiction has persisted and it seems likely that science fiction and the United States will remain synonym for a long time to come.

10.2 **Research methodology**

It was decided to utilize the descriptive survey method to empirically gather data on the selection of science fiction. This method is better suited to research in this particular situation than other methods of research such as the historical method, the experimental method and the analytical survey.

Descriptive survey research is probably the best method available for the collection of data in a population group which is too large to observe directly, and is furthermore an excellent instrument for the measurement of attitudes and views in large populations (Babbie 1986:237). This feature was especially suited to this investigation, where the opinions of public librarians are to be sought. Busha and Harter (1980:55) confirm that descriptive survey research methods are particularly suitable as techniques within

librarianship, where data is sought on the attitudes of librarians about library practices, standards and policies.

Consideration was thereafter given to the three major methods used in descriptive survey research: the face-to-face interview, the telephone survey and the mail questionnaire.

The face-to-face interview was ruled out as a result of the distance and expense involved, also the fact that questions were going to be put to public librarians involving certain statistical data and specific aspects of policy, which could mean the consultation of records and colleagues. A telephone survey was also ruled out as respondents would likewise not be afforded the opportunity of consulting records and fellow librarians.

The mail questionnaire presented itself as the logical choice, by reason of the fact that it obviated a potential obstacle: the considerable distance involved. Nachmias and Nachmias (1976:180) finds that the mail questionnaire tends to be more objective, as it reduces bias resulting from the personal characteristics or competence of the human interviewer. The mail questionnaire has further advantages, such as the ease with which quantitative data can be collected and analyzed as well as the respite it allows respondents to complete the questionnaire at a time of own choice (Busha & Harter 1980:62).

Cognizance was, however, also taken of disadvantages peculiar to the mail questionnaire, respondents could misinterpret or perceive ambiguity in questions. This disadvantage was not seen as too serious an obstacle, as the respondents in this instance would be professional public librarians replying to questions couched in correct terminology. The introductory letter under cover of which the questionnaire was sent out (Appendix 1) further requested that the questionnaire be completed by an experienced librarian. The covering letter further gave the assurance that no responding institution would be identified by name in the dissertation, nor would any negative comparisons be drawn between services.

The first important aspect to be deliberated upon was the type of question to be used. Bailey (1978:107) finds closed-end questions to be best suited where answer categories will be discrete, distinct and relatively limited in number; whereas open-ended questions can be utilized to elicit the respondents' unique views, aims and philosophy. As the questionnaire would be seeking answers in the form of percentages of stock devoted to fiction, science fiction and other specific figures, choices and answers, it was decided to utilize closed-ended questions for these more clear-cut tangible aspects. Open-ended questions were utilized to solicit answers to aspects such as principles, opinions and sources and authors considered important by respondents. Careful consideration was given to the construction of the questions in order to keep them unambiguous, relevant and simple (Busha & Harter 1980:72-73) and to follow the principle that the sequence of questions be from the general to the more detailed.

The questionnaire commenced with the broad levels of fiction, serious and popular and the respondents' views of their importance in the public library collection, and a determination of what percentage of the total stock is devoted by respondents to fiction, non-fiction and science fiction. Respondents were also requested to indicate which percentage of stock they devote to fantasy. (Fantasy is not the subject of this study, but this question was included as science fiction and fantasy are sometimes viewed as being part of the same category of fiction, often shelved together and lumped together for statistical purposes). This question would therefore alert respondents to this distinction in category.

Respondents were next requested for their views on principles for the selection of serious and popular fiction and differences, if any, in selection principles for these two levels of fiction (cf. paragraph 1.4 for the definitions of these levels of fiction and the positioning of science fiction in the spectrum from serious to popular). Respondents were also requested to situate themselves as institutions in the quality-demand continuum.

In addition respondents were questioned regarding the utilization of a standardized scorecard or other format when evaluating fiction.

The questionnaire at this juncture seeks information on the most important factors in selection, with respondents being given twenty factors to choose from. Respondents were also invited to list any other factors they may wish to add. Respondents were further requested to indicate their *modus operandi* when selecting fiction. Possibilities such as in-house evaluation, reviews, standing orders, publishers' "blurbs", suppliers' selections and jobbers' catalogues were listed.

Respondents were asked questions on the use of selection aids, their views on the efficacy of their selection, whether user studies are effected, and whether public librarians should be trained in the appreciation of popular fiction.

Lastly respondents were asked to rate the importance of the works of forty authors of science fiction, and to nominate any authors not included in the list.

The questionnaire is contained in Appendix 2.

10.4 **Sampling method**

After careful consideration of the two major types of sampling methods (probability and non-probability sampling), it was deemed best to utilize non-probability sampling. Babbie (1973:106) finds that despite the generally accepted superiority of probability sampling, non-probability sampling is well-suited for situations in which probability sampling would be prohibitively expensive and/or in cases where precise representativeness is not imperative. The purpose of this empirical investigation was to seek data on a large cross-section of American (and Canadian) public library practice as regards the selection of works of science fiction.

It was therefore judged expedient to resort to purposive (i.e.judgmental) sampling by choosing forty major metropolitan or large regional public library services in the United States. As the purpose of the questionnaire was to gain insight into American selection of science fiction as a whole, care was taken to select only one library service per state in order to include the practices of as many states as possible, and thus distribute the survey sample as widely across the United States as possible.

In only two cases were exceptions made, firstly California which is one of the most populous states in the USA, its population of over 30 million exceeding by far the average population of other states in the Western United States (in fact approaching that of South Africa with its total population of approximately 40 million). California furthermore has a population far exceeding that of the combined population of for instance, seven other Western states included in the sample, namely Washington State (4,2 million), Colorado (2,8 million), Oregon (2,6 million), Utah (1,5 million), New Mexico (1,3 million), Idaho (1,0 million) and Wyoming (0,5 million), which together total only 14,9 million, thus not even one half of the Californian population. California was therefore allowed two major public library services in the sample: accordingly the public library services of two major metropolitan libraries, those of Los Angeles and San Diego were chosen. The other exception, where two library services from the same state were chosen was Texas, with its relatively large population of 15 million *vis-à-vis* many other states, as well as the fact that it is geographically one of the largest states in size, comprising more than half the area of the Republic of South Africa. Two major services, namely those of Houston and San Antonio were accordingly chosen.

Many of the major metropolitan public library services were included in the sample: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, Houston, New Orleans, Boston, Miami, San Diego, Baltimore and Philadelphia. These metropolitan public library services serve very large communities such as the Houston Area Library System which serves a community of 4 563 824, Los Angeles Public Library System which has a user community of 3 433 600, Chicago 2 783 726, Miami-Dade County 1 626 510, and Detroit 1 027 954. Some of the

other metropolitan and regional public library services serve smaller communities such as the Metropolitan Library System in Oklahoma which caters for 599 611 persons, the Akron-Summit County Public Library in Ohio which serves a community of 435 000; and the Newark Public Library in New Jersey which serves 325 000 people. The smaller services are in the magnitude of the Richland County Public Library in Columbia, SC which serves 285 720 users.

In view of the cultural similarities between the United States and Canada in the linguistic and cultural sense, and the sizable population of Canada (25 million), questionnaires were also sent to the Public Libraries of Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver. The Toronto Public Library, like the New York Public Library and a few other American public library services, does not list the size of its community, whereas the Ottawa Public Library indicates that it serves a population of 313 987, and the Vancouver Public Library lists a figure of 471 696.

The addresses and statistics mentioned above were very kindly placed at the disposal of the researcher by the United States Embassy in Paris, France.

The sample thus consisted of forty metropolitan or major regional public library services purposely chosen in thirty-eight of the fifty states in the USA. In only two states, California and Texas, were two public library services chosen for the reasons stated above. The sample is thus broadly representative of public library services across the USA. The three Canadian public library services chosen are respectively those of the capital and the two largest cities.

Appendix 4 contains the list of the forty American and three Canadian public library services to whom questionnaires were sent.

10.5 **Covering letters and response rate**

Questionnaires were dispatched to the forty-three institutions under cover of an explanatory letter (cf. Appendix 1).

The covering letter was carefully formulated in order to explain clearly what the empirical study wished to achieve, and to give the firm undertaking that services would not be negatively identified and compared.

The initial response rate was 41,8%, after which questionnaires were again posted to non-respondents with the request that they reply. The final response rate was 62,8% which is considered acceptable as a response rate. Babbie (1989:242) indicates that "... 50 percent is *adequate* for analysis and reporting. A response rate of ... 60 percent is *good*".

In the event, only one Canadian public library service responded and reference will hereafter be made only to American public library selection as the respondents are 96,3% American.

10.6 **Analysis of data gathered**

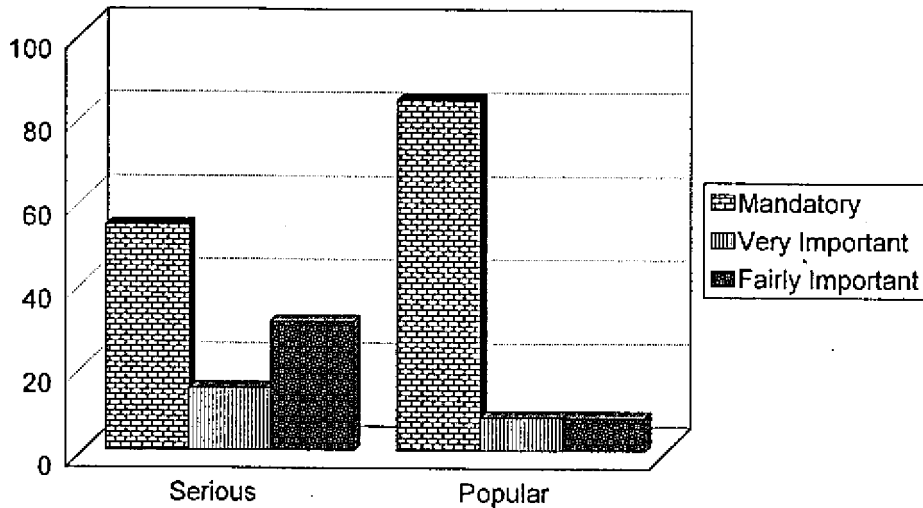
The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to analysis of the response to the questionnaire.

10.6.1 Importance of different levels of fiction

The first question (cf. Appendix 2) enquired into the relative importance attached to serious fiction and popular fiction. This introductory question focuses on institutional views of the two main levels of fiction as science fiction stretches across the spectrum from serious to popular (cf. paragraph 1.5 in this regard).

FIGURE 10.1

Respondents' views on the relative importance of the different levels of fiction



Respondents clearly indicate that the majority view popular fiction as mandatory for the public library collection, whereas only half see the inclusion of serious fiction in the collection as mandatory. The precise relationship can be seen even more clearly in Table 10.1.

TABLE 10.1

Importance attached to the various levels of fiction

FICTION LEVEL	MANDATORY	VERY IMPOR- TANT	FAIRLY IM- PORTANT	TOTAL
Serious	54%	15%	31%	100%
Popular	84%	8%	8%	100%

The popular or genre fiction level clearly enjoys an advantage over serious/classical fiction in the opinion of respondents, with by far the greater majority of public librarians viewing the inclusion of popular fiction in their collections as mandatory. Only slightly over half of respondents view the inclusion of serious fiction as mandatory. It is interesting to note that a similar question was posed to South African public librarians in the course of a recent

survey by means of a mail questionnaire (Brewis 1992:132-134), in which it transpired that by far the greater majority of respondents (92,3%) rated serious fiction as mandatory. This questionnaire utilized three levels of fiction (serious/classical, medium-level and light fiction), the last two levels being rated as mandatory by respectively 76,9% (medium-level) and 23,1% (light fiction). It is therefore clear that American public libraries rate serious fiction less favourably than their South African counterparts.

10.6.2 Fiction and non-fiction as percentages of the total collection and of loans

Respondents were requested to indicate which percentages of their collections as well as loans were works of fiction as opposed to non-fiction. (See question 2 in Appendix 2.) Table 10.2 below represents the resultant analysis.

TABLE 10.2

Fiction and non-fiction as percentages of total stock and of total loans

READING MATTER	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL STOCK	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LOANS
Fiction	28,3	49,2
Non-fiction	68,4	49,8

These results illustrate that the fiction collection enjoys much more use than its relative ratio to the collection. The non-fiction collection conversely constitutes two-thirds of the collection, yet accounts for less than half the loans.

This corresponds roughly to the ratio of stock component as opposed to use, as found when the same question was asked of South African public libraries in 1992 (Brewis 1992:134-135). Table 10.3 compares these figures.

TABLE 10.3

Comparison of ratio of fiction/non-fiction to total stock: South Africa (1992) and North America (1995)

TYPE OF FICTION	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL STOCK		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LOANS	
	NORTH AMERICA	SOUTH AFRICA	NORTH AMERICA	SOUTH AFRICA
Fiction	28,3	56,7	49,2	73,8
Non-fiction	68,4	43,2	49,8	23,0

It is clearly evident that the ratio of the non-fiction component of the North American libraries to total stock is much higher than that of South Africa (68,4% as opposed to 43,2%), while the relation of fiction component to total stock shows the reverse (28,3% as opposed to 56,7%). The use made of these two components in both South Africa and on the North American continent shows the same tendency. The use made of the fiction collection is far in excess to its actual ratio to stock. The reverse would seem true as regards the utilization of the non-fiction collection in relation to its actual ratio to stock. Statistics can be misleading in this regard as reference works and other items are consulted on the premises and such use is not reflected in statistics.

10.6.3 Ratio of loans of science fiction to total loans of fiction

This question was put to respondents in order to determine the actual use made of their science fiction collections. As it is not unheard of for public libraries to regard both science fiction and fantasy as part of the same category, both as regards shelving and the keeping of statistics, the use made of fantasy was thus also requested in order to make it clear to respondents that fantasy should be separated from science fiction. Disappointingly less than half of the respondents (44%) supplied statistics on science fiction use. In terms of these statistics science fiction loans represented 6,6% of total fiction loans. (Fantasy

averaged at 4,4%). In cases where respondents lumped both categories together, the average was 7,8%.

The indicated figures supplied by some respondents show a high ratio of science fiction loans to total fiction, loans ranging to figures as high as 15%, 10% and 8%.

10.6.4 General principles for fiction selection

This question sought to assess whether institutions possess major principles for the selection of popular fiction, and respondents were requested to summarize their overall philosophy regarding fiction selection.

Respondents mostly indicated that they possess a broad policy to meet the recreational needs of the user, the majority indicating that they buy the best fiction available in all categories. Noteworthy responses in this regard were:

- "We purchase most fiction found in major review sources, we purchase all fiction requested by patrons."
- "The number of copies range from 1 - 70 depending on author recognition."
- "Our central library buys all [respondent's emphasis] hard-core fiction from major U.S. publishers. For paperbacks and imports we consider reviews in local media and major genre magazines, as well as public demand."

The majority of respondents emphasize the popular element, that popular fiction is needed and demanded by users, the fiction demanded by patrons and the general interest in popular fiction:

- “As a public library we see our mission as a ‘popular’ rather than scholarly one: thus science fiction/fantasy is popular, so we purchase accordingly.”
- “We provide what our users want, in the quantity they want, within budget confines.”
- “We order popular, current authors. We keep most titles written by a popular author. Many are weeded in three years. Some ‘classics’ and authors are kept even if not needed.
- “We select high demand novels, fiction to meet the reading needs of the general public.”
- “Titles selected for purchase/re-purchase are those that are perceived to be/have been proven to be of interest to library users. That is, ordering is geared to demand.”
- “Selection of a wide variety of types and genres.”

Several respondents mention diverse general principles according to which selection is done such as believability of representation, interest, plausible plot, structural soundness, clarity of style, recreational value, effectiveness of presentation and qualities conducive to actual thought and understanding. A very telling and honest comment on the selection of popular fiction in public libraries was made by a respondent regarding discrepancy between policy and practice:

We support popular fiction with a lease book program as well as the usual purchases. We also expedite acquisition of high-demand items. *These practices are not part of major selection principles, but are part of the*

differences between what we say and what we do. We devote far more funds and energy to popular than we do to serious fiction. [Emphasis added].

The respondents therefore show a high awareness of the user's need for popular fiction and a concomitant commitment to selecting and providing this material.

10.6.5 Selection policy statements

Question 5 (Appendix 2) was designed to find out whether respondents' policy statements specifically mention separate categories of popular fiction, namely science fiction, Westerns, romances, mysteries, etc.

Only 29,6% of respondents indicated that their formal selection policies refer to the different categories of popular fiction.

Less than a quarter (22,2%) of respondents indicated that their formal policy statements have differing major principles for the selection of popular fiction as opposed to serious fiction. These respondents state these differences in principle being that:

- "Popular fiction selection [is] based more on usage."
- "We purchase much more popular than serious [fiction]."
- "We buy fewer copies of serious fiction."
- "We select quantities based on demand. The popular is in high demand."
- "... we devote far more funds and energy to popular fiction."

The answers furnished by respondents indicate that although only a minority have formal selection policies referring specifically to science fiction, much energy and effort is devoted by selectors to satisfying the needs of their patrons for popular fiction. Demand and actual use are named as important aspects, also that fewer copies of works of serious fiction are acquired. One respondent indicated that much attention was paid to providing popular fiction to the users, even though these practices are not formally part of the major selection statements of this specific public library service.

10.6.6 Policy statements on science fiction

Questions 8 and 9 of the questionnaire (Appendix 2) were aimed at discovering whether respondents have policy statements regarding the selection of science fiction. Disappointingly only 8% reported positively. Those policy principles reported by this small minority related to using selection aids such as well-known reviewing journals (Kirkus, Publishers Weekly, and Locus), patron requests and literary award nominations (cf. paragraph 10.6.13).

10.6.7 Quality-demand continuum as viewed by respondents

In question 10 (Appendix 2) respondents were requested to position themselves, in terms of the much-debated quality versus demand controversy, in a continuum ranging from 0 (Quality) to 100 (Demand).

The individual responses ranged from 40 (leaning towards quality) to 100 (fully in favour of demand). Collectively a median position of 68,4% resulted, which illustrates that the majority of respondents polled strongly in favour of demand. This collective institutional leaning towards demand can clearly be seen from the results depicted in paragraphs 10.6.4 and 10.6.5. This finding illustrates that quality is still a relatively strong factor in selection.

10.6.8 Relationships between book, reader and collection

Respondents were requested in question 11 (cf. Appendix 2) to indicate which was the most important factor: the relationship of book to the collection or the relationship of book to reader, or whether both were considered to be equally important.

A majority of respondents (56%) viewed the book-collection and book-reader relationships as equally important. A sizeable minority (40%) opted for the book-reader relationship as the most important, thus revealing a noticeable emphasis on the user as opposed to a lack of emphasis on the book/collection relationship. Only 4% of respondents found the relation of book to collection as the most important factor.

10.6.9 Theoretical frameworks as a basis for major selection principles

This question was aimed at determining whether respondents' selection policies were based on any model, paradigm, cycle or system.

A small minority (12%) of respondents replied affirmatively. Their summaries in this respect were nearly identical. Respondents replies evince a lack of any clearly-defined model, paradigm or system, and concentrate only on the satisfying of demand without giving any consideration to any other factors such as quality:

- "Give the reader what he/she wants".
- "Buy what is popular in demand and needed by this community".
- "Anticipate demand and supply it".

10.6.10 Criteria for the evaluation of different levels of fiction

The next question centred on the utilization of criteria for the evaluation of fiction and whether, should respondents have specified criteria, such criteria are utilized to evaluate all levels of fiction.

Less than half (41%) reported that they do utilize specific criteria for the evaluation of fiction.

One third of respondents (33%) replied that they used the same criteria to evaluate all levels of fiction. Less than one-fifth (19%) reported using separate criteria to evaluate popular fiction. The following question requested respondents to specify criteria used for the evaluation of serious fiction, popular fiction and also science fiction. Respondents indicated that serious fiction was judged on such criteria as literary merit, as a representation of an important trend movement, vitality and originality, artistic presentation, literary awards, promising new author or the work's status as a classic of serious fiction.

Respondents reported that popular fiction was judged on criteria such as quality of writing, appeal to diverse users, author's recognizability, publisher's standards, a popular topic and good reviews in a reputable publication. Regarding the criteria utilized to evaluate works of science fiction, respondents stated that criteria involved here were:

- quality of writing
- author's popularity
- whether author is recognized as a standard author
- good review(s) in reputable journal(s)
- popular topic

- whether the work is a best seller
- whether science fiction in series is needed

The responses in regard of the evaluation of science fiction do not firmly indicate the existence of any unique criteria used solely for the evaluation of science fiction.

10.6.11 Scorecards or other standardized formats for the evaluation of works of popular fiction

The question posed here was whether respondents utilize a standardized scoring card or any other standardized format when evaluating popular fiction. All respondents answered in the negative. It is therefore clear that selectors in those public library services polled do not personally evaluate works of science fiction in a systematic, standardized fashion. The formats would seem to indicate that very little item-by-item evaluation is undertaken.

10.6.12 Most important factors in the selection of science fiction

Respondents were furnished with a variety of factors (numbering twenty in total) which could influence the selection decision. Respondents were requested to rate the relative importance of these factors on a scale of 1 ('insignificant') to 10 ('indispensable').

TABLE 10.4

Most important factors in science fiction selection

(Scale 1 = Insignificant and 10 = Indispensable)

FACTOR	SCALE VALUE
Needs of readers	9,38
Press/Journal reviews	8,31
Reputation of author	8,23
Objectives of public library	8,23
Policy of public library	8,23
Popularity of genre	7,96
Potential use to reader	7,96
Budget	7,85
Expected loan frequency	7,81
Potential value for collection	7,42
Literary prizes won by an item of SF	7,26
The existing collection	7,1
Intrinsic literary quality	5,66
Price of item	5,31
Publicity given by publisher to an item	4,85

The respondents again emphasize the needs of readers, as they did when requested to indicate their overall major principles for the selection of popular fiction. Popularity of the genre, potential use to the reader and loan frequency also rank highly as factors in the selection of fiction. This is evidence of a highly user-oriented approach with the potential usefulness of the book to the reader outranking the potential value of the book to the collection. This finding correlates with respondents' view that the relationship between book and reader is far more important than the relationship between book and collection (cf. paragraph 10.6.8). This analysis also points to reliance on two major aids in the selection of science fiction: the press/journal review and the reputation of the author.

Further important factors ranking immediately after the above factors are literary prizes won by a book (7,26), the existing collection (7,1) and intrinsic literary quality (5,66);

followed by the price of the item (5,31) and the publicity given by the publisher to the item (4,85) and the format hardcover/paperback (4,7).

Intrinsic literary quality as a factor is clearly subordinated to reader needs, and the use a book might have for the reader and the popularity and loan frequency of the item itself, a further correlation with the finding that the respondents lean strongly towards demand in the quality versus demand debate, (cf. paragraph 10.6.7).

The factors ranked as being of least importance were bibliographic guides/lists (4,8), publisher's reputation (4,43), publisher's policy/tendencies (2,6) and finally bibliographic details (1,81). Mention has been made in chapter 9 (cf. paragraph 9.2.5 and Figure 9.4) of the model of the selection context as advanced by Atkinson (1984) which utilizes bibliographic (citational) details as one of the main components. This factor clearly does not, in the institutional view of North American libraries, represent an important factor in the selection of science fiction. In the same context it could be mentioned that the model of the decision-making process in fiction selection of Oosthuizen (1991, 1994) includes factors such as the existing collection (rated highly at 7,1). The only factors in Oosthuizen's model not rated highly by these respondents are publisher's policies/tendencies (2,6) and bibliographic details (1,81).

Respondents were invited to list any additional factors relating to science fiction which in their view should have been included in this section of the questionnaire, and furnish a rating as well, which is indicated here after the proposed factor:

The various suggestions were:

- Performance of the author's previous work (8)
- Requests by users (9)
- Circulation history of author (10)
- Available space in fiction collection (10)

- Whether author is of same nationality as country in which the public library is situated (9)
- Local author (10)
- Local interest (10).

10.6.13 Selection aids utilized in the selection of science fiction

Respondents were given a set of seven assorted selection aids and requested to stipulate which percentage of their services' evaluation of individual works of fiction was effected by means of these selection instruments. Table 10.5 depicts this result.

TABLE 10.5

Selection of science fiction by means of specific selection aids

INSTRUMENT	UTILIZATION
Reviews	62,7%
In-house criteria	10,4%
Publishers' blurbs	7,8%
Suppliers' selections	5,6%
Blanket/standing orders	4,0%
Jobbers' catalogues	3,9%
Judging by title	1,0%

The review is by far the most preferred aid in the selection of science fiction followed by the utilization of in-house criteria and publishers' blurbs. The other selection aids mentioned are little utilized.

Respondents were further requested to indicate whether they utilized any other selection aids and if so, to furnish a rating, and the following were reported:

- The Science Fiction Book Club selections and membership (50%)
- User requests (no value indicated)

10.6.14 Trend in the demand for science fiction

Respondents were requested to indicate whether they judged the current demand for science fiction to be increasing, decreasing or unchanged (cf. question 17 of the questionnaire).

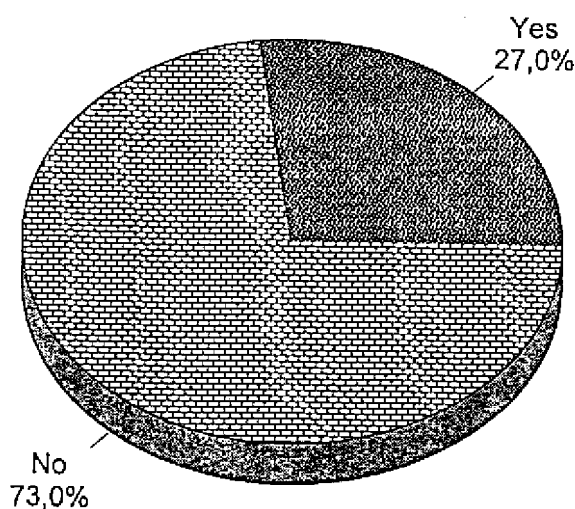
One half (52%) of respondents are of the opinion that the demand for science fiction is increasing, with a sizeable minority (40%) judging that the demand is unchanged. A very small number (8%) of respondents see the demand decreasing. This indicates that the popularity of the genre is generally on the increase.

10.6.15 Public library budget for the purchasing of science fiction

Respondents were questioned as to whether they dedicate a portion of their fiction acquisition budget to purchasing science fiction. Figure 10.2 reflects the position as indicated by respondents.

FIGURE 10.2

Public library budget reserved for science fiction



Slightly over a quarter (27%) of respondents follow the practice of reserving an allocation for science fiction.

A fifth of respondents supplied the precise percentages of their budgets reserved for the acquisition of science fiction, with these ranging from 15% to 3%, and averaging at 8%. This figure correlates with the finding in paragraph 10.6.3 which indicates that science fiction represents an average of 6,6% of respondents' fiction loans. This figure further corresponds with the fact that one half of respondents view the demand for science fiction as being on the increase.

10.6.16 Guides to science fiction

The question posed whether respondents viewed existing handbooks on science fiction to be satisfactory, and if so, to name a few.

A substantial majority (74%) of respondents reported that they found the following available handbooks on science fiction to be satisfactory (cf. also paragraph 11.9 regarding reference works).

The Anatomy of Wonder, edited by Neil Barron

The Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction, edited by John Clute

Billion Year Spree, by Brian Aldiss

Trillion Year Spree, by Brian Aldiss

Science fiction: Alien encounter, by Frank Mayell

Science Fiction Writers, by Everett Bleiler

New Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction, edited by James Gunn

Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature, by R. Reginald

Twentieth Century Science Fiction Writers, 3rd edition

Genreflecting: a guide to reading interests in genre fiction, by B. Rosenberg

The works respectively edited by Barron and Clute prove to be the most widely-used as they are mentioned by the majority of respondents (cf. paragraph 11.9).

10.6.17 Quality of selection practices

Here respondents were questioned on their perceptions of the quality of their own selection of science fiction in general, and offered three possibilities, namely 'satisfactory', 'good, could be improved', and 'not satisfactory'.

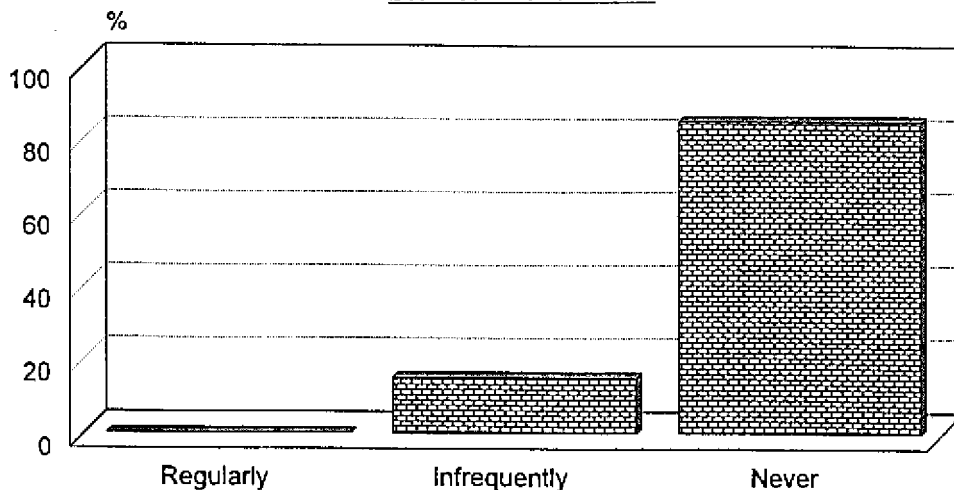
Just under half (48%) of respondents judged their selection of science fiction as satisfactory, whilst the same number (48%) judge their own performance as good but with a possibility of improvement. Overall these public library selectors seem satisfied with the quality of their science fiction selection.

10.6.18 User studies

Respondents were requested to indicate whether they conducted user studies 'regularly', 'infrequently' or 'never'.

Figure 10.3 depicts the frequency of user surveys by respondents.

FIGURE 10.3
Studies of user needs



Only fifteen percent of respondents undertake user studies on an infrequent basis with the remainder indicating that they do not follow this practice. It is unfortunate that the clearly-expressed commitment of respondents to the needs of users as expressed, *inter alia*, in paragraphs 10.6.4, 10.6.5, 10.6.7 and 10.6.8, is not reinforced by more precise enquiry into the needs of users. Such studies can be very valuable in assisting public libraries to provide for the needs of users.

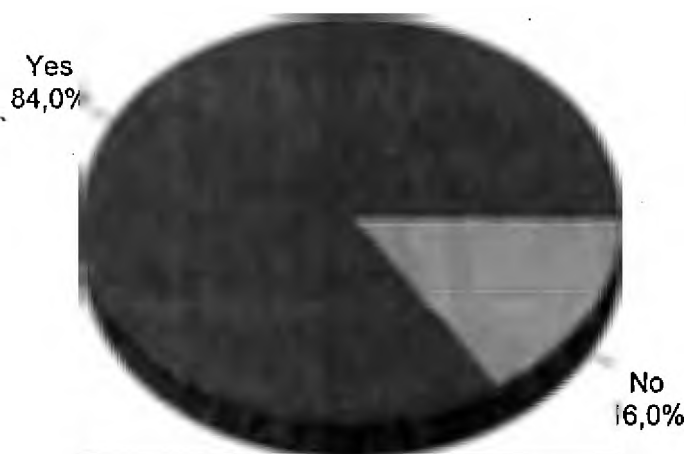
10.6.19 Training of public librarians in the appreciation and comprehension of popular (genre) fiction

The question put to respondents here concerned their views on the necessity for the training of public librarians in the appreciation and comprehension of popular fiction. Respondents had to indicate by means of 'yes' or 'no' whether they were in favour of this possibility.

A more positive reaction was received in regard of the question of formally training public librarians in the appreciation and comprehension of popular (genre) fiction as portrayed by Figure 10.4.

FIGURE 10.4

The training of public librarians in popular fiction



A substantial majority (84%) of respondents were of the opinion that such training should be given to public librarians.

10.6.20 Most important authors of science fiction

Respondents were requested to rate on a progressive scale (1 = 'not needed' and 10 = 'cannot be excluded'), a list of forty authors of science fiction. The list included some authors, generally considered as older classic writers of science fiction (Jules Verne, E.E. Smith and Robert A. Heinlein), as well as other lesser-known or forgotten authors such as H. Beam Piper, Keith Roberts, A.E. Van Vogt and Jack Williamson. These names and those of other well-known and in some cases lesser-known authors were deliberately listed haphazardly in order to test respondents' knowledge and opinion of these authors. Table 10.6 represents the respondents' rating of these authors for inclusion in their collections.

TABLE 10.6
Most popular science fiction authors

AUTHOR	%	AUTHOR	%
1 Anne McCaffrey	94,4	16 David Brin	73,3
2 Robert A. Heinlein	94,0	17 Bruce Sterling	73,2
3 Jules Verne	93,6	18 William Gibson	72,9
4 Philip K. Dick	92,0	19 Joan Vinge	70,8
5 Ursula K. Le Guin	91,2	20 Thomas M. Disch	68,2
6 Roger Zelazny	91,1	21 L. Ron Hubbard	67,2
7 C. J. Cherryh	90,4	22 George R. R. Martin	66,1
8 Poul A. Anderson	87,6	23 Norman Spinrad	66,0
9 Philip José Farmer	86,8	24 E. E. Smith	63,1
10 L. Niven & J. Pournelle	86,7	25 Lester Del Rey	61,3
11 Samuel R. Delany	84,4	26 Joanna Russ	60,4
12 Mary W. Shelley	83,2	27 A. E. Van Vogt	57,0
13 Greg Bear	79,6	28 Jack Williamson	56,8
14 Theodore Sturgeon	77,2	29 Colin Wilson	54,5
15 Kate Wilhelm	76,4	30 John Wyndham	54,5

Practical constraints such as the planned length of the questionnaire and the time and patience of respondents limited the list of authors presented for rating. Considerable deliberation was given to the presentation of a balanced list of science fiction authors ranging from Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley who wrote the progenitor of modern science fiction, Frankenstein in 1818, through authors of the nineteen thirties and forties such as A. E. Van Vogt, E. E. Smith, H. Beam Piper and Lester Del Rey; as well as the writers who refined science fiction into a respectable genre in the nineteen fifties such as Robert A. Heinlein, Alfred Bester and John Wyndham.

The literary-radical New Wave is represented by such masters of the genre as Samuel R. Delany and Roger Zelazny, as well as succeeding *avant-garde* authors such as Philip K. Dick, Philip José Farmer and Greg Bear, culminating in the literary *enfants terribles* of the innovative post-modern cyberpunk movement in the late nineteen eighties and early nineties, represented here by William Gibson, Bruce Sterling and Lewis Shiner.

Knowledgeable researchers in the field will immediately be able to protest that acknowledged masters of the genre such as Isaac Asimov, Frank Herbert, Robert Silverberg, Doris Lessing and Nancy Kress to name but a few, have been excluded from this select company of authors.

This cannot be denied, but, on the whole, it is considered that a representative cross-array of authors was presented for rating by respondents, and that this cross-section of old and new authors represents a valid perspective on how respondents view the inclusion of such diverse authors in the contemporary public library collection. Verne and Shelley, both nineteenth-century authors were ranked amongst the first fifteen most popular authors. Acknowledged older masters of the genre in the middle of the twentieth century, such as Heinlein, Anderson and Sturgeon, are also included, as are New Wave authors such as Zelazny and Delany. This select group is further augmented by the visionaries Dick and Le Guin, and the hard science writers Niven and Pournelle.

The second tranche of the most popular thirty authors contains the same mixture of old favourites of the nineteen forties, fifties and sixties such as E.E. Smith, Lester Del Rey, A. E. Van Vogt and Jack Williamson, as well as exciting new post-modern-cyber-punk authors such as Bruce Sterling and William Gibson.

All in all, the response regarding the most popular science fiction authors is a well-balanced and informed mixture of older, classic authors and exciting new experimental talents.

Those placed by respondents among the last eleven were Rudy Rucker (53,3%) and Lewis Shiner (46,5%) of the post-modern school, as well as writers who produced novels generally considered as classics of the genre such as Alfred Bester (52,7%), Olaf Stapledon (50,5%), Keith Roberts (39,1%) and Ward Moore (33,3%). Zenna Henderson (47,45), George R. Stewart (45,7%) and H. Beam Piper (45,7%), two older writers from the nineteen fifties and sixties who are also considered to have produced classic works, complete this list.

The mixture is once again a balance between classic writers and bright new experimentalists.

It should be emphasized that even the writers who gained less than fifty percent are still considered to be leading authors, such as Keith Roberts who wrote exquisitely lyrical works, and Zenna Henderson who produced a finely-crafted, bitter-sweet series of works of a gentle alien people stranded on Earth after being spacewrecked. These authors would be much more highly ranked if compared with other selections of authors.

Respondents were also requested to nominate other authors not included for rating, who, in their view, could not be excluded from their collections.

The most recommended author proved to be Isaac Asimov, with 30,8% of the total number of respondents nominating him, followed by Ray Bradbury (19,2%), Robert Silverberg (19,2%). Arthur C. Clarke (11,5%) and Harlan Ellison (11,5%). Other nominees were Gene Wolfe, H.G. Wells, Kim Stanley Robinson, Brian Aldiss, Gregory Benford, James Blish, Frank Herbert, Orson Scott Card and Stanislaw Lem.

Female authors nominated were Marion Zimmer Bradley, Octavia Butler, Lois Bujold and James Tiptree, jr. (*nom de plume* of Alice Sheldon).

The list of nominees is completed by Clifford D. Simak, Frederik Pohl, Harry Harrison, Fred Saberhagen and Harry Turtledove.

The ratings awarded to the authors presented to respondents, as well as those nominated by respondents themselves as important, demonstrate respondents' in-depth knowledge of the genre.

10.7 **Conclusion**

Analysis of the data gathered by means of the mail questionnaire from a representative sample consisting of forty public library services in the USA (and three in Canada) shows that popular fiction is considered to be mandatory for the public library collection, and that the fiction collection enjoys use far in excess of its ratio to the total collection. (This finding correlates with a similar study carried out in South Africa in 1992). On the whole, respondents lean strongly towards demand in the context of quality versus demand debate, although quality is not discounted as a factor.

Science fiction enjoys good circulation figures, and the popularity of science fiction within the context of the public library is increasing.

The needs of users and the demand for popular fiction, including science fiction, is emphasized by respondents, who clearly articulate their mission as the provision of popular fiction to satisfy the strong user demand. This strong commitment to user needs is commendable.

Selectors further evince an excellent practical knowledge of science fiction authors and guides to science fiction.

Little or no personal evaluation of individual works seems to be effected by selectors. Regrettably few respondents utilize separate criteria for the evaluation of popular fiction or specifically science fiction. The criteria mentioned as being utilized for the evaluation of science fiction are vague and generalized, and are not unique criteria especially designed for this purpose. Standardized scoring cards or other formats are not in use. Selectors rely heavily on press and journal reviews in selection.

In sum American public libraries exhibit a highly practical, user-orientated, competent approach to the selection of science fictions, although little personal evaluation of individual works is effected and few use specialized criteria for such evaluation.

The following chapter will be devoted to practical guidelines for the selection of science fiction in public libraries.

CHAPTER 11

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE SELECTION OF SCIENCE FICTION IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

11.1. Introduction

Chapters 8 and 9 were devoted to the study of theory and models pertaining to the selection of fiction. Chapter 10 was devoted to analysis of the data gathered by means of a mail questionnaire sent to selected American public library services in order to study their approach to the selection of science fiction. Having studied the question of selection both conceptually and empirically, this chapter will be devoted to the exposition of practical guidelines for the selection of science fiction in public libraries.

It was demonstrated in chapter 8 that conceptually there is a necessity for and movement towards a synthesis of the quality versus demand debate, and that the public library selector should live with and operate within the tension formed by these opposing concepts. This approach will be conducive towards selecting the best works within each popular category or genre of popular fiction such as science fiction. A further prominent concept which came to the fore was that user needs should be more precisely determined. There is a definite conceptual link between the process of selection in public libraries on the one hand and the needs of fiction users on the other hand. The final responsibility of the selector is to combine the cardinal aspects of public library objectives, user needs and the inherent value of the fiction text in the selection process. This would also hold true for science fiction.

Empirical study of the policy and practice of American public library services was carried out by means of a mail questionnaire (cf. chapter 10). Demand for science fiction, within the context of public libraries was found to be on the increase, and respondents to the questionnaire clearly articulated their mission as that of meeting this demand. Little

individual evaluation of works is carried through in the United States, although respondents clearly evinced a thorough and practical knowledge of the best works and authors of science fiction. Respondents were also *au fait* with authoritative reference works for science fiction, which demonstrated an excellent working knowledge of this category or genre of popular fiction.

This chapter will utilize the conceptual and empirical insight gained from the research in Chapters 8, 9 and 10 to formulate guidelines for the selection of science fiction.

11.2 Circulation

Science fiction is essentially a genre dominated by American authors, and has been transformed, in the USA, from a minor publishing category or genre to a major sphere of commercial publishing (Spinrad 1990:192). Delany (1984:102) estimates that works of science fiction account for 15% of all fiction published, whilst Spinrad (1990:55) documents 20% of all fiction published in the United States to be science fiction. Research has shown that the science fiction genre is among the highest circulators amongst popular fiction genres, with science fiction and fantasy together representing for instance 10,9% of the total fiction collection (Christensen 1984:76-77). Moore (1982:44) reports on her statistical research project into core collection development which *inter alia* studied the circulation of the fiction collection in a medium-sized public library, and which established that science fiction, ranked as a very high circulating genre along with best-sellers, mystery novels, war novels, and religious works, above thirteen other fiction genres and non-fiction categories such as Westerns, romances, classic fiction, history, adventure and sports. A follow-up study showed that the circulation of science fiction and fantasy led romance, general fiction, mystery and adventure novels, Westerns and humour. American public library services (cf. paragraph 10.6.3) report that, on an average, science fiction proved to have a 6,6 % share of the total fiction circulation, with works of fantasy forming 4,4 % of the fiction loans. Those respondents who consider science fiction and fantasy to be one single genre, reported a combined average of 7,8 %. Research by Brewis

(1992:108-111) found British statistics varying between 4,0 % and 5,8 %. Public librarians should therefore be aware that science fiction will be in demand and include this in their selection policy and practice.

11.3 Increasing demand for science fiction

Barboto (1986:73) finds that the breakthrough of science fiction novels into the mainstream best-seller list has eliminated much of the previous prejudice against science fiction, and produced a new adult audience for the genre. Lezard (1993:9) concurs with this view, finding that mainstream authors are utilizing the genre in increasing numbers, and thus following in the footsteps of noted authors such as George Orwell (Nineteen Eighty-four), Aldous Huxley (Brave New World), and Anthony Burgess (A Clockwork Orange). Prominent mainstream authors now turning to science fiction include P.D. James, Phillip Kerr, Martin Amis, David Ambrose and Allan Lightman. The science fiction market first became large, relatively prosperous and respectable to outsiders during the early nineteen seventies, with this enormous growth in general popularity and acceptability leading, by the nineteen eighties, to top authors commanding very high prices for their work (Hartwell 1984:31-33). This phenomenon has continued into the nineteen nineties, with an increasing demand for both written science fiction and films, often based on best-selling novels.

The public library selector should take these tendencies thoroughly into account. Just over half (52%) of North American public libraries polled by mail questionnaire for the purposes of this dissertation, indicated that the demand for science fiction was increasing. Spinrad (1990:7) documents that by 1990, five hundred new science fiction novels were being published annually in the United States. Selectors are thus faced with growing demand for science fiction on the one hand, and an expanding volume of new works on the other. The selector thus faces a daunting task if he or she would do justice to the needs of the user of science fiction by selecting the best quality works available. The selector

must therefore study the genre carefully, keep abreast of latest tendencies in the genre as well as the publishing world, in order to be able to select optimally.

11.4 Profile of the average reader of science fiction

Wood (1988:41) reports on a 1987 Gallup survey undertaken by means of 10 180 telephonic interviews conducted among a nationally representative sample of adults aged eighteen and over, in order to determine the profile of the person purchasing science fiction in the USA. These findings are illustrated in Table 11.1.

TABLE 11.1
The profile of the purchaser of science fiction

CHARACTERISTICS	Total Book Buyers %	Science Fiction Buyers %
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	44	60
Female	56	40
<i>Age</i>		
18-24 years	16	23
25-34 years	27	42
35-49 years	31	28
50 and older	28	7
<i>Education</i>		
University	60	67
High school graduate	31	28
Non-high school graduate	8	5
<i>Annual Household Income</i>		
\$ 30,000 or more	53	53
\$ 20,000 - \$ 29,000	23	20
\$ 10,000 - \$ 19,000	17	15
Under \$ 10,000	7	12
<i>Women's Employment Status</i>		
Full time	48	42
Part time	15	16
Not employed	37	42

Although these survey findings relate to purchases of science fiction, and not directly to readers of science fiction in the public library context, it can be surmised that this profile

would in large measure correspond with the science fiction user in the public library. The science fiction reader is therefore most likely to be male, a university graduate, between eighteen and thirty four years old, and earning a professional income. Herbert (1986a:46) quotes the noted author Frederik Pohl arguing in an interview that the average science fiction audience is 60% male, but in his estimation mostly between fourteen and twenty-five years of age. He postulates that these readers go through a stage in their early careers when they do not have much time to read, between their mid-twenties and their mid-thirties, after which many resume the reading of science fiction. Herbert (1986a:46) also interviewed other noted authors of science fiction, such as Marion Zimmer Bradley and Jean Lorrak who both feel that their readers encompass all age groups. Herbert (1986a:46) cites the eminent science fiction author and physicist Gregory Benford as saying that the science fiction reader audience is growing, fed in part by the interest created by the epic science fiction films being produced.

11.5 Policy statement on the selection of science fiction

A mission statement contains the goals for which libraries strive. These may not be entirely achievable on the short or medium term, whereas specific objectives are believed to be attainable within a certain time frame such as years rather than decades (Futas 1984:412).

A suggested policy statement could be formulated as follows:

The public library as democratic social institution insofar as the selection of fiction, both serious and classical and popular (genre) fiction is concerned, proceeds in the first instance in terms of its recreational objective which is to provide recreational reading as a leisure-time activity. The provision of good quality works on all levels of fiction is called for as one reader will enjoy reading the works of Thomas Hardy or William Faulkner for relaxation as much as another will be captivated by a well-written science fiction novel or mystery. The public library therefore must select a broad range of fiction levels and categories or genres ranging from such works of fiction as are generally considered

classical or serious works of fiction, as well as the readers' needs for fiction texts considered to be popular best-sellers, and works falling within the popular genres such as science fiction, detective/mystery novels, horror and Gothic novels, romances and narratives of the American West. There is a secondary principle involved: that of the informally educative, as a book of fiction can, on the informal level, enhance and enrich the life of the reader as much as a formal topic of study. There is therefore a wide variety of needs, tastes and levels of fiction involved in the reading of fiction and it is the duty of the selector in the public library to ensure that the best texts available in these different levels and genres of fiction, are presented to the reader for his or her choice. In order to be optimally able to cater for the needs of the user of the library's fiction, selectors should have:

- a sound knowledge of culture, both elite and popular
- an equally sound knowledge of all levels and genres of fiction, both popular and serious/classical
- an informed and knowledgeable view of the fiction reading needs of the community acquired by means of surveys and other methods.

The formal selection policy of the public library should, after describing the overall mission of the public library and its specific objectives in the selection of fiction, detail the operational approach towards the selection of the specific popular categories or genres such as science fiction.

The public library, as a democratic social institution must therefore provide for those patrons in need of works of science fiction. The public library must strive to provide only the best quality science fiction extent in the genre in general, as well as in the different sub-genres. The public library selector must be *au fait* with certain basic aspects of science fiction selection, in order to be:

- Cognizant of the origins and distinct phases of development of the genre, together with the literary-stylistic movements within the genre and its sub-genres.
- Adept at the evaluation of individual works of science fiction by means of a prescribed scorecard or standardized format.
- Familiar with the selection aids such as reviews of works of science fiction in newspapers and journals, bibliographies, guides, handbooks, encyclopaedias and any other possible aids.
- Proficient in interpreting the citational elements of the work such as author's reputation and publisher's reputation.
- Aware of the overriding responsibility to evaluate items individually, wherever possible.
- Fair in taking the selection decision itself by weighing the different factors against each other, and making the following judgements:
 - (i) Will the selection of this item be justified in terms of the expressed recreational and informally-educational objectives?
 - (ii) What is the inherent value of the item, as determined by the scorecard?
 - (iii) Will this satisfy user need(s)?
 - (iv) Will this item enhance the existing fiction collection in general and the extant science fiction collection in particular?
 - (v) Are there sufficient budgetary resources available for the acquisition of this item if selected?

Policy statements and operational guidelines will differ from public library to public library, and these examples are merely furnished as examples of possibilities.

11.6 Sub-genres of science fiction

It is important that the selector be *au fait* with the manifold and fluid sub-genres, as the satisfaction of user needs and the evaluation of individual works will be facilitated by knowledge of these different branches on the genre tree.

Science fiction has in the course of its development, become a sophisticated, multi-faceted genre. The early years of the genre were typified by a strong bias towards a background of hard science, which in the course of the twentieth century was, in turn, followed by an emphasis on the human element and society. In essence the genre is based on a continuum running from hard science fiction to soft science fiction. Works of science fiction can be placed at some point to intersect with this continuum. Individual works can also contain strong elements of both extremes of the spectrum. Certain well-known authors have over the course of their literary careers become identified with one or other side of the spectrum. Robert A. Heinlein, Arthur C. Clarke and Isaac Asimov are established old masters of the hard science grouping in the genre, whilst Harlan Ellison, Samuel R. Delany, Philip K. Dick and Robert Silverberg are well-known exponents of the soft science school.

Many critics have proposed categories for the grouping of the sub-genres, none of them quite satisfactory, e.g. Cioffi's division of the genre into *status quo* science fiction, *subversive* science fiction and *another world* category (Broderick 1995:25). This grouping is somewhat imprecise, and would be too broad to effectively group this divergent, amorphous genre.

The best cluster grouping for the genre which could be found was that of Malmgren (1991a), which will be utilized, although his grouping is not always accepted, as will be explained hereunder.

11.6.1 Assorted sub-genres

Before proceeding to a suggested broad encompassing taxonomy of the genre, the following identifiable sub-genres and/or narrative types which can be distinguished are listed hereunder:

(a) *Hard science fiction*

Narratives in which scientific and technological themes and applications feature prominently as an integral part of the narrative, its premises and conclusion. Prominent authors in this field are Robert A. Heinlein, Arthur C. Clarke, Larry Niven and Gregory Benford.

(b) *Dystopias, satires and social criticism*

Dystopias picture situations in which society has become unbearable and oppressive because of science, human kind and society's faults (Utopias picture ideal future societies). This genre also contains extrapolative social criticism. Prominent authors are George Orwell, Aldous Huxley, Frederik Pohl and D.M. Kornbluth.

(c) *Post-holocaust tales*

Here society is nearly destroyed and survivors struggle to rebuild their worlds, discrete groups do battle for supremacy and hegemony over limited resources, or simply just to survive. Prominent names here are Walter M. Miller, Edgar Pangborn, Russell Hoban, Poul Anderson and Harlan Ellison.

(d) *Allohistory (or alternative history)*

A fascinating sub-genre which postulates such questions as what would have happened if certain historical events had never taken place, such as what if the Southern Confederate forces had been victorious in the American Civil War, or if the Spanish armada had conquered England in 1588? Prominent authors here are Ward Moore, Keith Roberts, Norman Spinrad and Philip K. Dick.

(e) *Space opera (space adventure)*

These are fast-paced adventures set on exotic planets or in intergalactic empires, wars and conflicts, and written in a romantic swashbuckling style to match their sweeping themes. This is a much maligned sub-genre often condemned by serious critics as having no real scientific or literary value. These entertaining stories are nevertheless very popular. Poul Anderson, Jack Williamson, Joan Vinge, C.J. Cherryh, George R.R. Martin and Iain Banks have produced works in this category.

(f) *Human alien interaction*

Mankind encounters sentient alien beings in outer space or because the latter invade Earth. This is a fascinating sub-genre with excellent literary possibilities in describing first contact with extraterrestrials and the subsequent developments. Many authors have written works in this vein including Clifford D. Simak, James Blish, Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle and Ian Watson to name but a few.

(g) *Time Travel*

This sub-genre is also very popular and features protagonists travelling to other epochs to witness events, e.g. attending Abraham Lincoln's famous address at Gettysburg, or

depicting the visit of time travellers from other eras to observe or interfere in the present. H.G. Wells wrote the first brilliant work in the vein, followed by authors such as Wilson Tucker, Robert A. Heinlein, Michael Moorcock and Connie Willis.

(h) *Military science fiction*

A popular sub-genre which is basically a war novel or narrative set in future wars with the attendant development in military ethics, practices and equipment, written by authors such as Robert A. Heinlein, Gordon R. Dickson and Joe Haldeman.

(i) *Ecological disaster and catastrophe*

This sub-genre depicts the world being ruined by pollution and other man-made ecological disasters or even aliens deliberately altering the climate for their own colonialist purposes. John Brunner and J.G. Ballard are two very prominent names, as well as Harry Harrison, Thomas Disch and Hal Clement.

(j) *Journeys of discovery and colonization in space*

The population of an overcrowded earth seeks demographic relief by sending out colonists to settle and prepare new planets for human habitation. Robert A. Heinlein, Alexei Panshin, Gregory Benford, Frank Herbert and uncounted authors have touched on this aspect.

(k) *Sword and sorcery*

A form of science fantasy normally set in a feudal system or in a world which has lost its scientific knowledge and reverted to a medieval-type society. It features expert swordfighters, wizards and witches and other new-magical protagonists, often the remnants of high science being used for evil purposes. Fritz Leiber, Michael Moorcock

and Anne McCaffery are very prominent. Many of these narratives are borderline science fiction, verging on fantasy.

(l) *Cyberpunk science fiction*

This sub-genre centres on advanced computers within an artificial computer-created cyberspace, with evil multi-national corporations ruling the nation-states, outlaw computer hackers, futuristic drugs, and virtual reality, written in a hard-boiled sinister *film noir* mode. William Gibson, Rudy Rucker, Bruce Sterling, Greg Bear and Lewis Shiner are the leading literary lights.

(m) *Feminist science fiction*

A new and vibrant sub-genre authored by women who write science fiction with female protagonists and gender issues and feminist themes. This sub-genre covers the wide field of science fiction from sword and sorcery to hard science fiction. Ursula K. Le Guin, Joanna Russ, Suzy McKee Charnas, Vonda McIntyre and Kate Wilhelm are excellent examples.

(n) *Evolution of humanity*

The changes and mutation of the human mind and body, featuring such aspects as the search for immortality, the acquisition of awesome psychic powers such as telepathy, telekinesis, and other forms of extra-sensory perception, changes made to the human body to enable people to live in different atmospheres and habitats. Robert Silverberg, Alfred Bester, Bruce Sterling, Theodore Sturgeon and Roger Zelazny have written works in this vein.

(o) *Artificial intelligence*

This sub-genre has been popular since the early years of the genre and features the development of sophisticated robots, computers, spaceships, and other artificially-intelligent artefacts. It features the confrontation with or co-operation between man and machine. Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke, Philip K. Dick, Frederik Pohl, Clifford D. Simak and many other authors have touched on these aspects.

(p) *Dying Earth tales*

Stories set on ancient Earth, in a universe displaying extreme age. Gene Wolfe has written novels in this category.

(q) *Magic/science interaction*

This is a hybrid sub-genre which, although based on the solid, consistent regularity of the physical laws, which govern the work, but reverses these physical laws in certain instances to introduce a fantasy element, which introduces elements such as magic into this scientifically based world, Fritz Leiber, Stanisław Lem and Gene Wolfe have produced excellent works in this category.

(r) *Steampunk*

Versions of 19th century alternate worlds which describe variant outcomes of the industrial revolution, e.g. William Gibson and Bruce Sterling's The Difference Engine (1991).

(s) *Blending of genres or genre crossing*

Since the eighties there has been much blending, genres or genre crossing, or hybrids, such as science fiction Westerns, time-travelling romances and mystery stories in alien settings which has even more complicated any suggested taxonomy of the sub-genres of science fiction. Rose (1981:34) illustrates the difficulties involved in using his own four broad categories: time, space, monster and machine, by pointing to Arthur C. Clarke's 2000: A Space Odyssey, which could variously be interpreted as an alien-contact story, an evolutionary fable, a man-machine encounter or a tale of humanity undergoing a monstrous change.

11.6.2 Suggested categorization of science fiction into major thematic fields

The most utilitarian broad categorization for the discrete sub-genres to be found was that of Malmgren (1991a:18), who divides science fiction into five major thematic fields namely: Alien Encounter, Alternate Society, Gadget Science Fiction, Space Colonization and Discovery and Science Fantasy (cf. Table 11.2 below), although the allocation of sub-genres to the broad thematic fields have been somewhat altered, e.g. Allohistory, or Alternative History, as Malmgren (1991a:149) terms this sub-genre, is not allocated to the thematic category Science Fantasy but to the Alternate Society category. The Time Travel sub-genre is likewise allocated elsewhere.

Table 11.2 illustrates a modified thematic categorization of sub-genres, based on Malmgren's (1991a) categorization, as modified by this researcher:

TABLE 11.2

A suggested categorization of the science fiction sub-genres

CATEGORY	SUB-GENRES WITHIN THE GENRE	
Alien Encounter	Human/Alien Interaction	
Alternate Society	1. Dystopias, Satires and Social Criticism 2. Post-holocaust Story 3. Allohistory	4. Evolution of Humanity (metamorphosis) 5. Feminist Science Fiction 6. Time Travel
Gadget Science Fiction	1. Hard Science Fiction 2. Space Opera/Adventure 3. Cyberpunk	4. Military Science Fiction 5. Artificial Intelligence
Space Colonization and Discovery	Journey into Space and to other planets and galaxies, Colonization of other worlds	
Science Fantasy	1. Sword and Sorcery Tales 2. Magic/Science Interaction	

It must be emphasized that this categorization remains open to personal interpretation as Time Travel could equally well be allocated to Gadget Science Fiction or even Science Fantasy. Sub-genres are also not mutually exclusive, as a work could conceivably be both hard Science Fiction and Military Science Fiction. The same could be said of Allohistorical narratives which could arguably be transferred to the thematic category Science Fantasy. This exercise in categorization has solely been conducted as an orientation and familiarization exercise as far as the sub-genres are concerned. These deliberations serve to illustrate the complexity and amorphous quality of the genre which in turn makes it difficult to compartmentalize it. There is also a tendency in the works of certain contemporary authors to blend the science fiction, horror and fantasy genres. Stephen King's novel *The Tommyknockers*, published in 1989, comes to mind.

11.7 Identifying poor-quality science fiction

Science fiction has become a commercially-attractive genre, and it is to be expected that writers not strictly committed to the genre, will take advantage of its subject matter and conventions for financial reasons in order to produce imitative "pot-boilers" as this popular genre can be easily simulated outwardly without having any inherent value.

Spinrad (1990:3-5), both a respected author and critic, furnishes an example of a novel which, in his opinion, does not qualify to be good science fiction, even if it utilizes the outward theme and subject matter of the genre.

I have before me **The Eleven Million Mile High Dancer**, by Carol Hill. It is a science fiction novel. Its heroine, astronaut Amanda Jawarski, dresses in a Wonder Woman suit, roller-skates around the corridors of NASA, and has a magical cat named Schrodinger. After my third try at getting past page 60, I still can't figure out whether Ms. Hill is trying to be funny or not.

True, the book is filled with silly characters, sillier science, cartoon-level feminism, and the use of garbled quantum theory to legitimize vibrating mysticalism [sic] one would expect of a writer who appends a two-page explication of quantum mechanics for the unwashed masses, nearly half of which is a quote from Fritjof Capra's **The Tao of Physics**.

On the other hand, little of it is really funny; it is merely ludicrous, not humorous; trying to read this book for laughs is like watching a borscht-belt comic in his own nethermost pit of Hades, bombing out forever with jokes that don't get even a hollow giggle.

But if **Dancer** is failed satire, one must then ask of **what**, and the only possible answer, alas is of **itself**. That, if the book is meant as satire, is why it is so agonizingly unfunny, for satire just doesn't work when it has no reference reality to play off ... Because I do not think that this novel is a failed attempt at humor. I think it much more likely that it is a failed attempt at **science fiction** by a writer of some talent who hasn't the foggiest notion of what science fiction really is.

Breathes there an editor who has not seen this sort of first novel over and over again in the slushpile and sent it back with a form rejection slip after reading maybe

twenty pages? If for some reason such an editor felt perversely mellow enough to write a personal rejection letter, it would go something like this:

Dear Ms Hill:

While **The Eleven Million Mile High Dancer** displays ample evidence of your prose skills on a sentence and paragraph level and a firm grasp of the mechanics of scene, dialog, and description, it is equally evident that you have attempted to write a science fiction novel with little or no study of the form itself.

Science fiction may be serious extrapolation, space opera, satire, or metaphysical speculation, but not all at once in the same novel, let alone in the same paragraph. If you intend to use scientific extrapolation as a story element, you must understand it at least well enough to convince a general reader that you know what you are talking about. If you are writing action-adventure, you must keep your tongue from getting stuck in your cheek, and if you are writing humor, try reading some of it out loud to see if anyone laughs.

Don't be too discouraged by this rejection. Ms. Hill. You obviously **do** have some talent for writing narrative fiction on a professional level. But I would strongly advise reading a wide sampling of science fiction novels before attempting to write one again.

Harried Editor

I can see you scratching your head out there. Okay, so some lousy first novel managed to escape from the slushpile into marginal publication; why bother to agonize over it in print at such length? It happens all the time; all it means is that some overworked editor needed something quick to fill a hole in the schedule, and this was the least offensive thing available at the time.

Ah, but **The Eleven Million Mile High Dancer** is **not** Carol Hill's first published novel, but her **third**. It comes festooned with laudatory blurbs for previous work by literary high priests like John Leonard and Alfred Kazin. It was reviewed - on the whole, quite favorably - in important critical journals and national newsmagazines. Since it is so manifestly science fiction, albeit of a rather

amateurish sort, one is led to the inescapable conclusion that a significant segment of the American critical apparatus considers it **good science fiction**. [Spinrad's emphasis.]

Spinrad (1990) is forceful in presenting his point of view, but is quite correct in his judgement that the genre has become a lucrative target for opportunity. The selector should therefore be very discerning in the evaluation of texts, as even laudatory reviews and publishers' advertising and blurbs do not automatically guarantee that the text is representative of the best the genre has to offer.

Spinrad (1990:221-222) quite correctly declares that

Science fiction ... is an evolutionarily inevitable literary mode with its roots in the rise of the Age of Reason and its *raison d'être* in the replacement of the lost fantasy landscapes beyond the sea with the scientifically plausible wonderlands beyond the bounds of the quotidian present ... what science fiction should be is one of our culture's main means for pondering not only the future consequences of what we are doing now but the effects of these inevitable, unpredictable changes on the human spirit. And since these enormities are absolutely central to the very survival of our species, our culture requires such literature, requires such a science fiction, at its intellectual core ... in the real world, as I would imagine this book has made all too clear, SF is a commercial publishing genre, and science fiction that even tries to tackle issues of central social concerns, while it certainly exists, is only a small portion of the total product, and, buried as it is amidst the rocket-and-ray-gun packaging and fannish fads, seldom comes to the serious attention of the intellectual mainstream of cultural life.

Spinrad (1990) is being overly-harsh in his judgement that science fiction for the thinking person is only a minor segment of the genre. Most works of science fiction are still treating the central premise of science fiction: the tenuous position of humanity in the

universe. The warning that, commercialized and shallow science fiction exists, should, however, be headed by the discerning selector, whose objective should at all times be to select the best in the genre in order to best serve the needs of the public library patron. The genre has expanded enormously in both volume and depth and selectors have ample good-quality science fiction to choose from. Lurid, badly-written, irrational and weak imitations should be avoided at all costs. The necessity for the public library selector to know science fiction and evaluate texts personally, whenever possible, is underlined by Spinrad's (1990) findings.

11.8 Use of selection aids

Analysis of the mail questionnaire sent to fifty-three metropolitan and regional public library services (cf. paragraph 10.6.12 and Table 10.4) showed respondents indicating that 62,7 % of their selection of science fiction being effected by means of reviews, as opposed to in-house criteria (10,4 %), publishers' blurbs (7,8 %), suppliers' selections (5,6 %), blanket orders/standing orders (4 %), jobbers' catalogues (3,9 %) and judging by title (1 %).

The observation has been made above (cf. paragraphs 11.5), that the public library selector should whenever possible personally evaluate items. It must, however, be conceded that this will not always be possible, especially in the smaller public library, where the hard-pressed selector will have manifold other tasks and responsibilities. Inevitably the selector will be making use of selection aids such as reviews of new works coming onto the market. Book reviews of any sorts may not be the ideal method of getting information on a book, but in the absence of a better method, and with the difficulties inherent in fiction selection in general, the public library selector should make the best of what is available (Dixon 1986d:139).

Atkinson (1981:23) concurs that it is a fact that reviews are read by book selectors, and that the balance of opinions thus provided, assists towards the librarian's total picture of what is being published currently.

What should a selector expect to find in a good review? Gardner (1981:118) summarizes these aspects as being:

- (i) A description of the contents of a work, i.e. what it is about.
- (ii) An indication of the essence and quality of the work: in the case of fiction this will involve a discussion of the style the author has employed.
- (iii) An evaluation of the inherent value of the work.
- (iv) A comparison with other works on the same topic or in the same field. In fiction the question of the reviewer's taste will come into play, a most difficult question as the area is so subjective. The reader of the review is entitled to accept that the reviewer will be acquainted with the major novels of the past, and able to make judicious comparisons and judgements based on a knowledge of previous accomplishments of a particular author(s). For selectors the fourth element is a *sine qua non*, since the selector is not selecting books in a vacuum, but is adding on to an existing collection. The failure to compare a new book with others already in existence denies the librarian an essential element needed for judicious selection (Gardner 1981:118). The selector should therefore be discerning and cautious in utilizing reviews.

Smith (1992:205) finds that the standard reviewing sources used by public libraries to select fiction do not always provide adequate coverage of all popular genres, and that public libraries do not always utilize available sources:

A telephone survey of six urban North Carolina public libraries revealed that only one library subscribed to **Science Fiction Chronicle** but that it did not use this publication for selection. Another library subscribed to the **New York Review of Science Fiction**, and the library did consult it for selection purposes. If these six libraries are typical, it can be inferred that it is not standard practice in North Carolina's public libraries to consult genre specific sources for selection purposes.

The following are recommended specialist sources for reviews on works of science fiction and critical and scholarly articles on all aspects of the genre.

Science Fiction Chronicle

The New York Review of Science Fiction

Science-Fiction Studies

Extrapolation: A Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy

Foundation: Review of Science Fiction

Tangent

Locus

Science Fiction Eye

Nova Express

The last two have of late been publishing irregularly, and are not always available.

The following journals covering all genres of fiction and popular fiction including science fiction, can also be recommended:

Publishers Weekly

Kirkus Reviews

Booklist

Library Journal

11.9 Reference works

The mail questionnaire sent to forty North American metropolitan and regional public library services and three Canadian services (cf. paragraph 10.6.16) found that a substantial majority, viewed the available reference works as satisfactory. The works cited by respondents as being most useful, are listed hereunder in their latest editions together with further works cited by respondents or as selected by this researcher. These reference works have been listed by the researcher in descending order of importance as follows:

Science Fiction: The Illustrated Encyclopaedia (1995), edited by J. Clute.
Cape Town: Human & Rousseau.

The Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction (1993), edited by J. Clute and P. Nicholls. London: Orbit.

Anatomy of Wonder, 4th edition (1995), edited by N. Barron. New York: Bowker.

Trillion Year Spree: The History of Science Fiction (1986), by B.W. Aldiss. London: Grafton.

Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature (1992), edited by R. Reginald *et al.* Detroit: Gale.

The Ultimate Guide to Science Fiction (1990), by D. Pringle. New York: Pharos.

The Best in Science Fiction: winners and nominees of the major awards in science fiction (1993), by A. Guillemette. New York: [s.n.].

The New Encyclopaedia of science fiction (1988), by J.E. Gunn. New York: L. Viking.

Readers' Guide to Twentieth-century Science Fiction (1989), edited by M. Fletcher. Chicago: American Library Association.

More than 100 Woman Science Fiction Writers (1988), edited by S. Yntema. Freedom, Calif.: Crossing Press.

Twentieth-century Science Fiction Writers (1986), edited by C.C. Smith. Chicago: St James Press.

Science Fiction: The 100 Best Novels; an English-language selection 1949 - 1984 , (1985), by D. Pringle. London: Xanadu.

The Science Fiction Source Book (1984), edited by D. Wingrove. Harlow, UK: Longman.

Science Fiction Writers: Critical Studies of the Major Authors from the Early Nineteenth Century to the Present Day (1982), edited by E.F. Bleiler. New York: Scribner.

Science Fiction and Fantasy Reference Index, 1878 - 1985: An International Author and Subject Index to History and Criticism (1987), edited by H.W. Hall. Detroit: Gale Research.

Fantastic Voyages: Learning Science through Science Fiction Films (1994), edited by L.W. Dubeck *et al.* New York: [s.n.].

Reference Guide to Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror (1992), by M. Burgess. Englewood, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited.

The Bloomsbury Good Reading Guide to Science Fiction and Fantasy (1989), by M.H. Zool. Bungay, UK: Bloomsbury.

It is recommended that the selector utilize at least the first six reference works listed, as aids to selection. These are all reputable sources which will provide well-researched and useful background information on the most prominent works and authors in the genre.

11.10 Collections of shorter works of science fiction

Many excellent anthologies of shorter works of science fiction are published annually, of which a few of the most prominent over the last few years are:

Nebula Awards 30 (1996), edited by P. Sargent. New York: Harcourt Brace.

The Year's Best Science Fiction: Twelfth Annual Collection (1995), edited by G. Dozois. New York: St. Martin's.

Nebula Awards 29 (1995), edited by G.J. Morrow. New York: Harcourt Brace.

Nebula Award-Winning Novellas (1995), edited by M.H. Greenberg. New York: Barnes & Noble.

The New Hugo Winners (1995), edited by C. Willis. New York: Baen.

The Best from Fantasy & Science Fiction: A 45th Anniversary Anthology (1995), edited by E.L. Ferman & K.K. Rusch. New York: St. Martin's.

New Eves: SF About the Extraordinary Women of Today and Tomorrow (1995), edited by J. Frank *et al.* New York: [s.n.].

New Legends: The original SF anthology for the 90s and beyond (1995), edited by G. Bear. London: Legend.

Modern Classic Short Novels of Science Fiction (1995), edited by G. Dozois. New York: St. Martin's.

Future Primitive: The New Ecotoias (1995). New York: Tor.

Omni Visions Two (1994), edited by E. Datlow. New York: Omni Books.

Tomorrow Sucks (1995), edited by G. Cox & T.K.F. Weiskopf. New York: Baen.

The Norton Book of Science Fiction: North American Science Fiction, 1960-1990 (1990), edited by U.K. Le Guin and B. Attebery. New York: Norton.

11.11 **Awards for acclaimed works of science fiction**

Throughout the world there are many awards given annually, or periodically, to authors for novels, novellas or short stories judged outstanding in the period under review. Such awards, especially the Hugo and Nebula Awards, are reliable indicators that the specific work is of superior quality. Criticism is sometimes expressed by disgruntled authors and/or critics that the awards are not always judged absolutely objectively. This is to be expected,

as choices for mainstream literary awards are likewise often criticized. For the purposes of selection, these awards can be accepted at face value, as tangible proof that the work itself is of superior quality and can even be selected, without individual evaluation by the selector, should time not permit evaluation. These awards are mostly awarded in the United States, unless otherwise stated.

(a) The Hugo Award:

The correct title for the Hugo Award is The Science Fiction Achievement Award, although the word "Hugo" is universally used, in honour of pioneering science fiction editor Hugo Gernsback. The Hugo Award has existed since 1953, and is voted on annually at the World Science Fiction Convention. The first Hugo ever awarded was for Alfred Bester's novel The Demolished Man (1953). The Hugo is for the best new novel, novella, novelette and short story and has also on occasion been awarded for best science fiction magazine.

(b) The Nebula Award:

The Nebula Award is presented annually by the Science Fiction Writers of America. The members of this association have nominated and voted the award of the Nebula since 1966. The first recipient was Frank Herbert for the novel Dune (1965). The Nebula is awarded for best new novel, novella, novelette and short story, and can also be awarded to a distinguished writer. It was awarded to Isaac Asimov as the Grand Master of 1989 in view of his distinguished contribution to the genre.

(c) The John W. Campbell Memorial Award:

The John W. Campbell Memorial Award is presented each spring since 1973 for the best novel of the previous year, with Barry Malzberg winning the first Campbell Memorial Award for Beyond Apollo (1972). Named for the most celebrated editor in the genre, there is also a second award bearing his name.

(d) The John W. Campbell Award:

The John W. Campbell Award is presented annually, by popular vote, at the World Science Fiction Convention to the best new writer. Jerry Pournelle was the first recipient in 1973.

(e) The Phillip K. Dick Award:

The Phillip K. Dick Award is given annually for the best book to have originally appeared in paperback, and is named for the great visionary author.

(f) The World Fantasy Award:

Conferred by a panel of judges, The World Fantasy Award for the best new novel is announced at the Annual World Fantasy Convention, but is often awarded to works of science fiction, e.g. Glimpses (1993), by cyberpunk author Lewis Shiner.

(g) The Arthur C. Clarke Award:

Awarded for the best new science fiction novel published in Britain, this prize was founded by the celebrated British author Arthur C. Clarke.

(h) The James Tiptree, Jr. Award:

Named in honour of the noted author Alice Sheldon who wrote under this pseudonym, the Award is for best new novel or shorter work of science fiction.

(i) The Compton Crook Award:

Is normally awarded annually for the best new novel.

(j) The Theodore Sturgeon Award:

Is conferred upon the author of the best new short story and named in honour of the well-known author Theodore Sturgeon.

(k) The British Science Fiction Awards:

Awarded by the British Science Fiction Association at its Easter convention, the categories awarded are for the best new novel and best new short work of science fiction.

11.12 **Leading science fiction magazines**

Science fiction magazines have traditionally published the latest short fiction of new and/or leading authors, and public library selectors could subscribe to leading magazines, in order to

- (a) Keep abreast of latest developments in the genre and read the works of current masters and emerging new talents.

- (b) Several issues of a magazine could be bound and made available for lending to patrons.

Leading magazines to which public libraries could subscribe are:

Asimov's Science Fiction

The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction

Analog

Amazing

Interzone

Tomorrow

Science Fiction Age

In order to illustrate the importance of science fiction published in magazines, it should be considered that during the year 1994 the above-mentioned magazines published new short stories and novelettes by acknowledged masters, as well as new talents in the genre, such as Brian W. Aldiss, Gregory Benford, Michael Bishop, Terry Bisson, Ben Bova, John Brunner, Greg Egan, Michael F. Flynn, Lisa Goldstein, George Guthridge, Charles L. Harness, Alexander Jablokoy, Ursula K. Le Guin, Jack McDevitt, Terry A. McGarry, Barry N. Malzberg, Michael H. Payne, Mike Resnick, Brian Stableford, Norman Spinrad and many others (Dozois 1995:xvii).

Aldiss, Benford, Brunner, Le Guin, Stableford and Spinrad are among the best-known authors and critics in the genre.

Selectors are therefore advised to subscribe if possible to one or more of these above-mentioned magazines. Prices are fairly reasonable in the American economic context, for example both Asimov's Science Fiction and Analog can be ordered at (US)\$ 39,97 for thirteen issues.

11.13 **Regular user needs studies**

The selector requires advance warning of user needs in order to be fully cognizant, when selecting, of the specific reading needs of his or her patrons. An annual or biennial study is recommended, which could be carried out cost-effectively by means of a questionnaire handed out at the loans desk to patrons taking out science fiction. The questionnaire, preferably not longer than two pages at the most, should seek information on which authors and sub-genres are most preferred, as well as requesting whether patrons have any specific requests to make in regard of their needs for specific works of science fiction not thus far provided for. Analysis of the data thus garnered, as demonstrated in paragraph 10.6, will provide a clear picture of reading needs. The analysis of the response to the mail questionnaire sent to public library services in America made it clear that only 15 % of respondents effect user studies, and that only on an infrequent basis. User studies are *crucially important* as careful analysis of the response will enable selectors to provide best quality works of preferred authors in each sub-genre of science fiction. Regular user studies will also enable selectors to draw up, and maintain a profile of the user of science fiction which will prove useful for the optimal selection of science fiction. A method of recording circulation statistics should be devised in order to determine the volume of science fiction lending, as well as to establish which authors, works and sub-genres are needed by users. Community involvement such as a permanent suggestions box for users to nominate books for selection should be solicited.

11.14 **Development and maintainance of a balanced core collection**

Selectors should not just consider current works for acquisition, but seek to develop a balanced core collection covering all phases of the genre. Some of the earliest works of science fiction, such as those by H.G. Wells and Jules Verne still make enjoyable reading today and selectors should ensure that older works are included in collections. The same holds true for certain works from every phase of the genre. Many of the older works are

being reissued due to popular demand, and selectors should take advantage of this in order to augment their science fiction collections.

The works of acknowledged older masters of the genre are reprinted at regular intervals, e.g. Heinlein's popular novel Starship Troopers (1959) which was reprinted eight times between 1959 and 1986 in the United Kingdom alone.

11.15 **Knowledge of science fiction as a genre**

It is incumbent upon selectors to study the origins of the genre and its distinct phases of development should they not be knowledgeable in this field. Selectors should peruse science fiction journals and criticism on a continuous basis in order to remain current. This is stated in full realization of the reality that selectors will have many other pressing duties and professional commitments. It is, however, *vital* that selectors be aware of past and current developments and trends as selection must optimally take place against this background of familiarity with the genre.

11.16 **Authoritative and current selection aids**

The latest reference works should be utilized wherever possible, e.g. Science Fiction: The Illustrated Encyclopaedia (1995), edited by John Clute. Older reference works and handbooks covering certain periods will also remain useful, e.g. Trillion Year Spree: The History of Science Fiction (1986), by B.W. Aldiss.

11.17 **Separate shelving for the science fiction collection**

The science fiction selection should be shelved separately for the convenience of patrons. Separate shelving also facilitates the overview by the selector on the collection, completeness and gaps to be filled. The works of fantasy in this collection of the public

library should preferably be shelved separately, next to the science fiction collection for the convenience of the users who do not view science fiction and fantasy as separate categories or genres.

11.18 **Evaluation of individual works**

Selectors should preferably, or at least wherever possible, evaluate works individually. Works could also be assigned to non-selector librarians for evaluation and report-back to a selection committee. This may probably only be possible in larger public libraries. A joint selection committee could be scheduled to meet at regular intervals.

11.19 **Scorecard or other standardized format with set criteria for evaluation**

It is essential that selectors have a scorecard and set of criteria specifically designed for the evaluation of science fiction, as this will be the most utilitarian in horizontally comparing individual works. Paragraph 12.3.1 and Table 12.1 furnish a set of specially-designed criteria set within a scorecard format for easy utilization, as well as eight practical examples of how to evaluate works of science fiction by means of this scorecard.

11.20 **Community involvement in selection**

Knowledgeable or interested patrons could also be invited to assist in the selection of science fiction. Several science fiction novels have been made into excellent films such as Blade Runner, Dune and The Man Who Fell To Earth, to name but a few. Such films could be acquired on video cassette, and a Science Fiction Club started with a viewing, discussion and reading groups in order to engage community involvement. Such community involvement will provide invaluable feedback to the selector in regard of user needs, and will assist selectors in the process of selection as users will feel free to nominate works they may have noticed in bookshops and press reviews.

11.21 **Separate budget allocation for science fiction**

It is advisable that a separate and standing budget allocation be created in order to ensure that the selector of science fiction be able to steadily develop the science fiction collection, instead of having to compete with other popular categories for funds.

11.22 **Training of public librarians/selectors in science fiction**

Where feasible, training in science fiction, whether formal or informal, should be arranged for public librarians/selectors. A substantial majority (84 %) of the North American public library services polled by mail questionnaire replied that such training should be given to public librarians.

11.23 **Solving the quality versus demand dilemma**

Selectors in public libraries have been faced with the ongoing quality versus demand conundrum since the nineteenth century. The selector of science fiction does, however, have the advantage over other popular genres such as romances and narrative of the American West, as science fiction has become a sophisticated, richly-textured (lately also post-modern) genre with quality in depth within every one of its sub-genres. The selector, therefore, has the advantage of being able to select high-quality works in every subdivision of the genre, from Alien Encounters to Hard Science Fiction to Alternate Society. Even the sub-genre of space adventure/space opera, traditionally considered to be the most unsophisticated and crudely-written in the early years of the genre, i.e. as exemplified in some of the works of A.E. Van Vogt, is now a sophisticated and stylish branch of the genre. The space adventures (or 'space opera' as some critics and *aficionados* still playfully call this sub-genre) is written by authors of the literary calibre of C.J. Cherryh, Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle, and Colin Greenland to name but a few, and have attained an excellent quality.

The selector is therefore in a position to provide as many high-quality works in every sub-division of the genre as he or she wishes, without having to include works of lesser quality. On the whole, the inherent and sophisticated quality of the genre, especially since the advent of the nineteen sixties, works very much in favour of the selector; as works of questionable quality which only imitate the conventions of the genre, can immediately be eliminated from the selection process.

11.24 Conclusion

This chapter has presented guiding principles for the selection of science fiction covering such necessary background aspects as the need for a policy statement, popularity and circulation, profile of the reader of science fiction and the increasing demand for this genre. Guiding principles were also furnished in regard of the various sub-genres of science fiction, as well as in the recognition of poor-quality science fiction by the selector. The utilization of selection aids such as press and journal reviews was discussed, as well as the value of the various literary awards. Guidance was also presented as regards the most authoritative reference works available to selectors.

The chapter concluded with the elucidation of several guiding principles for the selection of science fiction and *inter alia* emphasized the need for user studies at regular intervals and the necessity for selectors to be knowledgeable of science fiction as a genre. The solving of the quality versus demand dilemma was also commented on.

Chapter 12 represents the concluding chapter of this study.

CHAPTER 12

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 Introduction

This study set itself the problem of researching the selection of science fiction within the context of the public library, and divided this field of research into several sub-problems for study, which accordingly formed the successive phases of research:

- (i) What are the cultural, societal and literary origins of science fiction as a popular fiction genre?
- (ii) What are the distinct phases of development of science fiction as a popular fiction genre?
- (iii) What is the characteristic essence of science fiction which would affect its evaluation? Are conventional literary criteria suitable for evaluation or should alternative criteria be developed in this study?
- (iv) Is there satisfactory theory at hand to illustrate the science fiction selection process? If not, can a model be designed for greater clarity regarding the selection process?
- (v) What is current practice as regards the selection of science fiction in the public library?
- (vi) What guiding principles can be formulated for science fiction selection in the public library?

This concluding chapter reports the conclusions reached after thorough study of the above-mentioned sub-problems, and submits certain recommendations regarding science fiction selection which are based on these findings.

12.2 Findings

At this juncture of the study, it is therefore opportune to present certain conclusions reached during the above-mentioned successive phases of research.

12.2.1 Cultural, societal and literary origins of science fiction

The cultural, societal and literary origins of science fiction can be found in the great socio-economic upheaval brought about by the coming of modern industry, democracy and mass society to Western Europe and North America during the second half of the eighteenth century. Modern industrial society and technology and the advent of public education led to the rise of popular culture, mass readership and the proliferation of popular fiction novels. The literary origins of science fiction as a genre and a progeny of technology can be found in the Industrial Revolution. The first recognizable work of science fiction appeared on 11 March 1818: Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus.

12.2.2 Phases of developments of science fiction

After an auspicious literary beginning through the pens of gifted authors such as Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Edgar Allan Poe and the brilliant H.G. Wells the genre found itself during the nineteen thirties and forties mainly confined to popular magazines, overemphasizing science to the detriment of literary quality, descriptive power and intellectual structure. By the nineteen fifties science fiction authors were writing in good workmanlike literary fashion, increasingly featuring engrossing political, religious and philosophic themes.

The nineteen sixties would witness the New Wave: authors for whom literary style and thematic pessimism were guiding stars to steer by, combined with originality of thought, sophistication and polish. The eighties and nineties witnessed further sophisticated and high-quality works of science fiction, notably the cyberpunk movement featuring high-technology, hard-boiled plots, frightening corporate dictatorships in a near-anarchic milieu of social decay. Since the nineteen sixties science fiction has demonstrated breadth of subject, depth of treatment and richly-textured language and technique. Science fiction was, in the course of the twentieth century influenced, if belatedly, by two broad cultural dominants: modernism and post-modernism with their respective epistemological and ontological strategies.

In sum, contemporary science fiction as a popular genre is a significant body of work within present-day fiction, viewed by critics as being on the cusp of post-modernism, and a supreme expression of late capitalism.

12.2.3 Characteristic essence of science fiction and evaluation criteria

Science fiction, in its traditional of imaginative response to science and technology exceeds, in depth and sophistication, the all-encompassing formulae of other popular fiction genres. In contrast to other popular genres, science fiction has no comparably explicit formulae which can be identified as characteristic of this genre, as it possesses a variety of simultaneously available formulae. Science fiction furthermore demonstrates a megatextual character: an own generic megatext or encyclopaedia of imaginary words, tropes, fabulata, linguistic innovations, and its own distinct reading protocol.

Research clearly showed that criteria for evaluating science fiction would differ significantly, in certain aspects, from conventional literary criteria; as the assumptions of mainstream fiction cannot in all cases be applied to science fiction.

It became clear that no accepted evaluative criteria exist, and accordingly a set of primary and secondary criteria was compiled for the evaluation of science fiction.

12.2.4 Theory and models pertaining to fiction selection

Twentieth century theory relating to fiction selection was examined including specific aspects such as public library objectives, inherent value of fiction texts, quality versus demand, and community studies. General theory in this field yields valuable knowledge and insight but, on the whole, is not always adequate in guiding selection practices and explaining or predicting phenomena.

Models pertaining to fiction selection were examined, notably those of Atkinson (1984), McGrath (1985), Rutledge and Swindler (1987), and Oosthuizen (1991, 1994). It was found that each of these models illustrates one or more important aspects of selection and the interplay of elements involved.

It was found that there is no existing model for the selection of science fiction, a definite need which should be addressed in this study.

12.2.5 Current practice in science fiction selection: an empirical study

A survey of American public library science fiction selection practices found that respondents evince an excellent practice knowledge of the genre itself, authors and guides, as well as a highly user-oriented approach; articulating their mission as the provision of fiction to the user. Little or no personal evaluation of individual works of science fiction is done, and few respondents utilize separate criteria (or standardized scoring for evaluation of science fiction). The few criteria mentioned are vague and generalized. The majority of selectors rely heavily on press and journal reviews as selection aids. *The survey confirmed that a vacuum exists as regards the use of specified criteria for the evaluation and selection of works of science fiction in the context of the public library.*

12.2.6 Guiding principles for science fiction selection

It was found that certain guiding principles could be formulated for the selection of science fiction, covering such aspects as a user profile, formulation of policy statements, distinct sub-genres of science fiction, identification of poor quality and imitative science fiction, use of selection aids, literary awards, user needs studies and the quality versus demand conundrum.

12.3 **Recommendations**

Study of theory relating to the selection of fiction (chapters 8 and 9), as well as an empirical investigation into actual and current practices in science fiction selection, have identified elements and guiding principles which can now be utilized in science fiction selection. As previously established (cf. paragraphs 12.2.4 and 12.2.5) there is no specific model for science fiction selection. Accordingly this vacuum will be addressed in the form of a model specifically designed for the illustration of the science fiction selection process within the context of the public library.

12.3.1 A model for the selection of science fiction

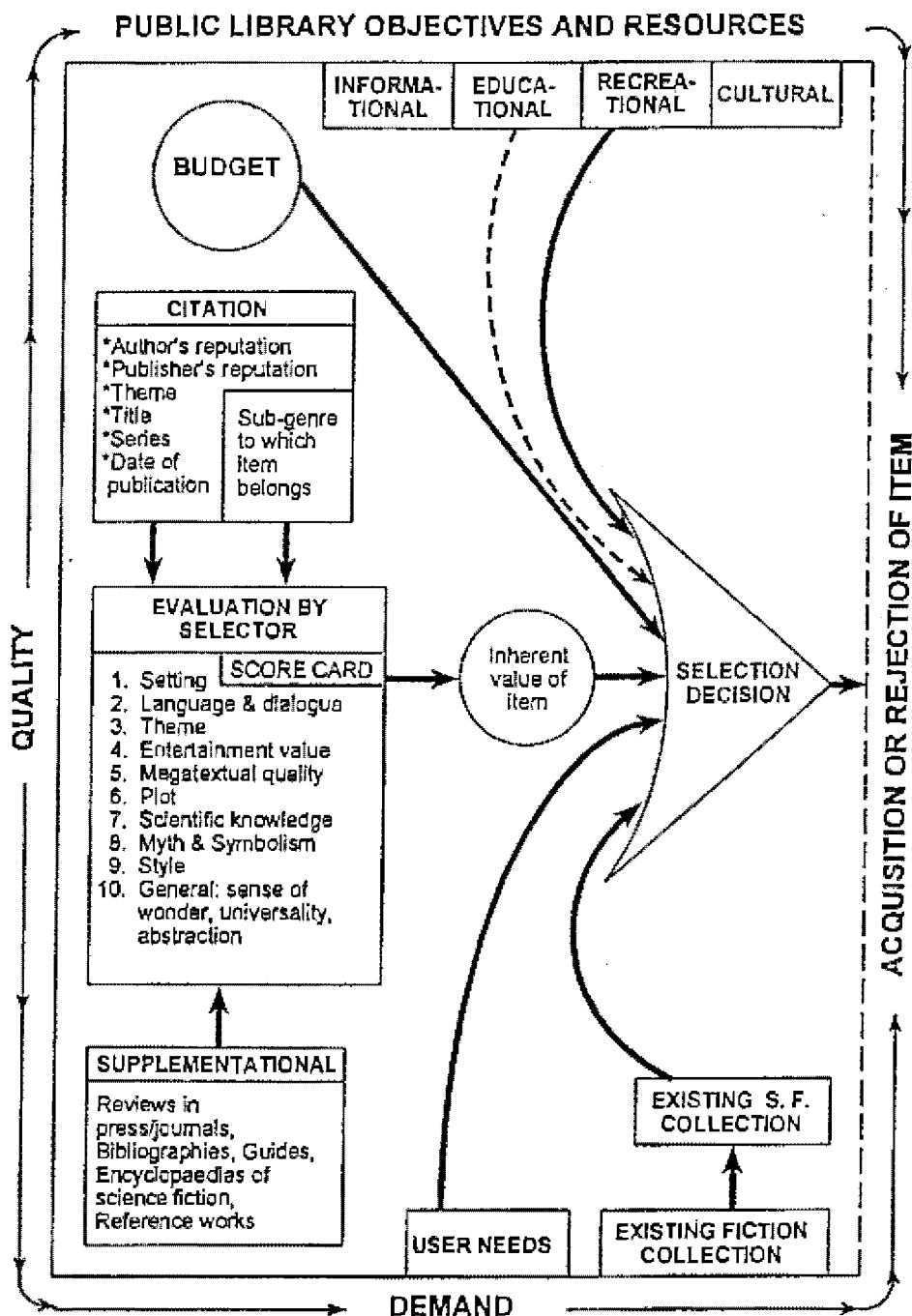
Figure 12.1 below presents a model for the selection of science fiction within the context of the public library, as designed by this researcher.

The model furnishes a visual portrayal of the science fiction selection process, and includes the major factors which come into play from the moment the item is being considered by the selector for inclusion in the library collection. Apart from the mechanism whereby the inherent literary value of the item is determined (i.e. consideration of the citational details, use of supplemental sources and evaluation by means of a scorecard with set criteria),

contextual factors are also included. These include public library objectives, budgetary influence, existing collection, and most importantly, user needs.

FIGURE 12.1

A model for the selection of science fiction



The elucidation of this model will take place in the following sequence:

- The objectives of the South African public library
- Evaluation of individual works of science fiction by the selector in order to determine its inherent value
- Utilization of the scorecard: testing and applicability
- Budget
- User needs
- Existing fiction collection and existing science fiction collection
- Selection decision

12.3.1.1 Objectives of the contemporary South African public library

The public library in South Africa (cf. paragraph 8.4.1), has up to now been modelled on the traditional Anglo-American public library, geared to meet the informational, educational and recreational reading needs of the mostly educated middle class user from the developed sector of South Africa, because of historical societal and political reasons. In order to further explain the factors included in the proposed model which relate to public library objectives, it is necessary to consider the present and projected future objectives of the public library in South Africa. The generally-accepted objectives of the traditional Anglo-American public library are:

- (a) Information: this objective is common to public, academic and special libraries, with information needs in public libraries being more diffuse and less clearly defined than in academic or special libraries.
- (b) Culture: the provision of cultural reading is a major function of public libraries: it involves the pursuit of knowledge, truth, beauty or goodness, even though it is always mixed up with other motivations such as the search for social importance, status, self-realisation and the comfort of a dream world. Such reading is judged to include works of literature, art and philosophy and may also cover history, biography and topography.
- (c) Education: in the sense of informal self-education or self-development, the provision of educational material has always been very much part of the Anglo-American public library's brief. (The provision of educational textbooks is not normally seen as part of the objectives of Anglo-American public libraries). Science fiction due to its unique characteristics as a genre is, as illustrated in paragraph 3.7, extremely well-suited for self-education as it thrives on the *Gedankenexperiment*, reflects crucial contemporary and future societal issues and furnishes an excellent perspective on scientific advances. Science fiction can also be utilized as a very effective teaching instrument.
- (d) Recreation: most Anglo-American public library users read recreationally at one time or another, and large numbers of people read almost exclusively in this way. In Britain, well over half of public library issues consists of material which can be termed recreational: popular fiction and some popular non-fiction. The provision of recreational material has thus become an increasingly important objective.

- (e) Research: the use of public libraries for research material varies a great deal according to the size and quality of the individual public library collection, but will be unlikely to form a significant part of the collection. This objective is therefore discounted in the model.

The perspective on the general objectives of the South African public library would differ in some respects. For example, in respect of the informational objective. Apart from traditional information services for the user from the developed sector, specially-designed services for the user from the developing sector would be needed such as community information service, including survival information, repackaging of information in other easily-accessible formats and a referral service to assist enquiries from citizens. The educational objective would ideally be seen as including support for users engaged in formal and/or informal education. The initiation of and support for literary programmes would be called for as well as the provision of study areas, in the library, for students at secondary and tertiary level as mentioned by Oosthuizen (1991:281).

The justified view that the Anglo-American public library does not normally see the provision of educational textbooks as falling within its terms of reference, would not hold true for the South African library where public libraries in developing communities could quite conceivably be faced with such needs, especially in the case of part-time students or students from developing communities approaching their local public libraries for material for assignments. The need to provide literary training and to provide for those with deficient education with a school for the masses is a great opportunity for the public librarian (cf. paragraph 8.4.1). Librarians in South African public libraries are becoming aware of the cognitive needs of developing communities, especially the desire for formal and informal education in these communities.

This researcher foresees, as stated in paragraph 8.4.1, that the eventual mission of the South African public library will be a median between the two extremes of the traditional Anglo-American public library catering mostly for the informational, educational,

recreational and cultural needs of the educated middle classes on the one hand; and the concept that these objectives have become irrelevant and obsolete in a developing country and should be replaced by the objectives of informing and educating the masses on the other. It is foreseen that the public libraries in the metropolitan and suburban areas of South Africa will have a large and ever-growing proportion of educated and professional middle-class users in need of the traditional informational, educational, recreational and cultural services of the public library. Such educated middle-class and professional users will conceivably also *inter alia* fit the profile of the science fiction reader (cf. paragraph 11.4 and Table 11.1). Public libraries in developing and disadvantaged communities will quite likely, in view of the pressing needs of the community for educational upliftment and community-oriented services, not have the same need of recreational reading.

The educated middle class, the traditional patron of the public library, is however growing rapidly, as more and more South Africans achieve secondary and tertiary educational qualifications. (The University of South Africa is a glowing example with 127 000 students in 1996). The reading of fiction can exercise a positive impact on local communities (as mentioned in paragraph 3.5.6), as it helps establish and maintain the reading habit thus promoting a high rate of literary and personal self-development in communities (Goodall & Kinnell 1992:211-229).

The retention of the recreational reading objective is in any case a *sine qua non* for the selection of and continued provision of works of science fiction by the public library. The preceding remarks and views by experts in this field concur in justifying the inclusion of the recreational objective and the informal education objective (i.e. where people read for self-development), in this micro-level model for the selection of science fiction in the public library. These observations may be of use in the observation of the continuing and very necessary debate regarding the future objectives of public libraries within the South African context.

All activities of the public library including selection should be determined by its objectives. The selection of science fiction is thus effected, and reflected in the model, as being undertaken in terms of the recreational and informal educational objectives, which are a *sine qua non* for the selection of science fiction.

12.3.1.2 Evaluation of individual works of science fiction by the selector in order to determine its inherent value

The selector will commence the evaluation by examining the citational details of the work in question: author, publisher, title, date of publication, and theme as indicated in the promotional summary or “blurb” on the inside or back of the work’s dust jacket. The reputation of both author and publisher, if known, will be central elements in the citational details. If not known, such information can be elicited from supplemental sources such as press and journal reviews, bibliographies, guides, encyclopaedias and reference works (cf. paragraphs 11.8 and 11.9).

The selector will also give consideration to the sub-genre to which the work of science fiction belongs (cf. paragraph 11.6), such as hard science fiction, post-holocaust tales, time travel, feminist science fiction and the various other sub-genres. The informed selector will know which sub-genres are most in demand in the specific user community. The sub-genre per se thus functions, within this model, as a *de facto* citational datum, in the same way as author, title, publisher and other citational details.

Having ascertained the above-mentioned citational and supplemental details and background, the selector now proceeds to evaluate the inherent worth of the work under consideration by means of the specially-designed scorecard and its criteria derived from and relating to the unique characteristics of science fiction (cf. paragraph 7.7 to 7.9). The application of these criteria culminates in the inherent value of the work of science fiction expressed as a percentage, thus assigning a concrete numeric value to the inherent value of

the item, and allowing the selector to horizontally compare all works of science fiction under consideration.

12.3.1.3 Utilization of the scorecard: testing and applicability

Chapter 7 was devoted to the determination of the literary essence of science fiction as a genre *which would influence its evaluation and thus ultimately its selection*. Certain criteria were postulated for the evaluation of science fiction based on the unique characteristics of the genre. Several of these criteria such as the work's megatextual quality and use of fabulata, the grounding of the story in scientific knowledge, the level of distraction and the universality and treatment of formula(e) are unique criteria chosen specifically for this purpose and therefore not found in other models for the evaluation of more conventional categories of fiction. Several conventional criteria for the evaluation of fiction such as language and dialogue, setting and style are also identified. Oosthuizen (1991:3-5), for instance, utilizes the criteria of character, plot, time, space and language to evaluate fiction texts.

Having thus compiled a set of criteria for a suitable scorecard in order to be able to evaluate the inherent value of a work of science fiction by means of unique criteria derived from and suitable to the characteristics of this genre, this specially-designed instrument can accordingly be presented as an integral part of the model. Table 12.1 reflects the scorecard in compacted format.

TABLE 12.1

Scorecard for the evaluation of individual works of science fiction

CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
Setting: /5	Does text make reader see alien planets, space, the unknown or changes on Earth?
Language & dialogue: /5	Does language and description contribute to overall effect, future or alien societies, vivid imagery? Does dialogue mimic and conjure up alien accents, changes in speech and scenes of the future in believable manner.
Theme: /5	Does the theme reflect the idea itself as the hero? Does theme reflect SF's unique premise: man's precarious position in the cosmos?
Megatextual quality & fabulata: /5	Is this work representative of SF's unique encyclopaedia of imaginary words, semantic tools, linguistic innovation? Is the work worthy of SF's specialized mode of writing and reading? Will the work contribute to the S.F. collective megatext?
Entertainment value: /5	Is the work enjoyable reading? Does it live up to SF's reputation as a playful genre which is fun to read?
Plot: /5	Is the plot exciting, interesting, causal, gripping?
Scientific knowledge: /5	Is the scientific knowledge base of the work plausible? Does it respect present-day scientific principles?
Myth & symbolism: /5	Is it a good example of SF's unique mythology and symbolism of the human facing the universe? Is it symbolic of man's aspirations and upward struggle?
Style: /5	Does it have credible own literary style, focus, details, tone and stylistic character? Does the style enhance the narrative structure and theme?
General: /5	SF has many simultaneously-available formulae. If there is a recognizable formula, is it treated well and originally, and not just duplicated? Does the work conjure up a sense of wonder without sacrificing the hard edge of reality? Is narrative too didactic? (note that SF as genre tends towards this but it should never be overly explicit). Is there a moment of illumination and a suspension of disbelief? Is there a high level of abstraction and universality, e.g. is the fate of humanity at stake?
TOTAL: /50	
SCORING VALUE: 5 = excellent, 4 = very good, 3 = fair value, 2 = below average, 1 = unacceptable	

12.3.1.3.1 *Testing the scorecard*

In order to test the practical application of the scorecard, evaluations of eight science fiction novels follow below. Each evaluation will be preceded by a synopsis and points awarded are listed after each separate criterion.

a *The Lincoln Hunters* (1958), by Wilson Tucker

The novel *The Lincoln Hunters* depicts a ruthlessly regimented world, some six hundred years hence, when time travel to the past is possible and is utilized to help historians research the past, or for very rich people to satisfy their curiosity regarding certain historical events. The time travel agency utilizes individualistic actors and other nonconformists ill-suited to regimented society, for their ability and willingness to learn and evaluate archaic languages, dress and customs. The protagonist is Ben Steward who is sent to record a lost speech, made by Abraham Lincoln in 1856, together with a small team of back-up actors. The novel cleverly plays on the paradoxes and anomalies of time travel, and ends in Steward faking his death and remaining in 1856 America, an individualistic and vigorous age much more suited to his personality, where he will be able to help affect the course of future history.

Evaluation:

- (i) Setting: Text is very evocative as it very believably depicts the disparate worlds of 2578 and 1856 AD, together with believable social customs and details (4/5).

- (ii) Language and dialogue: Use of language and dialogue is excellent, as author has to depict futuristic use, as well as authentic nineteenth century speech and idiom (4/5).

- (iii) Theme: The concept of time travel and tampering with history is dynamic and dominant, reflecting man's precarious position in the universe (4/5).
- (iv) Megatextual quality and fabulata: The text is worthy of the genre's specialized mode of writing, although not as strong in this area as the New Wave and later post-modern SF, due to its very realistic tone (3/5).
- (v) Entertainment value: Most enjoyable reading with playful yet serious elements and historical quotes (5/5).
- (vi) Plot: Plot is interesting and makes exciting reading as the conclusion is never obvious (4/5).
- (vii) Scientific knowledge: Fair, although possible background explanation or technical details are kept to a minimum (3/5).
- (viii) Myth and symbolism: Text is symbolic of man's aspirations (3/5).
- (ix) Style: Style is credible, good literary focus, excellent small detail (4/5).
- (x) General: Excellent treatment of time travel *motif*, conjures up a very strong sense of wonder and speculation, but keeps the hard edge of reality (4/5).

Total: $38 \times 2 = 76 \%$.

b Pavane (1966), by Keith Roberts

The word 'pavane' denotes a stately dance in elaborate clothing, aptly chosen for this allohistory. It is set in England of 1968, but due to the assassination of Elizabeth I in 1588

the subsequent hegemony of Spain and the Inquisition, the Reformation and the Industrial Revolution did not take place, as all technological progress has been blocked by the Church and her ever-vigilant priesthood. This alternative England of 1968 is still almost medieval, with steam-driven tractors for long-distance haulage and semaphores for communication. Rebellion is in the air, however, and the novel follows the fate of several protagonists, male and female. The novel ends by posing, subtly, the question: is this repressive, steam-driven quasi-medieval world not perhaps still preferable to the horror of mass slaughter and nuclear Armageddon?

Evaluation:

- (i) Setting: Text is exceptional in its evocation of a changed alternate world which is completely believable (5/5).
- (ii) Language and dialogue: Both contribute brilliantly toward the evocation of an alien, yet still English society by means of word picture, accents, and almost lyrical prose (5/5).
- (iii) Theme: Exceptional balance with the philosophy of history as dominant, yet featuring strong elements of characterization - this artistic balance rarely found in science fiction (5/5).
- (iv) Megatextual quality and fabulata: Text is representative of SF's unique array of imaginary worlds and specialized mode of writing (3/5).
- (v) Entertainment value: Very entertaining, yet thoughtful reading (4/5).
- (vi) Plot: Exciting and causal (4/5).
- (vii) Scientific knowledge: Sound knowledge is displayed (4/5).

- (viii) Myth and symbolism: Very representative of man's aspirations and tenuous position in a dark universe (4/5).
- (ix) Style: Exquisite literary craftsmanship, focus, details, enhances the narrative structure and theme. Roberts is one of the finest and most stylish writers in the genre (5/5).
- (x) General: A very original treatment of the allohistoric concept, which conjures up a great sense of wonder without sacrificing the dark edge of reality. Very high-level suspension of disbelief due to very real alternate world created in this work (5/5).

Total: $44 \times 2 = 88 \%$.

c *Voice from Earth* (1972), by J.M. Graham

A colony of settlers on the planet Pharos, long cut off from Earth, which is believed to have been destroyed, finds a derelict ship, full of settlers in suspended animation, which had originally been dispatched soon after the landing of the first settlers. The settlers utilize this second ship to travel to Earth, and afterwards return to their own planet Pharos to find it destroyed by a nuclear civil war.

Evaluation:

- (i) Setting: Neither Pharos nor Earth is really conjured up effectively, Pharos does not even seem alien and the setting is unconvincing (2/5).
- (ii) Language and dialogue: Unconvincing, a character telephones another and upon hearing that he is not available: "Oh! Well, could you tell him there's

something on down at the Space Terminal". No future linguistic changes are even attempted or hinted at. No contribution towards the evocation of strangeness is made by the language (1/5).

- (iii) Theme: The author wishes to use the central idea as the hero of the story: space colonization, nuclear holocaust, colonists alone in the harsh universe, but it is weakly and unconvincingly presented (2/5).
- (iv) Megatextual quality and fabulata: Not representative at all of this unique quality and mode. It attempts to use dialogue and description are more suited to a realistic mystery story than a work of science fiction (1/5).
- (v) Entertainment value: Low, because of the above-mentioned unconvincing setting and language (1/5).
- (vi) Plot: Could be more exciting and interesting (3/5).
- (vii) Scientific knowledge: Fairly good detail given (3/5).
- (viii) Myth and symbolism: Not a very good example of man's unique mythology and aspiration due to its unconvincing presentation, more than the idea itself (2/5).
- (ix) Style: Text has no credible own style or focus on the small details which contribute towards a polished stylistic tone (1/5).
- (x) General: The possibility of conjuring up a sense of wonder is wasted, the text in places is wooden and didactic. There is no credible suspension of disbelief (1/5).

Total: $17 \times 2 = 34$ %.

d *The Sheep Look Up* (1974), by John Brunner

The Sheep Look Up is a novel of a polluted Earth slowly strangling to death in its own industrial and nuclear waste. People wear filter masks in the streets, even crops turn poisonous and society is collapsing into anarchy. One man, Austin Train, becomes a populist leader followed by millions of desperate, frightened people. He becomes an almost mythical symbol of resistance against the techno-bureaucratic corporate forces. The novel ends on a very dark note, with a quotation from Milton's *Lycidas*: "The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed/ But swoln [sic] with wind, and the rank mist they draw/ Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread".

Evaluation:

- (i) Setting: Excellent setting makes the reader implicitly believe in this changed, horrifying planet, brilliant descriptions, interspersed with a *collage* of advertisements, conversations, a laboratory report, headlines, excerpts from political speeches, together creating a very believable setting (4/5).
- (ii) Language and dialogue: Contribute very well to the overall effect, conjures up, through excellent colloquial dialogue, a believable evocation of the ruined, dying Earth (4/5).
- (iii) Theme: The idea comes forward strongly and reflects man's precarious position in the universe (4/5).
- (iv) Megatextual quality and fabulata: The innovative text is representative of the unique encyclopaedia of science fiction and grammatical innovation (3/5).

- (v) Entertainment value: Although not enjoyable reading due to its almost apocalyptic images, it is gripping, if frightening reading (4/5).
- (vi) Plot: Interesting, if at times unexciting (3/5).
- (vii) Scientific knowledge: Excellent scientific grounding, impeccable details on pollution and ecological changes (4/5).
- (viii) Myth and symbolism: The novel speaks very strongly of man's struggle in a harsh universe (4/5).
- (ix) Style: Brunner uses an innovative style, setting his tone with splintered vignettes and *collages* of different sorts, political speeches, advertisements and other images (3/5).
- (x) General: The novel conjures up a high level of abstraction. The fate of humanity is at stake (4/5).

Total: $37 \times 2 = 74 \%$.

e *Galactic Takeover Bid* (1973), by J.R. McIntosh

Galactic Takeover Bid centres on Earth's space exploration corps (CHART), a service encharged with surveying space and identifying opportunities and dangers to mankind. A ship of this service is sent to an Earth colony where the Aboriginal inhabitants have risen up and killed the colonists. The commanding officer of the ship, Captain Blake, faces the dilemma of how to resolve this situation.

Evaluation:

- (i) **Setting:** The setting on an alien planet is not convincing and believable, and does not make the reader really picture this alien situation (2/5).
- (ii) **Language and dialogue:** The language used is wooden and the dialogue is unconvincing: they do not contribute greatly towards the overall picture (2/5).
- (iii) **Theme:** The theme does present the central idea of mankind exploring and settling other planets forward as the hero. It also reflects in fairly good fashion the unique premise of science fiction which is man's precarious position in the universe (3/5).
- (iv) **Megatextual quality and fabulata:** There is little evidence that this text has any of science fiction's specialized mode characteristics. The novel does not contribute anything to the genre's general encyclopaedic megatext and is mundane and unconvincing (1/5).
- (v) **Entertainment value:** Not entertaining on any scale, story is rather flat and unexciting (2/5).
- (vi) **Plot:** This could have been an exciting plot as the ingredients are all there such as danger on an alien planet, colonists attacked by aboriginal inhabitants; the plot could have been better constructed and more exciting (2/5).
- (vii) **Scientific knowledge:** Scientific background is handled in a realistic fashion (3/5).

- (viii) Myth and symbolism: The novel technically has the elements to symbolise mankind's struggle for survival in a hostile universe, but is handled in such a flat, bland way that it is not really mythical or symbolic (1/5).
- (ix) Style: The literary style is banal and perfunctory, and contributes to the novel's lack of visual images and literary impact (1/5).
- (x) General: The novel does not conjure up a sense of wonder, abstraction or universality. The science fiction formula is not treated originally or with innovation (2/5).

Total: $19 \times 2 = 38 \%$

f *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), by Ursula K. Le Guin

Genly Ai is an envoy from the League of Worlds, sent by his government on a diplomatic mission to Gethen, a country world inhabited by a tough people with a difference. They are androgynous, taking on a definite sexual gender only at certain times, sometimes male, sometimes female. Genly Ai is thrown together with his host Estraven, a high noble, and they make a desperate journey of almost a thousand miles across a glacier. The tale of these two protagonists is one of misunderstanding, suspicion and treason, but also points to the possibility of contact and trust between humans and alien societies and cultures. Estraven dies, and Genly Ai must speak his epitaph to his alien family.

Evaluation:

- (i) Setting: Incomparable - the novel transports the reader into the wintry alien planet with its hard, alien society. "I was alone, with a stranger, inside the walls of a dark palace, in a strange, snow-changed city, in the heart of the Ice Age of an alien world ... how could I expect this man or any other to

believe my tales about other worlds, other races, a vague benevolent government somewhere off in outer space ...” The descriptions and images of this world are vivid and visual (5/5).

- (ii) Language and dialogue: The language is artistic and rich, and the dialogue contributes greatly to the rich texture of this novel (5/5).
- (iii) Theme: The theme is presented with clarity and stark simplicity, namely that of man’s struggle to survive in a hostile and harsh universe. This is the basic premise of science fiction, concretized and treated in brilliant fashion (4/5).
- (iv) Megatextual quality and fabulata: Le Guin’s novel is firmly and elegantly couched in the specialized science fiction mode of writing, and becomes an evocative part of the greater megatext (4/5).
- (v) Entertainment value: This novel, with its almost eerie setting, is very readable and not easily put down (5/5).
- (vi) Plot: It is causal and even startling at times, well-structured, and keeps the reader’s interest (4/5).
- (vii) Scientific knowledge: Adequate, although this is not a work of hard science fiction, and thus not thrust to the forefront (3/5).
- (viii) Myth and symbolism: The novel has a mythical element, magical quality, and strikingly symbolizes the human condition with extraordinary effect (5/5)
- (ix) Style: The style of the novel is built on thoughts and metaphors, also clear yet muted descriptions, giving it an artistic quality which is of a very high standard (5/5).

- (x) General: The novel does not depend on any overt formula or cliché, it creates a palpable feeling of wonder, abstraction and universality. It is enigmatic and moving (5/5).

Total 45 x 2 = 90 %

g *Blood Music* (1985), by Greg Bear

Vergil Ulam, a brilliant if unbalanced researcher in Biochemistry develops a new type of biochip (cellular organism) and accidentally creates intelligent cells named noocytes. He injects himself with his own newly-created organisms, in order to evade the strict security controls of the company employing him, and sell his invention to the highest bidder. The noocytes spread through his body changing his body form and brain function, and spreads from there into the rest of the North American population. The rest of the world seals off the North American continent in order to contain this new plague, but the noocytes in humankind now form an alien telepathic community concentrating on inner space. Humankind has now become a radical new life form.

Evaluation:

- (i) Setting: Portrayed with excellence, the author brings to the reader in a very believable, almost horrifying way, inexorably into the setting which turns almost surreal towards the end but always believable and at times even horrifying (4/5).
- (ii) Language and dialogue: Bear is a master at descriptive prose and his dialogue is particularly strong and believable (4/5).

- (iii) Theme: The theme is the premise of science fiction *par excellence*: the terrible influence of technology on humankind and the tenuous hold of the human being on a hostile and changing universe (5/5).
- (iv) Megatextual quality and fabulata: The text is very representative of this important genre characteristic, fabulata are created in the text (4/5).
- (v) Entertainment value: High entertainment value, even if almost horrifying at times - a good example of a popular genre with intellectual and scientific content yet still highly enjoyable reading (5/5).
- (vi) Plot: Causal, well-structured and also startling (4/5).
- (vii) Scientific knowledge: Superb quality and background. Bear in fact acknowledges, in the introduction of the novel, that he had advice from several PhDs and access to their laboratories in order to build up the necessary scientific background and facts (5/5).
- (viii) Myth and symbolism: The novel is a concretization of man's fall from Eden - the apple is replaced by a laboratory-bred biochip (4/5).
- (ix) Style: The author has a lucid yet multi-faceted style as he brings in small details and description to form a very stylish, rounded whole (4/5).
- (x) General: This is a most original concept, treated with excellence, to create a real sense of wonder and universal abstraction at this unexpected turn in the evolution of humankind (4/5).

Total: $43 \times 2 = 86\%$.

This short story written by the pioneer of the cyberpunk school is a dark yet bitter-sweet story of two freelance computer hackers who, for payment, venture into bio-enhanced cyberspace (the artificial universe created by the interlinked web of hundreds of millions of artificial intelligences, computers and machines). The two computer mercenaries, Bobby and Automatic Jack make a living by entering immense and sophisticated computer brains to pilfer money and information for own gain. There are dangers such as bio-enhanced artificial intelligences which are able to literally fry the brain of the intruding computer hacker by means of neural feedback. Both hard-bitten partners are rivals in love with the same girl, and must now prepare themselves for the biggest and most dangerous computer mission of their lives.

Evaluation:

- (i) Setting: Brilliant and real, a baroque high-tech and sharp-edged setting, made very real and believable by masterly descriptive techno-prose which speaks to the reader in an exceptional fashion (5/5).
- (ii) Language and dialogue: Exquisitely tight and tense yet flippant, this category like the setting contributes greatly to this tale of post-industrial, at times even sordid high-technology lowlife (5/5).
- (iii) Theme: The central premise of science fiction is clearly seen in this short story: the influence of technology on humans struggling to survive in a hostile world (4/5).
- (iv) Megatextual quality and fabulata: The text is ideally representative of the characteristic of the genre, as it contributes several new acronyms and expressions to the megatext of science fiction (ICE = Intrusion

Countermeasures Electronics, monochrome nonspace, simstim = simulated stimuli, waldo = a high precision electric tool capable of being connected onto an artificial limb, electronic consensus-hallucination) (5/5).

- (v) Entertainment value: Highly entertaining as a fast, hard-boiled, high-tech tale of adventure (4/5).
- (vi) Plot: Very original and causal, tightly-structured for maximum effect (4/5).
- (vii) Scientific knowledge: Extremely convincing in all its high-tech, very believable world of computer cowboys and electronic raiders, faultlessly presented as background (5/5).
- (viii) Myth and symbolism: Very representative of mankind's struggle to survive a hostile world (4/5).
- (ix) Style: The text has a hard-boiled, darkly-textual richly-detailed style which sets the tone for this gripping story (5/5).
- (x) General: The story is original in concept, in fact Gibson launched the sub-genre by means of innovative stories such as *Burning Chrome*. It creates an almost pitying sense of abstraction and wonder for the possibilities and threat of future technology (4/5).

Total $45 \times 2 = 90$ %.

12.3.1.3.2 *Applicability of the scorecard*

The accuracy of the evaluation of these eight works by means of the scorecard were verified by reference to authorities in the field.

Perusal of generally acknowledged authoritative selection aids such as the works of Aldiss (1986), Clute and Nicholls (1993), Barron (1995) and Cluté (1995) show that the novels by Tucker (1958), Roberts (1966), Le Guin (1969), Brunner (1974), Bear (1985) and Gibson (1987) which all scored value ratings of between 72% and 90%, are all listed as prominent works by Aldiss (1986:258, 373, 347, 318, 416) with the exception of Gibson (1987) which postdates Aldiss's book. Clute (1995) lists the works by Roberts (1966), Le Guin (1969), Brunner (1974), Bear (1985) and Gibson (1987), as among the pick of science fiction authors (Clute 1995:155, 174, 178, 194, 199).

The novels by Graham (1972) and McIntosh (1973) which attained low value ratings of 36% and 44% respectively, are not listed in any of these authoritative sources, neither are these authors mentioned as leading or respected authors. The scorecard thus tests satisfactorily as an evaluative instrument.

The above-mentioned examples serve to illustrate that, if applied rigorously, the specially-designed criteria will assign a dependable numerical value rating to each work of science fiction being evaluated.

12.3.1.4 Budget

The budget of the public library is an important factor. Smaller public libraries will of necessity have less generous budgets, and smaller public libraries may have to content themselves with smaller core collections of works of science fiction. Of necessity smaller public libraries will when utilizing the scorecard (cf. paragraph 12.3.1.2 for examples) be much stricter in stipulating a minimum score below which works are not considered for selection. Where a score of 65% might suffice for large public libraries, smaller libraries might lay down a minimum score of 80%. In some cases public libraries will have a certain fixed percentage of its budget for fiction acquisition designated for science fiction which in

turn will affect the stipulation of minimum scores. The smaller the budget, the higher will be the minimum score required.

12.3.1.5 User needs

The selector will need to be informed of the needs of the community served by the public library as far as fiction reading needs in general are concerned, as well as science fiction reading needs, for example, which authors or sub-genres are most popular. Such information can be collected from circulation statistics but is best gained from user need studies, and thus includes the important element of user needs in the model.

12.3.1.6 Existing fiction collection and existing science fiction collection

The selection of fiction is part of the general collection development process and the science fiction selection process must be aimed at enhancing the completeness of the fiction collection as a whole. The size and completeness of the science fiction collection will be an important factor in the selection process. Smaller public libraries will of necessity select from the basis of having a balanced, core collection, whereas large public libraries with more generous budgets will be able to select more widely and include substantial numbers of works in each distinct sub-genre.

12.3.1.7 Selection decision

The selection decision itself commences once the selector has assessed the inherent value of the item. Should the score attained by the item fall below a pre-determined minimum, the item can be rejected out of hand, thus allowing the selector to concentrate on works of at least fair to excellent inherent value.

The selector will accordingly, in the light of his or her knowledge of user needs be able to determine whether these works will, notwithstanding their scores, meet user needs as far

as sub-genre, author and series would be concerned. The selector will further have to determine whether these works will meaningfully enhance or augment deficiencies in the science fiction collection.

Once the selector is therefore satisfied that the works are of at least fair inherent value, will meet user needs and augment the existing collection, the decision can be taken to acquire the item should funds be available.

The micro-level selection of science fiction in the public library is bounded by the three broad parameters of quality, demand and public library objectives and resources which together flow into the decision to acquire or reject the work under consideration. This micro-level model demonstrates the confluence and interplay of the factors involved in the selection of science fiction, culminating in the selection decision, which takes into account the objectives to be achieved, user needs, the existing science fiction collection, the budget as well as the inherent value of the work of science fiction under consideration; as determined by citational and supplementational elements as well as evaluation by means of a specially-designed scorecard. Unlike Oosthuizen's (1994) model which determines the value of a work of fiction by means of text evaluation, supplementational sources and citational details, as well as factoring in present collection, user needs, popularity of text and publication trends (cf. Figure 9.5); this model assesses the inherent value of the item differently. The inherent value of a work of science fiction is assessed independently, i.e. purely on its merit as a text of science fiction by means of a specially-formulated set of criteria together with supplementational sources and citational details. No other factors, such as user needs, present collection and publication trends, play any role at this stage of the selection process. The inherent value expressed as a numerical value is thus the science fiction item's independent value as science fiction *per se*, after which it is weighed against, and competes with several other factors such as extant science fiction collection and budgetary constraints.

It is of cardinal importance that the selector personally evaluate the work under consideration and assign a numeric indication of its inherent value. Should this not be possible the work should at least be granted a numeric assessment on the strength of what can be found in supplemental sources such as reviews, guides, encyclopaedias and other reference works on the scale of 1 to 5 (1 = unacceptable, 2 = below average, 3 = fair value, 4 = very good and 5 = excellent).

The scorecard demonstrates that the selection of science fiction need not be a haphazard process, and that it can be a controlled, quantifiable process leading to the selection of quality science fiction to meet the needs of public library users.

12.3.2 Recommended core collection for medium-sized public libraries

Appendix 5 contains a list of three hundred and seventy-five works of science fiction which is submitted as a core collection for medium-sized public libraries. This core collection will provide a well-balanced basic selection of the best available works in the genre. The list is grouped according to the discrete and distinguishable literary phases and stylistic ground swells of science fiction, also determined in part by the response to the mail questionnaire sent to American public library services, as well as by research effected in the course of this study.

This recommended core list is furnished in full cognizance of the fact that personal literary tastes will (and should) differ. The suggested list should be seen as a reasoned and balanced proposition, arrived at after thorough study of the genre. Care has been taken to include older works which have withstood the test of time and still offer enjoyable reading (Shelley, Verne, Wells), whilst listing representative works from every major movement within the genre up to the writing of this dissertation. The list contains works of at least good, and in most cases high-quality science fiction which will enable medium-sized public libraries to utilize this core collection as a basis for further development of their science fiction collections. The genre has become commercially viable over the past decades and

many of the older classic works are being reissued, with shorter works often reappearing in anthologies and reprints of collected works of authors.

12.4 Conclusion

Science fiction is a popular, prolific and richly-textured genre on the cusp of post-modernism, also viewed as the supreme expression of late capitalism. Science fiction, like other popular fiction genres, contains a deep lode of cultural, political and social values and mores, and is a socially valuable genre as its basic entertainment value is at the same time intellectual, technological/scientific, sociological and philosophic.

Research into the characteristic essence of science fiction which would affect its selection found that there are no generally-accepted criteria for determining the inherent literary value of works of science fiction. Research into the theory of twentieth-century fiction selection further evinced that there is no existing model for the selection of science fiction.

The existing lack of a model for science fiction selection was addressed by means of a specially designed model, which also incorporates a scorecard containing a specially-compiled set of criteria for the evaluation of individual works of science fiction. The model visually displays and illustrates the interplay of the main factors involved in the selection process, within the parameters of public library objectives, resources, quality and demand, and leads up to the moment where the decision is taken to select or reject a proposed item.

In conclusion this researcher would recommend that a structured approach be followed at all times by the selector of science fiction. The guiding principles for science fiction selection as established in the course of this study, together with the model of the selection of science fiction and its scorecard containing specially selected evaluative criteria, as well as the recommended core collection, clearly demonstrate that the science fiction selection process can and should be structured, controlled and guided within established parameters.

Further research is clearly called for in the theory of popular fiction selection in general, and science fiction in particular. The findings and recommendations of this study are submitted with the aspiration that they may contribute towards the selection of quality science fiction to that most deserving of all library users, the public library patron.

APPENDIX 1

COVERING LETTER FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

59 Quai d'Orsay
75343 Paris
Cedex 07
3 July 1995
Tel:45559237
Fax:45554146

Dear Sir/Madame

The question of selecting and evaluating works of science fiction for public libraries has not been widely or intensively researched in South Africa.

The undersigned is at present engaged in research, through the University of South Africa, for a doctoral thesis entitled **Science fiction in the public library: essence and selection**. My promoter is Professor J.A. Kruger of the Department of Information Science of the University of South Africa, with Mrs E.M. Gericke, Senior Lecturer, acting as joint promoter. They can be reached telephonically at 09331-12-4296071 or by telefax at 09331-12-4293400.

As the science fiction genre has become in the words of Brian Aldiss, "mainly an American activity", a survey on American selection policies and practices by means of a mail questionnaire is essential. This questionnaire is being sent to forty major metropolitan/county library services across the USA (and several in Canada), in order to seek information on institutional views, practice and advice.

It would be much appreciated if the enclosed questionnaire could be completed by an experienced librarian. A stamped and addressed envelope is included for the return of the questionnaire to France.

The assurance is hereby given that no public library service will be identified by name in the doctoral thesis, nor any negative comparisons made between services. All information forwarded by respondents will be treated in strict confidence.

Your kind assistance in this worthy field of research will be much appreciated.

Sincerely

William Brewis

APPENDIX 2

MAIL QUESTIONNAIRE

SCIENCE FICTION IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY:

Definitions

The concepts selection and evaluation are defined as follows:

Selection : The process of determining whether a work of science fiction meets the needs of the user.

Evaluation : The process of determining the intrinsic literary value of a work of science fiction.

Selection of science fiction: For the purpose of this study 'selection of science fiction' includes both these definitions, and refers to the decision-making process whereby works of this genre are considered for adding to the existing collection - keeping user needs in mind and evaluating the intrinsic literary value of each work individually.

Classical/serious/fiction: Includes works of the imagination generally acknowledged to be of literary excellence as regards type, theme, sensibilities and poise. These works of fiction were written for a small, elite group of intellectual readers suited by education and inclination to in-depth literary interpretation and aesthetic appreciation. Such works are often used in the teaching of literature and language at secondary and tertiary level.

Popular (genre) fiction : Works showing generally competent literary workmanship style and descriptive qualities, even if not measuring up to the exacting standards set for classical/serious fiction. This type of fiction is aimed mostly at the educated middle class. Also includes genre fiction, i.e. fiction utilizing a readily identifiable literary formula such as science fiction, Westerns, detective novels and tales of horror.

Abbreviation : For the sake of convenience 'science fiction' is written as SF throughout

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY MEANS OF CHECKING THE APPLICABLE BOX, OR INSERTING YOUR COMMENTS

Office use

1. Please indicate the importance your service attaches to the following components of your collection:

1.1 Serious/classical fiction

Mandatory	1
Very important	2
Fairly important	3
Unimportant	4

1.2 Popular (genre) fiction

Mandatory	1
Very important	2
Fairly important	3
Unimportant	4

2. On average, please indicate which percentage of the total book stock for adult users of your branches/service points is fiction or non-fiction.

2.1 Fiction %

2.2 Non-fiction %

3. On average, what are the total percentages normally loaned out from the stock for adults by your branches/service points?

3.1 Fiction %

3.2 Non-fiction %

3.3 What percentages of your total fiction loans are represented by the following two genres?

Questionnaire no

1 - 4

Record no

5 - 6

7

8

9-10

11-12

13-14

15-16

SF

Fantasy: (purely imaginative literature where scientific and technological advances play no role)

17-18

19-20

- 4. If your service does possess a formal set of major principles for the selection of popular (genre) fiction to adult users, please summarize the overall philosophy regarding fiction provision in general.

20-21

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- 5. Does your formal selection policy only refer to popular (or genre) fiction, in general, or are the different genres such as SF, Westerns, romances, mysteries etc mentioned?

Only popular (or genre) fiction	1
Specific genres named	2

22

- 6. Is there any difference between your major selection principles for serious fiction as opposed to popular (genre) fiction?

Yes	1
No	2

23

- 7. If your answer to question 6 was Yes, please briefly explain the

difference(s):

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Office use

24

8. Has your service formulated a set of major principles for the selection of SF:

Yes	1
No	2

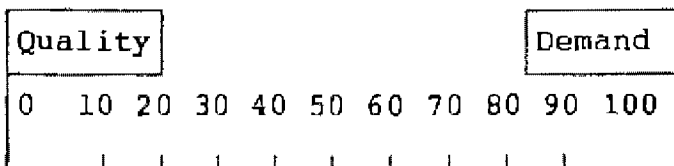
25

9. If your answer to question 8 was Yes, please summarize these principles:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

26-27

10. In terms of the much-debated 'Demand versus Quality' argument in fiction provision please indicate where your institution finds itself in this continuum



28-30

11. Which, in your view, is the most

important principle:

Relation of book to the collection	1
Relation of book to reader	2
Both are equally important	3

Office use

31

12. Is your public library service's major selection principles in any way based on a theoretical model, paradigm, cycle, or system?

Yes	1
No	2

32

13. If the answer to question 12 was Yes, please explain or sketch briefly:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

33-34

14. Does your service utilize specified criteria when evaluating a work of fiction?

Yes	1
No	2

35

- 14.1 If your service does utilize specific principles, are the same principles used to evaluate ALL levels of fiction, that is both serious and popular (genre) fiction?

Yes	1
No	2

36

14.2 Please list any such specified principles used to evaluate:

(a) Serious fiction

.....

.....

.....

37-38

(b) Popular (genre) fiction

.....

.....

.....

.....

39-40

(c) SF

.....

.....

.....

41-42

14.3 Do your selectors utilize a standardized scoring card or other standardized format when evaluating popular fiction?

Yes	1
No	2

43

14.4 Does your service have a profile of the SF reader? If so please list:

Age:

44-45

Gender:

46-47

Occupation:

Office use

Educational level:

48-49

Other characteristics:

50-51

.....

52-53

15. Please indicate on a progressive scale from 1 ('insignificant') to 10 ('indispensable') the importance of the following factors in SF selection.

	FACTOR	Scale 1 - 10	
15.1	Reputation of author		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 54-55
15.2	Format: hardcover/paperback		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 56-57
15.3	Bibliographic details		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 58-59
15.4	Popularity of genre		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 60-61
15.5	Existing collection		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 62-63
15.6	Publishers' policies/tendencies		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 64-65
15.7	Needs of readers		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 66-67
15.8	Objectives of public library		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 68-69
15.9	Policy of public library		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 70-71
15.10	Budget		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 72-73
15.11	Reputation of publisher		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 74-75
15.12	Literary prizes won by book		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 76-77
15.13	Press/Journal reviews		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 78-79
15.14	Publicity given by publisher		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 80-81
15.15	Price of the book		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 82-83
15.16	Potential use to reader		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 84-85
15.17	Potential value for collection		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 86-87
15.18	Intrinsic literary quality		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 88-89

	FACTOR	Scale 1 - 10
15.19	Bibliographic guides or lists	
15.20	Expected loan frequency	

Office use

90-91

92-93

16.1 Please add any additional factor(s) which, in your view, should be taken cognizance of when selecting SF and indicate relative importance on the scale of 10.

.....

94-95

17. Is the demand for SF increasing, decreasing or unchanged?

Increasing	1
Decreasing	2
Unchanged	3

96

18. When selecting SF which percentage of your service's evaluation of individual works of SF is done by:

In-house evaluation by means of own specified criteria %
 Reading publishers' blurbs %
 Reviews in press %
 Blanket/standing orders %
 Jobbers' catalogues %
 Judging only by title %
 Suppliers' selections %
 Other means (please specify) %

97-98

99-100

100-101

102-103

104-105

106-107

108-109

110-111

19. Does your service have a specific % of budget for fiction dedicated for SF purchases?

Yes	1
No	2

112

- 19.1 If YES, what is % for SF %

113-114

20. Are the available handbooks for SF adequate (eg B Rosenberg's Genre-flecting: A Guide to Reading Interests in Genre Fiction)?

Yes	1
No	2

115

- 20.1 If YES please name a few of the most satisfactory handbooks:

.....

116-117

21. What do you think of the quality of your SF selection:

Satisfactory	1
Good, could be improved	2
Not satisfactory	3

118

22. Does your library service undertake regular user surveys to determine, inter alia, the user demand for SF:

Regularly	1
Infrequently	2
Never	3

23. Are you of the opinion that public librarians should be formally trained in the appreciation and comprehension of popular (genre) fiction?

Yes	1
No	2

24. Please indicate on a progressive scale from 1 ('not needed') to 10 ('cannot be excluded') the general value of the following SF authors' works for your collection.

	AUTHOR	Scale 1-10
24.1	Keith Roberts	
24.2	Ursula K Le Guin	
24.3	John Wyndham	
24.4	Jack Williamson	
24.5	L Ron Hubbard	
24.6	Alfred Bester	
24.7	AE van Vogt	
24.8	Greg Bear	
24.9	H Beam Piper	
24.10	William Gibson	
24.11	Anne Mc Caffrey	

119

120

120-121

122-123

124-125

126-127

128-129

130-131

132-133

134-135

136-137

138-139

140-141

Office use

	AUTHOR	Scale 1-10	
24.12	William Tenn		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 142-143
24.13	Joanna Russ		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 144-145
24.14	Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 146-147
24.15	Norman Spinrad		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 148-149
24.16	Colin Wilson		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 150-151
24.17	Philip José Farmer		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 152-153
24.18	Samuel R Delany		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 154-155
24.19	George R Stewart		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 156-157
24.20	Roger Zelazny		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 158-159
24.21	Lester de Rey		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 160-161
24.21	EE (Doc) Smith		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 162-163
24.22	Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 164-165
24.23	Thomas M Disch		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 166-167
24.24	George RR Martin		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 168-169
24.25	CJ Cherryh		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 170-171
24.26	Joan Vinge		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 172-173
24.27	Olaf Stapledon		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 174-175
24.28	Zenna Henderson		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 176-177
24.29	Rudy Rucker		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 178-179
24.30	Robert A Heinlein		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 180-181
24.31	Bruce Sterling		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 182-183
24.32	Poul Anderson		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 184-185
24.33	Philip K Dick		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 186-187
24.34	Kate Wilhelm		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 188-189

Office use

	AUTHOR	Scale 1-10
24.35	David Brin	
24.36	Neal Stephenson	
24.37	Lewis Shiner	
24.38	Jules Verne	
24.39	Theodore Sturgeon	
24.40	Ward Moore	

190-191
 192-193
 194-195
 196-197
 198-199
 200-201

25. Are there any other SF authors whose works cannot be excluded from your collection

202-203

Signature
 Library service
 Position in library service
 Date
 Telephone no
 Telefax no

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COURTESY AND YOUR TIME

END

APPENDIX 3

REMINDER TO RESPONDENTS NOT HAVING RETURNED
INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

59 Quai d'Orsay
75343 Paris
Cedex 07
15 August 1995

Tel:09331-45554146
Fax:09331-45554146

Dear Sir/Madame

I recently sent the enclosed questionnaire to your institution with the request that it be completed. To date I have received no reply.

I do realize that you have a very full work schedule, but would be most grateful if you could consider having this questionnaire completed by an experienced professional officer and returned to France in the enclosed stamped and addressed envelope.

Your kind assistance in this relatively unresearched area of the profession will be highly appreciated.

Sincerely

William Brewis

APPENDIX 4

LIST OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES TO WHOM QUESTIONNAIRES WERE SENT

1. New York Public Library, New York, NY
2. Los Angeles Public Library System, Calif.
3. Detroit Public Library, Mich.
4. Boston Public Library, Mass.
5. The Free Library of Philadelphia, Pa
6. Providence Public Library, RI
7. San Diego County Library, Calif.
8. Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library, Ind.
9. Houston Public Library, Tex.
10. New Orleans Public Library, La
11. Miami-Dade Public Library System, Fla
12. Seattle Public Library, Wash.
13. Louisville Free Public Library, Ky
14. Iowa City Public Library, Iowa.
15. Chicago Public Library, Ill.
16. Manchester City Library, Manchester, NH
17. Madison Public Library, Wis.
18. Kansas City Kansas Public Library, Kan.
19. Richland County Public Library, Columbia, SC
20. Akron-Summit County Public Library, Ohio.
21. Denver Public Library, Colo.
22. Laramie County Library Systems, Cheyenne, Wyo.
23. Public Library of Nashville & Davidson County, Tenn.
24. Multnomah County Library, Portland, Oregon.
25. Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, Md
26. Minneapolis Public Library, Minn.

27. Newark Public Library, NJ
28. Omaha Public Library, Neb.
29. Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Public Library, NM
30. San Antonio Area Library System, Tex.
31. Parmly Billings Library, Billings, Mont.
32. Henrico County Public Library, Richmond, Va
33. Kanawha County Public Library, Charleston, W Va
34. Hartford Public Library, Conn.
35. Alabama Public Library System, Montgomery, Ala.
36. Central Arkansas Public Library System, Little Rock, Ark.
37. Kansas City Kansas Public Library, Kansas City, Kan.
38. Metropolitan Library System in Oklahoma, Oklahoma City, Okla.
39. Salt Lake City Public Library, Utah.
40. Boise Public Library, Idaho.
41. Vancouver Public Library, Canada.
42. Ottawa Public Library, Canada.
43. Toronto Public Library, Canada.

APPENDIX 5

RECOMMENDED CORE COLLECTION FOR MEDIUM-SIZED PUBLIC LIBRARIES

A. Science fiction of the nineteenth century

Bellamy Edward: Looking Backward (1888)

Poe, Edgar Allan: "The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym" (1837)
(short stories) "The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion" (1839)
"The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (1845)

Shelley, Mary W.: Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus (1818)

Verne, Jules: Journey to the Centre of the Earth (1864)
A Trip from the Earth to the Moon (1865)
Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea (1870)
Hector Servedac, Off on a Comet (1877)
Clipper of the Clouds (1886)

B. Close of the nineteenth century: the first flowering of the genre

Wells, H.G. The Time Machine (1895)
The Island of Dr Moreau (1896)
The Invisible Man (1897)
The War of the Worlds (1898)
The First Men on the Moon (1901)
The Food of the Gods (1904)

C. Early twentieth-century science fiction and the nineteen twenties and thirties

- Arnold, E.L.: Lieutenant Gulliver Jones: His Vacation (1905)
(republished in the nineteen sixties as Gulliver of Mars)
- *Burroughs, Edgar Rice: A Princess of Mars (1912)
- Capek, Karl: War with the Newts (1936)
- Doyle, Sir Arthur
Conan: The Lost World (1912)
- Lewis, C.S.: Out of the Silent Planet (1938)
- Smith, E.E. (Doc.): The Skylark of Space (1928)
Grey Lensman (1939)
- Stapledon, Olaf: Last and First Men: A Story of the Near and Far Future (1930)
Star Maker (1937)

*The works of Burroughs are not strictly speaking science fiction, and should be classified as fantasy as there is no scientific element involved. His works however, give vivid descriptions of alien societies, and influenced science fiction in style and description. In the popular mind Burroughs is irrevocably identified with science fiction and older readers are bound to request his works.

D. The Golden Age: 1938-1950

- Conklin, Groff (ed.): A Treasury of Science Fiction (1948)
- De Camp, L.-Sprague: Lest Darkness Fall (1941)
- *Heinlein, Robert A.: Methuselah's Children (1941)
Rocket Ship Galileo (1947)
Space Cadet (1948)
Beyond this Horizon (1948)
Red Planet (1949)

Lewis, C.S.: Out of the Silent Planet (1939)
 Moore, C.L.: Judgement Night (1943)
 Vintage Season (1946), novelette
 Smith, E.E. (Doc): Children of the Lens (1947-8)
 Van Vogt, A.E.: The World of Null-A (1945)
 Williamson, Jack: The Legion of Space (1947)

*These novels of Heinlein were primarily aimed at young adults, but still make very good reading for all ages.

E. Age of Acceptance (1950 - 1961)

Asimov, Isaac: I, Robot (1950)
 Foundation and Empire (1952)
 Anderson, Poul: Brain Wave (1954)
 Bester, Alfred: The Demolished Man (1953)
 The Stars My Destination (1956), also published as
 Tiger! Tiger! (1956)
 Blish, James: Earthman Come Home (1955)
 Bradbury, Ray: The Martian Chronicles (1950)
 Fahrenheit 451 (1954)
 Budrys, Algis: Who? (1958)
 Clarke, Arthur C.: Childhood's End (1953)
 Clement, Hal: Mission of Gravity (1954)
 Del Rey, Lester: Nerves (1956)
 Dickson, Gordon R.: Dorsai (1959), later published as The Genetic General
 Finney, Jack: The Body Snatchers (1955)
 Heinlein, Robert A.: The Puppet Masters (1951)
 The Man Who Sold the Moon (1951)

Tunnel in the Sky (1955)
The Door into Summer (1956)
Double Star (1956)
Time for the Stars (1956)
Citizen of the Galaxy (1957)
Starship Troopers (1959)
Stranger in a Strange Land (1961)

Herbert Frank: Under Pressure (1955)
 Kneale, Nigel: The Quatermass Experience (1959)
 Miller, Walter M.: A Canticle for Leibowitz (1960)
 Moore, Ward: Bring the Jubilee (1953)
 Olivier, Chad: Shadows in the Sun (1954)
 Orwell, George: 1984 (1948)
 Pohl, Frederik & Kornbluth, Cyril: The Space Merchants (1953)

Pohl, Frederik: Slave Ship (1957)
 Sheckley, Robert: Immortality, Inc. (1958)
 Shute, Nevil: On the Beach (1957)
 Skinner, B.F.: Walden Two (1948)
 Silverberg, Robert: Master of Life and Death (1957)
 Simak, Clifford D.: City (1952)
 Tenn, William: The Liberation of Earth (1953)
Down Among the Dead (1954)

Tucker, Wilson: The Time Masters (1953), reissued (1971)
 Vidal, Gore: Messiah (1954)
 Wyndham, John: The Day of the Triffids (1951)
The Kraken Wakes (1953), later republished in the USA
 as Out of the Deep
Rebirth (1955)

The Chrysalids (1955)

The Midwich Cuckoos (1957)

F. The New Wave (1962 - 1973)

Aldiss, Brian W.: Non-Stop (1958)

Hothouse (1962)

Ballard, J.G.: The Drowned World (1962)

The Drought (1965)

The Crystal World (1966)

The Atrocity Exhibition (1970), retitled

Love and Napalm: Export USA (1972) in the United States

Brunner, John: Stand on Zanzibar (1968)

The Jagged Orbit (1969)

The Sheep Look up (1972)

Total Eclipse (1974)

Delany, Samuel R.: The Einstein Intersection (1966)

Nova (1969)

Babel 17 (1969)

Time Considered as a Helix of Semi-Precious Stones (1969)

Disch, Thomas M.: The Genocides (1965)

Camp Concentration (1968)

Ellison, Harlan: 'Repent Harlequin!', Said the Ticktockman (1965), novella

A Boy and His Dog (1969), novella

 Editor of: Dangerous Visions (1967), and

Again, Dangerous Visions (1972)

Moorcock, Michael: Behold the Man (1966)

Spinrad, Norman: Bug Jack Barron (1969)

The Iron Dream (1972)

Zelazny, Roger: A Rose for Ecclesiastes (1963), short story

This Immortal (1966)
The Dream Master (1966)
Lord of Light (1967)
Creatures of Light and Darkness (1969)

G. Individualistic authors of the nineteen sixties

Anderson, Poul: Guardians of Time (1961)
No Truce With Kings (1963), novella
Ensign Flandry (1966)

Crichton, Michael: The Andromeda Strain (1969)

Dick, Philip. K.: The Man in the High Castle (1962)
The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch (1965)
Dr Bloodmoney (1965)
Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? (1968), filmed very successfully as Blade Runner (1982)
Galactic Pot-Healer (1969)

Farmer, Phillip José: The Lovers (1960)

Heinlein, Robert A.: Podkayne of Mars (1962)
Glory Road (1963)
Farnham's Freehold (1964)

Henderson, Zenna: Pilgrimage: The Book of the People (1961)
The People: No Different Flesh (1966)

Herbert, Frank: Dune (1965)

Kavan, Anna: Ice (1967)

Keyes, Daniel: Flowers for Algernon (1966)

Le Guin, Ursula K.: The Left Hand of Darkness (1969)

Lem, Stanislaw: Solaris (1961)

McCaffery, Anne: Dragonrider (1968), followed by rest of this very popular series such as Dragonquest (1971) and Dragonsong (1976)

- Pangborn, Edgar: Davy (1964)
- Panshin, Alexei: Rites of Passage (1968)
- Piper, H. Beam: Space Viking (1963)
Gunpowder God (1965), also published as
Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen
- Roberts, Keith: Pavane (1968)
- Silverberg, Robert: Nightwings (1969)
- Simak, Clifford D.: Way Station (1964)
- Sturgeon, Theodore: Venus Plus X (1960)
Slaughterhouse 5 (1969)
- Tevis, Walter: The Man Who Fell to Earth (1963)
- Vonnegut, Kurt: The Sirens of Titan (1959)
Cat's Cradle (1963)
- H. The nineteen seventies
- Aldiss, Brian W.: Space Opera (1973)
Galactic Empires (1976)
The Malacia Tapestry (1976)
- Anderson, Poul: Tau Zero (1970)
The Earth Book of Stormgate (1978)
The Day of their Return (1978)
- Benford, Gregory: The Stars in Shroud (1978)
- Bishop, Michael: A Funeral for the Eyes of Fire (1975)
- Brunner, John: The Shockwave Rider (1975)
- Calvino, Italo: If on a Winter's Night a Traveller (1979)
- Charnas, Suzy McKee: Walk to the End of the World (1976)
- Cherryh, C.J.: The Book of Morgaine (1979)
The Faded Sun (1979), series

Clarke, Arthur C.: Rendezvous with Rama (1973)
Imperial Earth (1975)

Delany, Samuel R.: Dhalgren (1975)
Tales of Nevèrÿon (1979)

Del Rey, Lester: Pstalemate (1970)

Dick, Philip K.: A Scanner Darkly (1977)

Farmer, Phillip José: To Your Scattered Bodies Go (1971)

Finney, Jack: Time and Again (1970)

Haldeman, Joe: The Forever War (1975)

Harrison, Harry: A Transatlantic Tunnel, Hurrah (1972)

Heinlein, Robert A.: I Will Fear No Evil (1970)
Time Enough for Love (1973)

Le Guin, Ursula K.: The Lathe of Heaven (1971)
The Word for World is Forest (1972), novella
The Dispossessed (1974)
Earthsea (1977)

Levin, Ira: The Stepford Wives (1972)

McIntyre, Vonda: Dreamsnake (1978)
Fireflood And Other Stones (1979)

Malzberg, Barry: Beyond Apollo (1972)

Martin, George R.R.: With Morning Comes Mistfall (1973)
A Song for Lya (1974)
Dying of the Light (1977)
Sandkings (1979), novelette

Niven, Larry
& Pournelle, Jerry: The Mote in God's Eye (1974)
Lucifer's Hammer (1977)

Pangborn, Edgar: The Company of Glory (1976)

Pohl, Frederik: Man Plus (1976)
Gateway (1977)

- Jem (1979)
- Roberts, Keith: The Chalk Giants (1974)
The Grain Kings (1976)
- Russ, Joanna: The Female Man (1975)
- Silverberg, Robert: Downward to the Earth (1970)
Dying Inside (1972)
The Stochastic Man (1975)
Shadrach in the Furnace (1976)
- Stableford, Brian: Halcyon Drift (1972)
- Strugatsky, Boris
& Arkadi: Roadside Picnic (1972)
- Tiptree, James Jr.: Warm Worlds and Otherwise (1975)
(pseudonym of
Alice Sheldon):
- Tucker, Wilson: Up the Walls of the World (1978)
- Varley, John: Titan (1979)
- Vinge, Joan: The Outcasts of Heaven Belt (1978)
- Watson, Ian: The Embedding (1973)
The Jonah Kit (1975)
Alien Embassy (1977)
- Wilhelm, Kate: Let the Fire Fall (1972)
Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang (1978)
The Clewiston Test (1976)
Juniper Time (1979)
- Yarbro, Chelsea Quinn: Time of the Fourth Horseman (1976)

I. Nineteen eighties and nineties

- Aldiss, B.W.: Helliconia Spring, Helliconia Summer, Helliconia Winter
(1982-85)
Somewhere East of Life (1994)

Aldrin, Buzz
& Barnes, Jack: Encounter With Tiber (1996)

Anderson, Poul: The Stars Are Also Fire (1994)

Anthony, Patricia: The Happy Policeman (1994)

Asimov, Isaac: The Robots of Dawn (1983)
Robots and Empire (1985)
Gold (1995)

Attanasio, A.A.: Solis (1994)

Atwood, Margaret: The Handmaid's Tale (1986)

Baker, Sharon: Quarrelling They Met the Dragon (1984)

Ballard, J.G.: Crash (1985)

Banks, Iain M.: Feersum Endjinn (1994)

Baxter, Stephen: Raft (1991)
Anti-Ice (1993)

Batchelor, John C.: The Birth of the Peoples' Republic of Antarctica (1983)

Bear, Greg: Blood Music (1985)
Eon (1985)
Moving Mars (1993)

Benford, Gregory: Timescape (1980)
Furious Gulf (1994)

Bishop, Michael: No Enemy But Time (1982)
Brittle Innings (1994)
At the City Limits of Fate (1997)

Bisson, Terry: Fire on the Mountain (1988)
Pirates of the Universe (1997)

Bova, Ben: Brothers (1996)

Braabury, Ray: Quicker Than The Eye (1997)

Brin, David: The Postman (1985)
Glory Season (1993)
Otherness (1993)

Bujold, Lois McM.: Mirror Dance (1994)
 Cadigan, Pat: Synners (1991)
 Card, Orson Scott: The Worthing Chronicle (1983)
 Speaker for the Dead (1989)
 Ender's Game (1985)
 Children of the Mind (1996)
 Cherryh, C.J.: Downbelow Station (1980)
 Cyteen (1988)
 Hellburner (1992)
 Tripoint (1994)
 Foreigner (1995)
 Crowley, John: Love & Sleep (1994)
 Dunn, J.R.: This Side of Judgement (1995)
 Egan, Greg: Permutation City (1994)
 Feintuch, David: Challenger's Hope (1996)
 Fowler, Karen Joy: Sarah Canary (1991)
 Gentle, Mary: Golden Witchbreed (1983)
 Gibson, William: Neuromancer (1984)
 Count Zero (1986)
 Burning Chrome (1987)
 Virtual Light (1993)
 Gibson, William
 & Sterling, Bruce: The Difference Engine (1991)
 Goonan, Kathleen A.: Queen City Jazz (1994)
 Goldstein, Lisa: Travellers in Magic (1993)
 Summer King, Winter Fool (1994)
 Harrison, Harry: West of Eden (1984)
 Heinlein, Robert A.: Friday (1982)
 Job: A Comedy of Justice (1984)

- The Cat Who walks Through Walls: A Comedy of Manners
(1985)
- Herbert, Frank: God Emperor of Dune (1981)
Heretics of Dune (1983)
Chapter House Dune (1985)
- Hoban, Russell: Riddley Walker (1980)
- Hubbard, L. Ron: Battlefield Earth (1985)
- Jablokov, Alexander: The Breath of Suspension (1993)
- Jeter, K.W.: Blade Runner: The Edge of Human (1996)
- Jones, G.: North Wind (1994)
- Kelly, James Patrick: Wildlife (1994)
- Kerr, Katherine &
Kreighbaum, Mark: Palace (1996)
- Kress, Nancy: An Alien Light (1988)
Brain Rose (1990)
Beggars in Spain (1994)
Beggars and Choosers (1995)
- Kube-McDowell,
Michael P.: Emprise (1985)
- Le Guin, Ursula K.: A Fisherman of the Inland Sea (1993)
- Lem, Stanislaw: Peace on Earth (1994)
- Lessing, Doris: Canopies in Argos: Archives (1979-1983), a series of five
novels
- Luric, Alison: Women and Ghosts (1993)
- McAuley, Paul M.: Red Dust (1994)
- McAuley, Paul J.: Pasqual's Angel (1994)
- McCaffery, Anne: The Girl Who Heard Dragons (1993)
The Dolphins of Pern (1994)
- McDevitt, Jack: The Engines of God (1994)
- McHugh, Maureen F.: Half the Day is Night (1994)
- McKinley, Robin: A Knot in the Grain and Other Stones (1993)

Martin, G.R.R.: Fevre Dream (1982)
A Game of Thrones (1995)
A Song of Ice and Fire (1996)

Mason, Lisa: Summer of Love (1995)

May, Julian: Magnificat (1996)

Moran, Richard: The Empire of Ice (1994)

Morrow, James: This Is The Way The World Ends (1986)
Towing Jehovah (1994)
Blameless in Abaddon (1997)

Nagata, Linda: Deception Well (1997)

Niven, Larry & Pournelle
 Jerry: The Dragons of Heorot (1996)

Niven, L. &
 Pournelle, J.: The Gripping Hand (1993), sequel to The Mote in God's Eye
 (1974)

Noon, Jeff: Vurt (1993)

Ore, Rebecca: Slow Funeral (1994)

Park, Paul: Starbridge Chronicles: Soldiers of Paradise (1988), Sugar Rain
 (1989), The Cult of Loving Kindness (1991), Coelestis (1993)

Pohl, Frederik: Beyond the Blue Event Horizon (1980)
Heechee Rendezvous (1984)
The Merchants' War (1985)
Voices of Heaven (1994)

Pollack, Rachel: Temporary Agency (1995)

Powers, Richard: Galatea 2.2 (1996)

Powers, Tim: The Anubis Gates (1983)
Dinner at Deviant's Palace (1985)

Roberts, Keith: Molly Zero (1980)
Kiteworld (1985)

Robinson,
Kim Stanley: Red Mars (1993)
 Green Mars (1994)

Rucker, Rudy: The Hollow Earth (1991)

Ryman, Geoff: Unconquered Countries (1993)

Sawyer, Robert J.: End of an Era (1994)

Shepard, Lucius: Salvador (1984)
 Green Eyes (1984)
 Life During Wartime (1987)

Shiner, Lewis Glimpses (1993)

Shinn, Sharon: Archangel (1996)

Silverberg, Robert: Hot Sky at Midnight (1994)

Simmons, Dan: Hyperion (1989)
 Endymion (1997)

Springer, Nancy: Larque on the Wing (1994)

Stableford, Brian: The Eugene of Fear (1988)
 The Carnival of Destruction (1995)

Steele, Allen: The Jericho Iteration (1995)

Stephenson, Neal: Snow Crash (1993)
 The Diamond Age (1995)

Sterling Bruce: The Artificial Kid (1980)
 Schismatrix (1985)
 Islands in the Sun (1988)
 Heavy Weather (1994)

Swanwick, Michael: The Iron Dragon's Daughter (1994)

Tevis, Walter: Mockingbird (1980)

Tilley, Patrick: Star Wartz (1996)

Tipper, Sheri: Grass (1989)

Turner, George: Genetic Soldier (1994)

Turtledove, Harry: The Guns of the South (1992)

World War: In the Balance (1995)
 Varley, John: Steel Beach (1987)
 Vinge, Joan: The Snow Queen (1980)
 Vinge, Vernor: A Fire Upon the Deep (1992)
 Waugh, Charles &
 Greenberg, M.: Alternative Histories (1986)
 Williams, Walter Jon: City on Fire (1997)
 Willis, Connie: Lincoln's Dreams (1987)
Doomsday Book (1992)
 Wilson, Robert Charles: Mysterium (1995)
 Wood, N. Lee: Looking for the Mahdi (1997)
 Wolfe, Gene: The Shadow of the Torturer (1980)
The Claw of the Conciliator (1981)
The Sword of the Lictor (1982)
The Citadel of the Autarch (1983)
Caldé of the Long Sun (1995)
Exodus from the Long Sun (1997)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abrams, M.H. 1971. A glossary of literary terms. 3rd edition. New York: Rinehart.
- Adorno, T.W. 1957. Television and the patterns of mass culture, in Mass culture: the popular arts in America, edited by B. Rosenberg and D.M. White. New York: Free Press:474-487.
- Aiex, P.K. 1994. Reflections on science fiction in the light of today's global concerns. Indianapolis: [S.n]
- Aldiss, B. 1971. The wounded land: J.G. Ballard, in S F: the other side of realism edited by T.D. Claeson. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:118-129.
- Aldiss, B.W. 1984. A brief history, in The science fiction source book, edited by D. Wingrove. London: Longman:9-20.
- Aldiss, B. 1986. Trillion year spree: the history of science fiction. New York: Atheneum.
- Allen, W. 1956. Reading a novel. New York: Phoenix.
- Allott, M. 1973. Novelists on the novel. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Alston, E.F. 1962. Bibliotherapy and psychotherapy. ALA bulletin, 48:159-176.
- Altenbernd, L. & Lewis, L.L. 1966. A handbook for the study of fiction. New York: Macmillan.
- Amis, K. 1961. New maps of hell: a survey of science fiction. London: Gollancz.
- Anderson, P. 1974. The creation of imaginary worlds, in Science fiction today and tomorrow, edited by R. Bretnor. New York: Harper:235-259.
- Anderson, P. 1989. Nature: laws and surprises, in Mindsapes: the geographics of imagined worlds, edited by G.E. Slusser and E.S. Rabkin. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:3-15.

- Anderson, P. 1991. What works for me in writing science fiction. The writer, 104:13-15.
- Angenot, M. 1979a. The absent paradigm: an introduction to the semiotics of science fiction. Science-fiction studies, 6:9-19.
- Angenot, M. 1979b. Jules Verne: the last happy utopianist, in Science fiction: a critical guide, edited by P. Parrinder. London: Longman:18-33.
- Angulo, M.M. 1995. Random access memories: mechanism and metaphor in the fiction of William Gibson. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.
- Ash, B. 1975. Faces of the future: the lessons of science fiction. London: Elek.
- Ashley, M. 1978. Pulp and magazines, in Encyclopedia of science fiction, edited by R. Holdstock. London: Octopus:50-67.
- Asimov, I. 1978. Foreword, in Encyclopedia of science fiction, edited by R. Holdstock. London: Octopus:6-7.
- Asimov, I. 1981. Asimov on science fiction. New York: Doubleday.
- Asiov, A. 1995. Gold: the final science fiction collection. New York: Harper-Prism.
- Astle, R. 1980. Dracula as totemic monster: Lacan, Freud, Oedipus and history. Substance, 25:98-105.
- Atkinson, F. 1981. Fiction librarianship. London:Bingley.
- Atkinson, R. 1984. The citation as intertext: toward a theory of the selection process. Library resources & technical services, 29(2):109-119.
- Atkinson, R. 1986. Selection for preservation: a materialistic approach. Library resources & technical services, 30(4):341-353.
- Atkinson, R. 1987. Preparation for privation: the year's work in collection management, 1987. Library resources & technical services, 32(3):249-262.

- Atkinson, R. 1990. Preservation and collection development. Journal of academic librarianship, 16(2):98-103.
- Attebery, B. 1987. Science fantasy and myth, in Intersections: fantasy and science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser & E. Rabkin. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University: 181-190.
- Attebery, B. 1992. Strategies of fantasy. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University
- Attebery, B. 1993. Strategies of fantasy. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University
- Babbie, E. 1973. Survey research methods. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth.
- Babbie, E. 1986. The practice of social research. 4th edition. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth.
- Babbie, E. 1989. The practice of social research. 5th edition. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth.
- Babbie, E. 1990. Survey research methods. 2nd edition. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth.
- Babbie, E. 1992. The practice of social research. 6th edition. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth.
- Backus, J.L. 1986. Make background work for you. The writer, 99:15-17.
- Bagwell, J.T. 1987. Science fiction and the semiotics of realism, in Intersections: fantasy and science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser & E. Rabkin. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:36-48.
- Bailey, K.D. 1978. Methods of social research. 4th edition. New York: Free Press.
- Bainbridge, W.S. & Dalziel, M. 1978. The shape of science fiction as perceived by the fans. Science-fiction studies, 5:104-171.
- Baker, E.A. 1899. The classification of fiction. Library world, 1:198-200, 216-220.
- Baker, E.A. 1901. Book reviews: their help and their hindrances to selection. Library association record, 3:455-456.

- Baker, E.A. 1911. Book selection. Library association record, 13:17-29.
- Baker, H. 1992. Mobilities of presence: the motifs of time and history in the novels of Peter Ackroyd. MA dissertation, University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- Baker, S.L. & Shephard, G.W. 1987. Fiction classification schemes: the principles behind them and their success. Reading quarterly, 27(2):245-251.
- Baker, S.L. 1988. Will fiction classification schemes increase use? Reading quarterly, 27(3):366-376.
- Ballard, J.G. 1969. The new science fiction, in The new S.F.: an original anthology of modern speculative fiction, edited by L. Jones. London: Harmondsworth:35-69.
- Ballard, J.G. 1985. Crash. New York: Randon House.
- Barboto, J. 1986. The selling of science fiction. Publishers weekly, 23 May:73-76.
- Barbu, Z. 1976. Popular culture: a sociological approach, in Approaches to popular culture, edited by C.W.E. Bigsby. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:39-68.
- Barlow, A.J. 1989. Reality, religion and politics in Philip K. Dick's fiction. Ph.D. thesis, University of Iowa, Des Moines.
- Barlow, L. 1989. Great storytelling. The writer, 102:13-17.
- Barr, M.S. 1987. Alien to femininity: speculative fiction and feminist theory. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Barron, N. 1995. Anatomy of wonder. 4th edition. New York: Bowker.
- Bartter, M.A. 1990. Normative fiction, in Science fiction, social conflict and war, edited by P.H. Davies. Manchester: Manchester University:169-186.

- Baudrillard, J. 1983. The ecstasy of communication, in The anti-aesthetic, edited by H. Foster. Port Townsend, Wash.: Bay Press.
- Bear, G. 1985. Blood Music. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Bear, G. 1986. Writing science fiction in the late '80s. The writer, 99:9-11.
- Bear, G. 1995. Introduction, in New legends: the original SF anthology for the 90s and beyond, edited by G. Bear & M. Greenberg. London: Legend:vii-x.
- Beghtol, C. 1990a. Access to fiction: a problem in classification theory and practice, part 1. International Classification, 16(3):134-140.
- Beghtol, C. 1990b. Access to fiction: a problem in classification theory and practice, part 2. International Classification, 17(1):21-27.
- Bekker, S. & Lategan, L. 1988. Libraries in black urban South Africa: an exploratory study. South African journal of library and information science, 56(2):63-72.
- Bell, D. 1970. The cultural contradictions of capitalism. The public interest, 21:16-43.
- Bell, D. 1976. The coming of post-industrial society: a venture in social forecasting. New York: Bani.
- Benford, G. 1982. Why is there so little science in literature, in Nebula award stories sixteen, edited by J. Pournelle. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston:33-44.
- Benford, G. 1990. Aliens and knowability: a scientist's perspective, in Bridges to science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser ...[*et al.*]. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:53-64.
- Benford, G. 1995. Old legends, in New legends: the original SF anthology for the 90s and beyond, edited by G. Bear & M. Greenberg. London: Legend:292-306.
- Benison, J. 1989. Post-modernity and science fiction: an approach to the social relevance of J.G. Ballards' fiction. Ph.D. thesis, University of Essex, UK, [s.l].

- Berenstein, R. 1992. Mommie dearest: Aliens, Rosemary's Baby and mothering. Journal of popular culture, 24(2):55-75.
- Berger, A.A. 1973. Pop culture. Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum/Standard.
- Berger, H.L. 1976. Science fiction and the new dark age. Bowling Green: Bowling Green University.
- Berger, M. 1977. Real and imagined worlds: the novel and social science. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard.
- Berman, G. 1991. The way of a storyteller. The writer, 104:22-23.
- Bertens, H. 1991. Postmodern cultures, in Postmodernism and contemporary fiction, edited by E.J. Denyth. London: Batsford:123-138.
- Biggsby, C.W.E. 1975. Europe, America and the cultural debate, in Superculture: American popular culture and Europe, edited by C.W.E. Biggsby. London: Elek:1-27.
- Biggsby, C.W.E. 1976. The politics of popular culture, in Approaches to popular culture, edited by C.W.E. Biggsby. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:3-26.
- Birch, M.J. 1987. The popular fiction industry market, formula, ideology. Journal of popular culture, 2(3):79-102.
- Blish, J. 1971. On science fiction criticism, in SF: the other side of realism, edited by T.D. Clareson. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:166-170.
- Bloom, C. 1996. Cult fiction: popular reading and pulp fiction. New York: St.Martin's.
- Bonk, W.J. & Magrill, R.M. 1979. Building library collections. 5th edition. London: Scarecrow.
- Bonny, H.V. 1939. A manual of practical book selection for public libraries. London: Grafton.

- Bostwick, A. 1929. American public library. New York: Appleton.
- Botha, E. 1985. Fiksie in die openbare biblioteek. South African journal of library and information science, 53:1-3.
- Bottomore, T. 1987. Sociology: a guide to problems and literature. 3rd edition. London: Allen.
- Bova, B. 1974. The role of science fiction, in Science fiction today and tomorrow, edited by R. Bretnor. New York: Harper:3-16.
- Bova, B. 1984. Symbolism in science fiction. The writer, 97:7-9.
- Bova, B. 1985. Science and science fiction, Omni, 7-35.
- Brace, W.B. 1969. The stuff of fiction. New York: Norton.
- Bradbury, M. 1995. The struggle to find a new age of style. Mail and Guardian, 22 December:22.
- Brann, J. 1992. An advocacy of fantasy. Artes Natales, 11(3):5-9.
- Bretnor, R. 1974a. Introduction, in Science fiction today and tomorrow, edited by R. Bretnor. New York: Harper:vii-ix.
- Bretnor, R. 1974b. Science fiction in the age of space, in Science fiction today and tomorrow, edited by R. Bretnor. New York: Harper:150-182.
- Bretnor, R. 1974c. The future of science fiction, in Science fiction, today and tomorrow. New York: Harper:260-279.
- Bretnor, R. 1979. Preface, in Modern science fiction: its meaning and its future, edited by R. Bretnor. Chicago: Advent:xiii-xvi.

- Brewis, W.L.-E. 1992. The policy of South African public libraries regarding the provision of fiction for adult readers. M. Bibl. dissertation, University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- Brewis, W.L.-E., Gericke, E.M. & Kruger, J.A. 1994. Reading needs and motives of adult users of fiction. Mousaion, 12(2):3-18.
- Brewis, W.L.-E., Gericke, E.M. & Kruger, J.A. 1996a. The policy of public libraries regarding the provision of fiction for adult readers. Mousaion, 14(2):4-16.
- Brewis, W.L.-E., Gericke, E.M. & Kruger, J.A. 1996b. Contemporary popular fiction as cultural and literary phenomenon. Mousaion, 14(2):46-67.
- Briggs, A. 1985. What is the history of popular culture. History Today, 35:39-45.
- Brittanica Atlas. 1989. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica.
- Broadus, R.N. 1981. Selecting methods for libraries. New York: Wilson.
- Broderick, D. 1991. SF and the postmodern. New York review of science fiction, 30:12-16.
- Broderick, D. 1992. Reading s.f. as a mega-text. New York review of science fiction, 47(1):1, 8-11.
- Broderick, D. 1993. SF as generic engineering. Foundation: review of science fiction, 59:16-28.
- Broderick, D. 1995. Reading by starlight: postmodern science fiction. New York: Routledge.
- Brooke-Norris, S.B. 1985. The Johannesburg reference library and the crisis in black education. South African journal of library and information science, 54(4):200-202.

- Browne, R.B. 1972a. Perspective: what is popular culture?, in Side-saddle on the golden calf: social structure in America, edited by G.H. Lewis. Pacific Palisades, Calif.: Goodyear:118-146.
- Browne, R.B. 1972b. Popular culture: notes towards a definition, in Side-saddle on the golden calf: social structure and popular culture in America, edited by G.H. Lewis. Pacific Palisades, Calif.: Goodyear:11-27.
- Browne, R.B. 1973. Popular culture: notes toward a definition, in Popular culture and the expanding consciousness, edited by R.B. Browne. New York: Wiley:14-22.
- Browne, R.B. 1981. Up from elitism: the aesthetics of popular fiction. Studies in American fiction, 9(2):217-231.
- Browne, R.B. 1983. Popular culture - new notes toward a definition, in The popular culture reader, edited by C.D. Geist & J. Nachbar. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:13-20.
- Brunner, J. 1974. The sheep look up. London: Arrow.
- Buell, L. 1973. The design of literature. West Haven: Pendulum.
- Bukatman, S. 1992. Terminal identity: the virtual subject in postmodern science fiction. Ph. D. thesis, New York University, New York.
- Bukatman, S. 1993. Terminal identity: the virtual subject in postmodern science fiction. London: Duke University.
- Burke, P. 1976. Oblique approaches to the history of popular culture, in Approaches to popular culture, edited by C.W.E. Bigsby. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:69-84.
- Burke, P. 1978. Popular culture in early modern Europe. New York: Harper.
- Burke, P. 1985. What is the history of popular culture? History today, 35:40-41.

- Busha, C.H. & Harter, S.P. 1980. Research methods in librarianship: techniques and interpretation. Orlando: Academic.
- Butor, M. 1971. Science fiction: the crisis of its growth, in SF: the other side of realism, edited by T.D. Claerson. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:158-165.
- Byrne, C.D. 1995. Selves and others: the politics of difference in the writings of Ursula K. Le Guin. D.Litt. et Phil. thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- Caillois, R. 1961. Men, play and games. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press.
- Campbell, A.K.D. 1971. Fiction in libraries: a new approach. Library association record, 73(10):184-186.
- Carey, J. 1992. Extreme prejudice. The Sunday Times (UK), 28 June:8-9.
- Carrier, E.J. 1985. Fiction in public libraries 1900-1950. Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited.
- Carnovsky, L. 1935. Community studies in reading, II, Hinsdale, a suburb of Chicago. Library quarterly, 5(1):1-30.
- Carter, M.D. & Bonk, W.J. 1969. Building library collections. 3rd edition. Methuen, NJ: Scarecrow.
- Carter, P.A. 1977. The creation of tomorrow: fifty years of magazine science fiction. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Carver, D. 1984. The worlds of science fiction. Kentucky libraries, 48:5-12.
- Cawelti, J.G. 1973. The concept of formula in the study of popular literature, in Popular culture and the expanding consciousness, edited by R.B. Browne. New York: Wiley & Sons:109-119.
- Cawelti, J. G. 1976. Adventure, mystery and romance: formula stories as art and popular culture. Chicago: University of Chicago.

- Cawelti, J.G. 1977. Literary formulas and cultural significance, in The study of American culture/contemporary conflicts, edited by L. Luedtke. Deland, Fla.: Edwards:177-217.
- Changing conception of life in the universe: latest evidence from Mars was just another episode in the hottest scientific drama of the year. 1996. The Star. 24 December:6.
- Childers, T. & Van House, N.A. 1989. Dimensions of public library effectiveness. Library and information science research, 11(3):273-293.
- Chittenden, M. 1984. How to be your own critic. The writer, 97:14-16.
- Christensen, J.O. 1984. Management of popular reading collection. Collection management, 6(3-4):75-82.
- Chitchevlov, I. 1981. Formulary for a new urbanism, in Situationist international anthology, edited by K. Knabb. Berkeley, Calif.: Bureau of Public Secrets:1-29.
- Cioffi, F. 1982. Formula fiction: an anatomy of American science fiction, 1930-1940. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood.
- Clayton, D. 1987. Science fiction: going around in generic circles, in Intersections: fantasy and science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser & E. Rabkin. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:201-227.
- Clareson, T.D. 1971a. Introduction, in SF: the other side of realism, edited by T.D. Clareson. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:ix-xv.
- Clareson, T.D. 1971b. The other side of realism, in SF: the other side of realism, edited by T.D. Clareson. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:1-28.
- Clareson, T.D. 1981. Toward a history of science fiction, in The science fiction reference handbook, edited by M.B. Tymm. Mercer Island, Wash.: Starmont:3-20.
- Clarke, A.C. 1993. Shaping things to come. The Sunday Times, 16 May: 6-9.

- Clarke, A.M. 1992. A woman writing: feminist awareness in the works of Ursula K. Le Guin. Ph.D. thesis, University of California, [s.l.].
- Clement, H. 1974. The creation of imaginary beings, in Science fiction today and tomorrow. New York: Harper:259-277.
- Clifton, M. 1987. Jewels of wonder, instruments of delight: science fiction, fantasy, and science fantasy as vision-inducing works, in Intersections: fantasy and science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser & E. Rabkin. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:97-107.
- Cloete, T.T., Botha, E. & Malan, C. 1989. Gids by die literatuurstudie. Hersiene uitgawe. Pretoria: HAUM-Literêr,
- Clute, J. 1992. Is science fiction out to lunch, in The nebula awards 28, edited by J. Morrow. New York: Harcourt:1-9.
- Clute, J. 1995. Science fiction: the illustrated encyclopaedia. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau.
- Clute, J. & Nicholls, P. 1993. The encyclopaedia of science fiction. London: Orbit.
- Coetzee, P.C. 1983. Reading and readers. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.
- Coleman, S.A. 1989. The late-Victorian era and the flowering of four literary types: a study in the sociology of literature. Ph.D. thesis, Syracuse University, Syracuse.
- Collings, M.R. 1987. Filling the niche: fantasy and science fiction in contemporary horror, in Intersections: fantasy and science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser & E. Rabkin. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:48-55.
- Cordesse, G. 1975. The impact of American science fiction on Europe, in Superculture: American popular culture and Europe. London: Elek:160-174.
- Cox, M. 1990. Engendering critical literacy through science fiction and fantasy. English journal, 79(3):35-38.

- Craft, C. 1984. 'Kiss me with those red lips': gender and inversion in Bram Stoker's Dracula. Representations, 8:107-133.
- Csicsery-Ronay, L. 1992. Postmodern technoculture, or the Gordian knot revisited. Science-fiction studies, 19(3):399-419.
- Cuddon, J.A. 1985. A dictionary of literary terms. New York: Penguin.
- Culler, J. 1975. Structuralist poetics: structuralism, linguistics and the study of literature. New York: Ithaca.
- Curl, R. 1992. The metaphors of cyberpunk, ontology, epistemology and science fiction, in Fiction 2000: cyberpunk and the future of narrative, edited by G. Slusser & T. Shippey. Athens, Ga: University of Georgia:230-245.
- Curley, A. & Broderick, D. 1985. Building library collections. 6th edition. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow.
- Cutter, C.A. 1901. Should libraries buy only the best books or the best books that people will read. Library journal, 26:70-72.
- Daiches, D. 1974. Critical approaches to literature. London: Longman.
- Davies, P.J. 1990. Science fiction and conflict, in Science fiction, social conflict and war, edited by P.J. Davies. Manchester: Manchester University:1-8.
- Davis, E. 1965. Traditions of poetics: scriptural, classical, continental and English. Cape Town: Simondium.
- Davis, K.C. 1984. Two-bit culture: the paperbacking of America. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- DeKoven, M. 1991. Rich and strange: gender, history, modernism. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University.

- Delany, S.R. 1977. The jewel-hinged jaw: notes on the language of science fiction. New York: Berkley.
- Delany, S.R. 1978. The American shore: meditations on a tale of science fiction by Thomas M Disch-Angouleme. New York: Dragon.
- Delany, S.R. 1981. Some reflections on SF criticism. Science-fiction studies, 8(3):233-239.
- Delany, S.R. 1984. Starboard wine: more notes on the language of science fiction. New York: Dragon.
- Delany, S.R. 1987. The gestation of genres: literature, fiction, romance, science fiction, fantasy ... , in Intersections: fantasy and science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser & E. Rabkin. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:63-73.
- Delinsky, B. 1986. The novelist as storyteller. The writer, 99:78-90.
- Del Rey, L. 1980. The world of science fiction 1926-1976: the history of a subculture. New York: Garland.
- De Pew, J.N. 1975. An acquisitions decision model for academic libraries. Journal of the American society for information science, 26:230-246.
- Dervin, B. 1977. The development of strategies for dealing with the information needs of urban residents, phase I -citizen study; phase II - information practitioner study; phase III - applications. Washington, DC: US Office of Libraries and Learning Resources.
- De Tocqueville, A. 1957. In what spirit the Americans cultivate the arts, in Mass culture: the popular arts in America, edited by B. Rosenberg & D.M. White. New York: Free Press:27-34.
- Dickson, G.R. 1974. Plausibility in science fiction, in Science fiction today and tomorrow. New York: Harper:295-309.
- Disch, T.M. 1992. Big ideas and dead-end thrills. The Atlantic Monthly, 269:86-88.

- Dixon, J. 1980. The librarian and the novel. Assistant librarian, 73(6):82-87.
- Dixon, J. 1986a. Book selection, in Fiction in libraries, edited by J. Dixon. London: Library Association:141-153.
- Dixon, J. 1986b. Introduction, in Fiction in libraries, edited by J. Dixon. London: Library Association:vii-x.
- Dixon, J. 1986c. Reviews, on Fiction in libraries, edited by J. Dixon. London: Library Association:134-140.
- Dixon, J. 1986d. Selection, in Fiction in libraries, edited by J. Dixon. London: Library Association:127-141.
- Dixon, J. 1986e. Statistics and surveys, in Fiction in libraries, edited by J. Dixon. London: Library Association:1-20.
- Dixon, J. 1986f. Types of fiction material, in Fiction in libraries, edited by J. Dixon. London: Library Association:21-111.
- Donahoo, B. 1985. Moving with the mainstream: a view of postmodern American science fiction, in Critical essays on American postmodernism, edited by S. Trachtenberg. New York: Hall:131-165.
- Dowling, D. 1987. Fictions of nuclear disaster. Iowa City: University of Iowa.
- Downing, P.E. 1992. Writing science fiction: where to begin. The writer, 105:18-20.
- Dozois, G. 1995. Summation 1994, in The year's best science fiction: twelfth annual collection, edited by G. Dozois. New York: St. Martin's:xi-xvi.
- Drabble, M. 1991. Foreword, in Managing fiction in libraries, edited by M Kinnell. London: Library Association:vii-viii.
- Drury, F. 1930. Book selection. Chicago: American Library Association.

- Dubeck, L.W. 1990. Science fiction and science fiction teaching. Physics teacher, 28(5):316-318.
- Durnford, M. 1985. Collection building and maintenance. Artes Natales, 4(6):16-22.
- Eagleton, T. 1978. The idea of a common culture, in Culture and mass culture, edited by P. Davison ...[*et al.*]. Cambridge, UK: Chadwyk:291-321.
- Eagleton, T. 1983. Literary theory: an introduction. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Easthope, A. 1990. The personal and the political in utopian science fiction, in Science fiction, social conflict and war, edited by P.J. Davies. Manchester, UK: Manchester University:50-68.
- Ebert, T.L. 1980. The convergence of postmodern innovative fiction and science fiction: an encounter with Samuel R. Delany's technotopia. Poetics today, 1(4):91-104.
- Eco, Umberto. 1984. The role of the reader: explorations in the semiotics of texts. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University.
- Eco, Umberto. 1990. The limits of interpretation. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University.
- Edelman, H. 1979. Selection methodology in academic libraries: Library resources & technical services, 23:33-38.
- Eisenstein, A. 1976. The time machine and the end of time. Science-fiction studies, 3:161-165.
- Eliot, T.S. 1949. Notes towards the definition of culture. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Elkins, C. 1979. Science fiction versus futurology: dramatic versus rational roles. Science-fiction studies, 6:21-31.
- Epstein, J. 1984. What's left to shock when anything goes? The writer, 97:7-8.

- Erisman, F. 1988. Robert Heinleins' case for racial tolerance, 1954-1956. Extrapolation: a journal of science fiction and fantasy, 29(3):216-226.
- Escarpit, R. 1966. The book revolution. London: Harrap.
- Evans, G.E. 1979. Developing library collections. Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited.
- Evans, G.E. 1987. Developing library and information center collections. 2nd edition. Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited.
- Everman, W.D. 1986. The paper world: science fiction in the postmodern era, in Postmodern fiction: a bio-bibliographical guide, edited by L. McCaffery. New York: Greenwood:23-38.
- Fadiman, C. 1992. The art of literature, in Encyclopaedia Britannica. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica.
- Fiedler, L.A. 1975. Towards a definition of popular literature, in Superculture: American popular culture and Europe, edited by C.W.E. Bigsby. London: Elek:28-42.
- Fiedler, L. 1982. What was literature?: class culture and mass society. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Fiske, J. 1992. Reading the popular. Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Fiske, M. 1968. Book selection and censorship. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.
- Fluck, W. 1988. Fiction and fictionality in popular culture: some observations on the aesthetics of popular culture. Journal of popular culture, 21(4):49-62.
- Foerstel, H.N. 1994. Banned in the U.S.A.: a reference guide to book censorship in schools and public libraries. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood.
- Forgacs, D. 1985. Marxist literary themes, in Modern literary criticism, edited by A. Jefferson & D. Robey. London: Batsford Academic:134-169.

- Fourie, P.J. 1985. Die openbare biblioteek en populêre kultuur. South African journal of library and information science, 53(1):21-27.
- Fourie, J.A., Gericke, E.M. & Machet, M.P. 1996. Applied information user studies: study guide for TIN 402-W (Determining needs, developing information collections and user guidance). Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Fowler, A. 1971. The life and death of literary forms. New literary history, 2:199-216.
- Fox, R.G. 1992. The concept and components of culture, in Encyclopaedia Britannica. Chicago: Britannica:874-891.
- Franklin, H.B. 1980. Robert A. Heinlein: America as science fiction. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Franklin, H.B. 1990. Eternally safe for democracy: the final solution of American science fiction, in Science fiction, social conflict and war, edited by P.J. Davies. Manchester: Manchester University:151-168.
- Franklin, H.B. 1995. Introduction, in Future perfect: American science fiction of the nineteenth century: an anthology, edited by H.B. Franklin. Revised and expanded edition. New Brunswick: Rutgers University:1-4.
- Frederiks, C. 1982. The future of eternity: mythologies of science fiction and fantasy. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University.
- Freedman, C. 1987. Science fiction and critical theory. Science-fiction studies, 14(2):180-200.
- Futas, E. 1984. Library acquisition policies and procedures. Phoenix, Ariz.: Oryx Press.
- Frye, N. 1982. A study of English romanticism. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Gans, H.J. 1965. The public library in perspective, in The public library and the city, edited by R.W. Conant. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press:55-70.

- Gans, H.J. 1974. Popular culture and high culture: an analysis and evaluation of taste. New York: Basic.
- Gans, H.J. 1978. Popular culture in America: social problem in a mass society or social asset in a pluralist society, in Culture and mass culture, edited by P. Davison ... [*et al.*]. Cambridge, UK: Chadwyk:70-84.
- Gardner, R.K. 1981. Library collections: their origin, selection and development. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Gaus, H. 1979. The functions of fiction: the function of written fiction in the social process. Ghent: Wetenschappelijke Uitgeverij.
- Geist, C.D. & Nachbar, J. 1983. Introduction: what is popular culture?, in The popular culture reader, edited by C.D. Geist & J. Nachbar. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:1-12.
- Gerhard, K.H. 1991. Mystery and detective fiction: a qualitative approach. Public library quarterly, 10(4):49-59.
- Gertz, M.B. 1986. Fiction in the public library. Cape librarian, 33(1):6-9.
- Gibson, W. 1986. Burning Chrome. New York: Arbor.
- Gibson, W. 1988. Burning Chrome, in The nebula awards 18, edited by R. Silverberg. New York: Arbor:106-115.
- Gilmore, M. 1986. The rise of cyberpunk. Rolling Stone, 4 December:77-78, 107-108.
- Glazer, N. 1971. The role of the intellectuals. Commentary, 53:55-61.
- Goldbort, R. 1991. Literature, science, and liberal education: toward integration studies. Teaching English in the two-year college, 18(2):121-125.

- Goodall, D. & Kinnell, M. 1992. Fiction services, in Informing communities, edited by M. Kinnell. London: CSG Publishing:209-230.
- Gorman, G.E. 1986. Guidelines for collection development courses in Australian library schools. Education for librarianship, 3(1):38-45.
- Gorman, G.E. & Howes, B.R. 1988. Collection development for Australian libraries. Wagga-Wagga, NSW: Centre for Library Studies.
- Gorman, G.E. & Howes, B.R. 1989. Collection development for libraries. London: Bowker-Sauer.
- Graff, G. 1989. Narrative and the unofficial interpretive culture, in Reading narrative: form, ethics, ideology, edited by J. Phelan. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University:3-12.
- Graham, J.M. 1972. Voice from Earth. London: Chaucer Press.
- Granger, B. 1987. Writing a novel. The writer, 100:10-12.
- Greene, S.E. 1980. Best sellers, in Handbook of American popular culture, edited by M.T. Inge. Westpoint, Conn.: Greenwood:31-56.
- Griffin, G.B. 1980. 'Your girls that you all love are mine': Dracula and Victorian male sexual imagination. International journal of women's studies, 3:454-465.
- Gunn, J. 1974. Science fiction and the mainstream, in Science fiction today and tomorrow, edited by R. Bretnor. New York: Harper:183-216.
- Gunn, J. 1975. Alternate worlds. Englewood Cliffs, NY: Prentice Hall.
- Hailey, E.F. 1991. The essence of storytelling. The writer, 104:9-11.
- Haines, H.E. 1950. Living with books: the art of book selection. 2nd edition. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Haines, H.E. 1960. What's in a novel New York: Columbia University.
- Hall, S. & Whannel, P. 1965. The popular arts. New York: Pantheon.
- Hamilton, C. 1993. American genre fiction, in Modern American culture, edited by M. Gidley. New York: Longman:312-334.
- Hamlin, J.B. 1980. The selection process, in Collection development in libraries: a treatise, edited by R.E. Stewart & G.B. Miller. New York: Holt:185-201.
- Hanzo, T.A. 1980. The past of science fiction, in Bridges to science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser ...[*et al.*]. Carbondale: Illinois University:131-147.
- Harmeyer, D. 1995. Potential collection development bias: some evidence on a controversial topic in California. College & research libraries, 56(2):101-111.
- Hartwell, D. 1984. Will success spoil SF? Publisher's Weekly, 30 November:31-33.
- Hassan, I. 1980. The right Promethean fire: imagination, science and cultural change. Urbana, Ill.: Illinois University.
- Hassan, I. 1987. Making sense: the trials of postmodernism. New literary history, 18(2):437-459.
- Hatt, F. 1976. The reading process, a framework for analysis and description. London: Bingley.
- Hazen, D.C. 1982. Collection development collection management, and preservation: Library resources & technical services, 26:3-11.
- Hemingway, G.R. 1989. Effective transitions. The writer, 102:21-23.
- Herbert, F. 1974. Science fiction and a world in crisis, in Science fiction today and tomorrow, edited by R. Bretnor. New York: Harper:69-97.

- Herbert, R. 1986a. The author's visions: six leading SF writers describe their works. Publishers Weekly, 23 May:42-46.
- Herbert, R. 1986b. The now and future market place. Publishers Weekly, 23 May:59-62.
- Hill, D. 1978. Major theories, ideas, attitudes and idioms, in Encyclopedia of science fiction, edited by R. Holdstock. London: Octopus:28-49.
- Hillegas, M. 1971. Science fiction as a cultural phenomenon: a re-evaluation, in SF: the other side of realism, edited by T.D. Claeson. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:272-281.
- Hillegas, M. 1979. The literary background to science fiction, in Science fiction: a critical guide, edited by P. Parrinder. London: Longman:2-18.
- Hillinger, V. 1989. The vampire and the alien: variations on the outsider. Science-fiction studies, 16:145-160.
- Hinckley, K. & Hinckley, B. 1989. American bestsellers: a reader's guide to popular fiction, Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University.
- Hirsch, E. 1967. Validity in interpretation. London: Yale University.
- Holdstock, R. 1978. Locations: a modern perspective on science fiction, in Encyclopedia of science fiction, edited by R. Holdstock. London: Octopus:8-17.
- Hollinger, V. 1991. Cybernetic deconstructions: cyberpunk and postmodernism, in Storming the reality studio, edited by L. McCaffery. London: Duke University:203:219.
- Holmer, M. 1986. Twelve secrets of style. The writer, 99:10-14.
- Horne, E.M. 1975. A look at bibliotherapy. Special libraries, 66:27-31.
- Horton, P.B. & Hunt, C.L. 1972. Sociology. 3rd edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Houghton, T. 1985. Bookstock management in public libraries. London: Bingley.
- Hugo, L.H. 1985. A defence of popular fiction. South African journal of library and information science, 53(4):170-177.
- Huizinga, J. 1950. Homo ludens. Boston: Beacon.
- Hume, K. 1982. Medieval romance and science fiction: the anatomy of resemblance, 16:15-26.
- Hume, K. 1987. Gravity's rainbow: science fiction, fantasy and mythology, in Intersections: fantasy and science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser & E. Rabkin. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:190-201.
- Hunt, R. 1980. Visionary states and the search for transcendence in science fiction, in Bridges to science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser ...[*et al.*]. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:64-78.
- Huntington, J. 1979. The science fiction of H.G. Wells, in Science fiction: a critical guide, edited by P. Parrinder. London: Longman:34-51.
- Huysen, A. 1986. After the great divide. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University.
- Inge, T.M. 1978. Preface, in Handbook of American popular culture, edited by T.M. Inge. Westpoint, Conn.: Greenwood:ix-x.
- Isaacs, M. 1987. Fiction: a neglected aspect of library service. Australian library journal, 36(3):167-173.
- Ivonen, M. 1988. On the library classification of fiction. Scandinavian public library quarterly, 21(1):12-15.
- Jagannathan, N. 1988. Collection development at Andhra Pradesh Open University libraries. Library acquisitions: practice & theory, 12:281-296.

- Jameson, F. 1975a. World reduction in Le Guin: the emergence of utopian narrative. Science fiction studies, 2:221-230.
- Jameson, F. 1975b. Magical narratives: romance as genre. New literary history, 7:135-163.
- Jameson, F. 1977. Ideology, narrative analysis, and popular culture. Theory and society, 4:543-559.
- Jameson, F. 1982a. Towards a new awareness of genre. Science-fiction studies, 9(3):322-324.
- Jameson, F. 1982b. Progress versus utopia; or, can we imagine the future. Science-fiction studies, 27(9):147-158.
- Jameson, F. 1984. Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of later capitalism. New left review, 146:53-92.
- Jameson, F. 1991a. Postmodernism or the cultural logic of late capitalism, in Post-contemporary interventions, edited by S. Fish & F. Jameson. Durham, NC: Duke University:410-446.
- Jameson, F. 1991b. Postmodernism, or, the cultural logic of late capitalism. Durham, NC: Duke University.
- Japsen, A.L. 1993. Book selection in Danish public libraries. Scandinavian library quarterly, 26(4):20-23.
- Jefferson, A. 1985. Structuralism and post-structuralism, in Modern literary theory, edited by A. Jefferson & D. Robey. London: Batsford Academic.
- Jefferson, A. & D. Robey 1985. Introduction, in Modern literary theory, edited by A. Jefferson & D. Robey. London: Batsford Academic:1-15.
- Jordin, M. 1984. Contemporary futures: the analysis of science fiction, in Popular fiction and social change, edited by C. Pawling. London: Macmillan:50-75.

- Kagarlitski, J. 1971. Realism and fantasy, in SF: the other side of realism, edited by T.D. Clareson. Bowling Green: Bowling Green University:29-52.
- Kando, T.M. 1975. Leisure and popular culture in transition. St.Louis, Miss.: Mosby.
- Kane, P. 1994. The good, the bad and the ugly. The Sunday Times, 8 May: 8-10.
- Katz, B. 1992. Thoughts on selection, in The collection building reader, edited by B.-C. Sellen & A. Curley. New York: Neal-Schuman:26-78.
- Katz, E. & Foulkes, D. 1962. On the use of the mass media as escape: clarification of a concept. Public opinion quarterly, 26:377-388.
- Katz, W.A. 1980. Collection development: the selection of materials for libraries. New York: Holt Rinehart.
- Kaye, M. 1980. In defense of formula fiction; or they don't write schlock the way they used to. Top of the news, 37(1):87-90.
- Keeling, T.H. 1980. Science fiction and the gothic, in Bridges to science fiction, edited by P. Parrinder. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:107-120.
- Kerlinger, F.N. 1986. Formulations of behavioral research. 3rd edition, New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Ketterer, D. 1992. A typology of S.F. Science-fiction studies, 19:109-116.
- Killheffer, R.K.J. 1993. PW interviews: William Gibson. Publishers Weekly, 240:70-71.
- Klein, G. 1977. Discontent in American science fiction. Science fiction studies, 4(1):3-13.
- Knight, D. 1967. In search of wonder. 2nd edition. Chicago: Advent.
- Knight, D. 1980. Introduction, in Orbit 21, edited by D. Knight. New York: Harper:vii-xiii.

- Kohl, D.F. 1988. Collection development: an overview of the research. Collection management, 10(3/4):1-12.
- Kraft, K.T. 1980. Incorporating divinity: platonic science fiction in the Middle Ages, in Bridges to science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser ...[*et al.*]. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:22-41.
- Kreuziger, F.A. 1986. The religion of science fiction. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University.
- Kroeber, K. 1988. Romantic fantasy and science fiction. New Haven: Yale University.
- Labdon, P. 1991. Acquiring adult fiction, in Managing fiction in libraries, edited by M. Kinnell. London: Library Association:34-47.
- Landesman, C. 1993. Culture clash. The Sunday Times, UK, 14 November:11.
- Landon, B. 1993. Hypertext and science fiction. Science-fiction studies, 20:449-456.
- Langan, S. 1992. You cannot be serious. The Sunday Times, UK, 12 April:5.
- Larson, D.M. 1981. Thematic structure and conventions in science fiction. The sphinx: a magazine of literature and society, 4(1):38-45.
- Leedy, P.D. 1989. Practical research: planning and design. 4th edition. New York: Macmillan.
- Leedy, P.D. 1993. Practical research: planning and design. 5th edition. Prentice Hall, NJ: Macmillan.
- Le Guin, U.K. 1969. The Left Hand of Darkness. London: Orbit.
- Le Guin, U.K. 1992. The language of the night: essays on fantasy and science fiction. New York: Harper-Collins.

- Le Guin, U.K. 1993. Introduction, in The Norton book of science fiction, edited by U.K. Le Guin and B. Attebery. New York: Norton:15-44.
- Leiby, D.A. 1987. The tooth that gnaws: reflections on time travel, in Intersections: fantasy and science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser & E. Rabkin. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:107-119.
- Lem, S. 1971. Robots in science fiction, in SF: the other side of realism, edited by T.D. Clareson. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:307-325.
- Lem, S. 1974. The time travel story and related matters of SF structuring. Science fiction studies, 1:143-154.
- Leonard, J. 1993. Gravity's rainbow. The nation, 257-580.
- Lesser, S.O. 1957. Fiction and the unconscious. New York: Vintage.
- Levin, H. 1980. Science and fiction, in Bridges to science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser ... [et al.]. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:3-22.
- Lewis, G.H. 1972. Introduction, in Side-saddle on the golden calf: social structure and popular culture in America, edited by G.H. Lewis. Pacific Palisades, Calif.: Goodyear:i-xxi.
- Lewis, G.H. 1978. Trend report: the sociology of popular culture. Current sociology, 26(3):3-80.
- Lezard, N. 1993. Invasion of the SF snatchers. The Sunday Times UK, 16 May:9.
- Lindsfold, J.M. 1993. The elements of fantastic fiction. The writer, 106:18-21.
- Lomax, W. 1989. Landscape and the romantic dilemma: myth and metaphor in science-fiction narrative, in Mindscapes: the geographics of imagined worlds, edited by G. E. Slusser and E.S. Rabkin. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:242-256.

- Longhurst, D. 1989. Introduction, in Gender, genre and narrative pleasure, edited by D. Longhurst. London: Unwin:1-10.
- Lor, P.J. 1990. Research methods in literary and information science: study guide for BIB302-G. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Lor, P.J. 1994. RDP and LIS: an analysis of the Reconstruction and Development Programme from the perspective of library and information services. South African journal of library and information science, 62(4):128-135.
- Lowenthal, L. 1957. Historical perspectives of popular culture, in Mass culture: the popular arts in America, edited by B. Rosenberg and D.M. White. New York: Free Press:46-58.
- Lowenthal, L. 1961. Literature, popular culture and society. Palo Alto, Calif.: Pacific Books.
- Lowenthal, L. 1984. Literature and mass culture: communication in society. New Brunswick: Transaction.
- Luckhurst, R. 1991. Border policing: postmodernism and science fiction. Science-fiction studies, 18:358-366.
- Luckhurst, R. 1994. The many deaths of science fiction: a polemic. Science-fiction studies, 21:35-50.
- Lyotard, J.F. 1984. The postmodern condition. Manchester, UK: [s.n.].
- McCaffery, A. 1974. Romance and glamour in science fiction, in Science fiction today and tomorrow. New York: Harper:278-294.
- McCaffery, L. 1986. Introduction, in Postmodern fiction: a bio-bibliographical guide, edited by L. McCaffery. New York: Greenwood:xi-xxviii.
- McCaffery, L. 1990. Across the wounded galaxies: interviews with contemporary American science fiction writers. Urbana: Illinois University.

- McClintock, M.W. 1987. High tech and high sorcery: some discriminations between science fiction and fantasy, in Intersections fantasy and science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser & E. Rabkin. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:27-36.
- McColvin, R. 1925. The theory of book selection for public libraries. London: Grafton.
- McConnell, F. 1987. Frames in search of a genre, in Intersections: fantasy and science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser & E. Rabkin. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:119-132.
- McCrown, K.L. 1979. Marketing research: text and cases. Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop.
- McCurdy, H.G. 1968. The psychology of literature, in International encyclopaedia of the social sciences, edited by D. Sills. [s.l.]:Macmillan:425-433.
- Macdonald, D. 1957. A theory of mass culture, in Mass culture: the popular arts in America, edited by B. Rosenberg and D.M. White. New York: Free Press:59-73.
- McDougal, W.A. 1985. The heavens and the earth: a political history of the space age. New York: Basic.
- McGrath, W.E. 1985. Collection evaluation - theory and the search for structure. Library trends, 33(3):241-246.
- McGrath, W.E. 1986. Circulation clusters - an empirical approach to decentralization of academic libraries. Journal of academic librarianship, 12(4):221-226.
- McGrath, W.E., Geraci, D. & Romney, A.K. 1988. Matrix models and the search for structure in subject majors circulation: a methodological study. Library and information science research, 10(1):77-94.
- McGuirk, C. 1992. The 'new' romancers: science fiction innovators from Gernsback to Gibson, in Fiction 2000: cyberpunk and the future of narrative, edited by G. Slusser & T. Shippey. Athens, Ga: University of Georgia:109-129.

- McHale, B. 1987. Postmodernist fiction. New York: Methuen.
- McHale, B. 1992a. Constructing postmodernism. London: Routledge.
- McHale, B. 1992b. Elements of a poetics of cyberpunk. Critique: studies in contemporary fiction, 33(3):149-175.
- McIntosh, J.R. 1973. Galactic Takeover Bid. London: Ace.
- McKay, G. 1994. It's not 'about' science, it's 'about' fiction, and it's 'about' about. Foundation: the review of science fiction, 60:51-57.
- Mackey, D.A. 1984. Science fiction and gnosticism. The missouri review, 7(2):112-121.
- McLintock, M. 1973. Some preliminaries to the criticism of science fiction. Extrapolation, 15:17-24.
- McNelly, W.E. 1971. Science fiction: the modern mythology, in SF: the other side of realism, edited by T.D. Clareson. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:193-198.
- McQuail, D. 1969. Towards a sociology of mass communications. London: Collier.
- Madden, D. 1973. The necessity for an aesthetics of popular culture. Journal of popular culture, 7:1-13.
- Malmgren, C.D. 1980. Philip Dick's *Man in the high castle* and the nature of science-fictional worlds, in Bridges to science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser ...[*et al.*]. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:120-131.
- Malmgren, C.D. 1991a. Worlds apart: narratology of science fiction. Indianapolis: Indiana University.
- Malmgren, C.D. 1991b. Against genre/theory: the state of science fiction criticism. Poetics today, 12(1):125-144.

- Manlove, C. N. 1986. Science fiction: ten explorations. Kent: Kent State University.
- Mann, P.H. & Burgoyne, J.L. 1969. Books and reading. London: Deutsch.
- Mann, P.H. 1971. Books, buyer and borrowers. London: Deutsch.
- Mann, P.H. 1974. A new survey: the facts about romantic fiction. London: Mills & Boon.
- Mann, P.H. 1981. The romantic novel and its readers. Journal of popular culture, 15(1):9-18.
- Mann, P.H. 1991. Fiction readers: what people want to read, in Managing fiction in libraries, edited by M. Kinnell. London: Library Association:1-16.
- Mathieson, K. 1985. The influence of science fiction in the contemporary American novel. Science-fiction studies, 12(1):22-32.
- Maylor, P.R. 1986. Mood, plot and theme. The writer, 99:12-14.
- Mays, M.A. 1971. Frankenstein, Mary Shelley's black theodicy, in SF: the other side of realism, edited by T.D. Clareson. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:171-180.
- Mellor, A. 1984. Science fiction and the crisis of the educated middle class, in Popular fiction and social change, edited by C. Pawling. London: Macmillan:20-49.
- Mepham, J. 1991. Narratives of postmodernism, in Postmodernism and contemporary fiction, edited by E.J. Smyth. London: Batsford:138-155.
- Merrill, J. 1971. What do you mean: science? Fiction?, in SF: the other side of realism, edited by T.D. Clareson. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:53-95.
- Merritt, L.C. 1970. Book selection and intellectual freedom. New York: Wilson.
- Merry, B. 1977. Anatomy of the spy thriller. Bristol: Bristol Typesetting.

- Miller, F.D. & Smith, N.D. 1982. Introduction: the philosophical appeal of science fiction, in Philosophers look at science fiction, edited by N.D. Smith. Chicago: Nelson Hall:1-20.
- Miller, J.D. 1987. Parallel universes: fantasy or science fiction?, in Intersections: fantasy and science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser & E. Rabkin. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:19-25.
- Moore, C. 1982. Core collection development in a medium-sized public library. Library resources & technical services, Jan/Mar:37-46.
- Moore, P. 1951. Science and fiction. London: Harrap.
- Moretto, S. & Weidenburner, K. 1984. We'll take romance. Library journal, 15 September:1727-1728.
- Mosher, P.H. 1984. Quality and library collections: new directions in research and practice in collection evaluation, in Advances in librarianship, vol 13, edited by G.W. Simonton. Orlando, Fla: Academic.
- Moskowitz, M. 1984. Collection development and the college library: a state-of-the-art review. Collection building, Summer:5-10.
- Moskowitz, S. 1986. Five steps to science fiction sanity. Extrapolation, 27:281-294.
- Mott, F.L. 1957. Is there a best seller formula, in Mass culture: the popular arts in America, edited by B. Rosenberg and D.M. White. New York: Free press:113-118.
- Mouton, J. & Marais, H.C. 1991. Basic concepts in the methodology of the social sciences. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.
- Mulder, J. 1973. Leesmotivering en die rol van belangstelling. Pretoria: Universiteit van Suid-Afrika. (Mousaion II.3).
- Murry, J.M. 1960. Selected criticism 1916-1957. London: Oxford University.

- Nachmias, D. & Nachmias, C. 1976. Research methods in the social sciences. 2nd edition: London: Arnold.
- Nell, V. 1985. Informer or entertainer - ten series between elite and popular culture in the work of a public librarian. South African journal of library and information science, 53(4):159-169.
- Nell, V. 1988a. The psychology of reading for pleasure: needs and gratification. Reading research quarterly, 23:6-50.
- Nell, V. 1988b. Lost in a book: the psychology of reading for pleasure. New Haven: Yale University.
- Neuburg, V.E. 1977. Popular literature: a history and guide: from the beginning of printing to the year 1897. London: Woburn.
- Nourse, A. 1974. Science fiction and man's adaptation to change, in Science fiction today and tomorrow. New York: Harper:116-134.
- Nye, R. 1970. The unembarrassed muse: the popular arts in America. New York: Dial.
- Nye, R.B. 1983. Notes on a rationale for popular culture, in The popular culture reader, edited by C.D. Geist & J. Nachbar. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:21-29.
- O'Flaherty, W.D. 1989. The survival of myth in science fiction, in Mindscapes: the geographics of imagined worlds, edited by G.E. Slusser & E.S. Rabkin. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:16-33.
- Olsen, L. 1992. Cyberpunk and the crisis of postmodernity, in Fiction 2000: cyberpunk and the future of narrative, edited by G. Slusser & T. Shippey. Athens, Ga: University of Georgia:142-154.
- Oosthuizen, B.L. 1980. 'n Analitiese studie van leesgedrag met spesiale verwysing na die lees van die Afrikaanse roman. M. Bibl. dissertation, Johannesburg, Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit..

- Oosthuizen, B.L. 1981. Keuring van biblioteekversamelings. South African journal of library and information science, 50(2):64-70.
- Oosthuizen, B.L. 1991. Teksevaluering soos gedoen deur die keurder, die literator en die sensor. D Litt. et Phil. thesis, Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit, Johannesburg.
- Oosthuizen, B.L. 1994. Selection of fiction in the public library: a model of the decision-making process. South African journal of library and information science, 62(3):85-89.
- Ortega y Gasset, J. 1957. The coming of the masses, in Mass culture: the popular arts in America, edited by B. Rosenberg and D.M. White. New York: Free Press:38-48.
- Pace, S. 1993. Exploring your science fiction world. The writer, 106:9-12.
- Palmer, J. 1991. Potboilers: methods, concepts and case studies in popular fiction. London: Routledge.
- Pankake, M. 1984. From book selection to collection management: continuity and advance in an unending work, in Advances in librarianship, vol 13, edited by G.W. Simonton. Orlando, Fla: Academic:185-210.
- Panshin, A. 1971. Science fiction in dimension, in SF: the other side of realism, edited by T.D. Clareson. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:326-333.
- Panshin, A. & Panshin, C. 1974. Science fiction, new trends and old, in Science fiction today and tomorrow. New York: Harper:217-235.
- Parrinder, P. 1979a. The alien encounter: or Ms Brown and Mrs Le Guin, in Science fiction: a critical guide, edited by P. Parrinder. London: Longman:148-161.
- Parrinder, P. 1979b. Science fiction and the scientific world-view, in Science fiction: a critical guide, edited by P. Parrinder. London: Longman:67-90.

- Parrinder, P. 1979c. Editor's introduction, in Science fiction: a critical guide, edited by P. Parrinder. London: Longman:vii-x.
- Parrinder, P. 1980a. Science fiction: its criticism and teaching. New York: Methuen.
- Parrinder, P. 1980b. Science fiction as truncated epic, in Bridges to science fiction, edited by P. Parrinder. Carbondale, Ill.: University of Illinois:91-107.
- Pawling, C. 1984. Introduction: popular fiction: ideology or utopia, in Popular fiction and social change, edited by C. Pawling. London: Macmillan:1-19.
- Peacock, J.M. 1988. The unreconstructed man: the fiction of Philip K. Dick. Ph.D. thesis, University of Liverpool, Liverpool.
- Pejterson, A.M. & Austin, J. 1984. Fiction retrieval: experimental design. Journal of Documentation, 40(1):25-35.
- Pernicon, C. 1987. Homecomings: fantasy and horror, in Intersections: fantasy and science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser & E. Rabkin: Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:171-181.
- Perrin, N. 1989. Science fiction: imaginary worlds and real-life questions. New York Times book review, 9 April:37-38.
- Pieterse, L. 1989. The selection dilemma. Cape librarian, 33(6):12-15.
- Pors, N.O. 1986. Education for acquisitions: problems at the Danish library school. Library acquisitions: practice and theory, 10:141-149.
- Pohl, F. 1974. The publishing of science fiction, in Science fiction today and tomorrow. New York: Harper:17-45.
- Potts, S.W. 1980. Dialogues concerning human understanding: empirical views of God from Locke to Lem, on Bridges to science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser ...[et al.]. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:41-53.

- Priest, Christopher. 1978. New Wave: a radical change in the 1960s, in Encyclopedia of science fiction, edited by R. Holdstock. London: Octopus:162-173.
- Priest, C. 1979. British science fiction, in Science fiction: a critical guide, edited by P. Parrinder. London: Longman:187-203.
- Prothero, J. 1990. Fantasy, science fiction and the teaching of values. English journal, 79(3):32-34.
- Puschmann-Nalenz, B. 1992. Science fiction and post-modern fiction: a genre study. New York: Lang.
- Rabinovitz, R. 1975. Mass art and cultural decline. Journal of popular culture, 9:366-374.
- Rabkin, E.S. 1980. Fairy tales and science fiction, in Bridges to science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser ... [*et al.*]. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:78-91.
- Radway, J. 1987. Phenomenology, linguistics and popular literature. Journal of popular culture, 12(1):88-98.
- Ranganathan, S.R. 1966. Library book selection. London: Asia.
- Remington, T.J. 1977. Three reservations on the structural road. Science-fiction studies, 4:48-54.
- Rimmen-Kenan, S. 1983. Narrative fiction: contemporary poetics. New York: Methuen.
- Roberts, K. 1966. Pavane. St Albans, UK: Panther.
- Roberts, T.J. 1990. An aesthetics of junk fiction. Athens, Ga: University of Georgia.
- Robey, R. 1985a. Modern linguistics and the language of literature, in Modern literary theory, edited by A. Jefferson & D. Robey. London: Batsford Academic:38-64.
- Robey, R. 1985b. Anglo-American new criticism, in Modern literary theory, edited by A. Jefferson & D. Robey. London: Batsford Academic:65-83.

- Rockwell, F. 1988. Is your fiction out of focus? The writer, 101:25-27.
- Rockwell, F. 1992. Fiction openings: five musts. The writer, 105:18-21.
- Rose, M. 1976. Introduction, in Science fiction: a collection of critical essays, edited by M. Rose. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall:1-7.
- Rose, M. 1981. Alien encounters: anatomy of science fiction. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University.
- Rosenberg, B. 1957. Mass culture in America, in Mass culture: the popular arts in America, edited by B. Rosenberg and D.M. White. New York: Free Press:3-12.
- Rosenberg, B. 1982. Genreflecting: a guide to reading interests in genre fiction. Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited.
- Rosmarin, A. 1989. The narrativity of interpretive history, in Reaching narrative: form, ethics, ideology, edited by J. Phelan. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University:13-26.
- Ross, A. 1989. No respect: intellectuals & popular culture. New York: Routledge.
- Rottensteiner, F. 1975. The science fiction book: an illustrated history. London: Chatto.
- Rottensteiner, F. 1979. European science fiction, in Science fiction: a critical guide, edited by P. Parrinder. London: Longman:203-227.
- Rutledge, J. & Swindler, L. 1987. The selection decision: defining criteria and establishing priorities. College and research libraries, 48(2):123-131.
- Sagan, C. 1979. Broca's brain: reflections on the romance of science. New York: Random.
- Samuelson, D.N. 1993a. On hard science fiction. Science-fiction studies, 20:145-156.
- Samuelson, D.N. 1993b. Modes of extrapolation: the formulas of hard SF. Science-fiction studies, 20:191-240.

- Sanders, S. 1979. Characterization in science fiction: two approaches: the disappearance of character, in Science fiction: a critical guide, edited by P. Parrinder. London: Longman:131-147.
- Sargent, P. 1995. Introduction, in Woman of wonder: the contemporary years: Science fiction by women from the 1970s to the 1990s. San Diego: Harvest:1-20.
- Savolainen, M. 1990. The wave of science fiction as postmodern literature, in Criticism in the twilight zone: post-modern perspectives on literature and politics, edited by D. Zadworna-Fjellestad & L. Björk. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell:121-129.
- Scannell, V. 1986. How to enjoy novels. London: Piatkus.
- Schirmer, G.R. 1988. The fiction problem in public libraries: a study with special reference to Cape Town Library Service. M.A. (Library Science) dissertation, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.
- Schmerl, R.B. 1971. Fantasy as technique, in SF: the other side of realism, edited by T.D. Claeson. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:105-115.
- Scholes, R. 1975. Structural fabulation: an essay on fiction of the future. Indianapolis: Notre Dame University.
- Scholes, R. 1976. The roots of science fiction, in Science fiction: a collection of critical essays, edited by M. Rose. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall:44-56.
- Scholes, R. 1987. Boiling roses: thoughts on science fantasy, in Intersections: fantasy and science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser and E. Rabkin. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:3-18.
- Scholes, R. & Rabkin, E.S. 1977. Science fiction: history, science, vision. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schulz, H-J. 1987. Science fiction and ideology: some problems of approach. Science-fiction studies, 14(2):165-179.

- Schwarz, C.A. 1989. Book selection, collection development and bounded rationality. College & research libraries, 50:328-343.
- Schwarz, J. 1995. Neo-Victorian values in a sci-fi future. International Herald Tribune, 23 February:18.
- Scortia, T.N. 1974. Science fiction as the imaginary element, in Science fiction today and tomorrow, edited by R. Bretnor. New York: Harper:135-149.
- Seldin, G. 1957. The people and the arts, in Mass culture: the popular arts in America, edited by B. Rosenberg and D.M. White. New York: Free Press:74-97.
- Sellen, B.-C. 1992. Preface, in The collection building reader, edited by B.C. Sellen & A. Curley. New York: Neal Schuman:ix-x.
- Serebuick, J. 1992. An analysis of the relationship between book reviews and the inclusion of potentially controversial books in public libraries, in The collection building reader, edited by B.C. Sellen & A. Curley. New York: Neal Schuman:79-109.
- Shaw, D. 1991. An analysis of the relationship between book reviews and fiction holdings in OCLC. Library and information science research, 13(2):147-154.
- Shearer, K.D. 1983. Applying new theories to library selection. Drexel library quarterly, 19(2):73-90.
- Shepherd, G.W. & Baker, S.L.L. 1987. Fiction classification: a brief review of research. Public libraries, 26(1):31-32.
- Shillinglaw, N. 1990. Socio-economic determinants of the future of libraries in South Africa. South African journal of library and information science, 58(1):108-117.
- Shils, E. 1957. Daydreams and nightmares: reflections on the criticism of mass culture. Sewanee review, 65:587-608.

- Shils, E. 1960. Mass society and its culture. Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Science, 89(2):288-314.
- Shippey, T. 1979. The cold war in science fiction, in Science fiction: a critical guide, edited by P. Parrinder. London: Longman:90-110.
- Silverberg, R. 1983. The nebula awards. New York: Arbor.
- Slusser, G. 1992. The Frankenstein barrier, in Fiction 2000: cyberpunk and the future of narrative, edited by G. Slusser & T. Shippey. Athens, Ga: University of Georgia:46-71.
- Slusser, G.E. 1982. Heinlein's perpetual motion fur farm. Science-fiction studies, 9(1):51-67.
- Slusser, G.E. 1987a. Introduction: towards a theory of interaction, in Intersections: fantasy and science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser & E. Rabkin. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:vii-x.
- Slusser, G.E. 1987b. The 'and' in fantasy and science fiction, in Intersections: fantasy and science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser & E. Rabkin. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:133-171.
- Smelser, N.J. 1984. Sociology. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: McGraw-Hill.
- Smith, D. 1985. What is the history of popular culture? History today, 35:42-45.
- Smith, D. 1992. All readers their books: providing access to popular fiction. North Carolina libraries, 50:204-207.
- Smith, V.F. 1990. Teaching the science in science fiction. New Orleans, La: [s.n].
- Smyth, E.J. 1991. Introduction, in Postmodernism and contemporary fiction, edited by E.J. Smyth. London: Batsford:9-19.

- Snape, R. 1995. Leisure and the rise of the public library. London: Library Association Publishing.
- Sobchack, V. 1985. The ingenuity of astronauts: sex and the science fiction film, in Shadows of the magic lamp: fantasy and science fiction in film, edited by G.E. Slusser & E.S. Rabkin. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University.
- Sonenschein, D. 1972. Love and sex in the romance magazines, in Side-saddle on the golden calf: social structure and popular culture in America, edited by G.H. Lewis. Pacific Palisades, Calif.: Goodyear:156-179.
- Sontag, S. 1973. One culture and the new sensibility, in Popular culture and the expanding consciousness, edited by R.B. Browne. New York: Wiley & Sons:25-59.
- Spencer, K. 1987. Victorian urban Gothic: the first modern fantastic literature, in Intersections: fantasy and science fiction, edited by G.E. Slusser & E. Rabkin. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University:87-97.
- Spencer, K.L. 1983. 'The red sun is high, the blue low': towards a stylistic description of science fiction. Science-fiction studies, 10:March: 35-49.
- Spencer, L. 1992. Achieving a sense of reality in your novel. The writer, 105:11-13.
- Spengler, O. 1926: The decline of the West. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Spiller, D. 1986. Book selection: an introduction to principles and practice. 4th edition. London: Bingley.
- Spinrad, N. 1971. Stand on Zanzibar: the word as film, in SF: the other side of realism, edited by T.D. Clareson. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:181-185.
- Spinrad, N. 1990. Science fiction in the real world. Carbondale, Ill.: Illinois University.
- Stableford, B. 1978. Marriage of science and fiction, in Encyclopedia of science fiction, edited by R. Holdstock. London: Octopus:18-27.

- Sterling, B. 1986. Preface, in Mirrorshades: the cyberpunk anthology, edited by B. Sterling. New York: Arbor:i-xxvi.
- Sterling, B. 1988. Foreword, in Burning Chrome, by W. Gibson. London: Grafton.
- Stern, J.L. 1991. Creating a credible alien. The writer, 104:12-14.
- Stevenson, G. 1977. Popular culture and the public library, in Advances in librarianship, edited by M.J. Voigt & M.H. Harris. New York: Academic:179-220.
- Stevenson, L. 1971. The artistic problem: science fiction as romance, in SF: the other side of realism, edited by T.D. Clareson. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University:96-104.
- Stevenson, J.A. 1988. A vampire in the mirror: the sexuality of Dracula. PMLA, 104:139-149.
- Stoffle, C. 1982. A conversation with Carla Stoffle. College & research libraries, 43:232-233.
- Strehle, S. 1992. Fiction in the quantum universe. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina.
- Sturgeon, T. 1974. Science fiction, morals and religion, in Science fiction today and tomorrow. New York: Harper:98-115.
- Sturges, P. & Barr, A. 1992. 'The fiction nuisance' in nineteenth century British public libraries. Journal of librarianship & information science, 24(1):23-33.
- Suerbaum, U. 1981a. Theorie, in Science fiction: theorie und geschichte, themen und typen, form und weltbild, edited by U. Suerbaum. Stuttgart: Phillip:1-45.
- Suerbaum, U. 1981b. Geschichte, in Science fiction: theorie und geschichte, themen und typen, form und weltbild, edited by U. Suerbaum. Stuttgart: Phillip:46-147.

- Surmelian, L. 1968. Techniques of fiction writing: measure and madness. New York: Doubleday.
- Sutherland, J.A. 1979. American science fiction since 1960, in Science fiction: a critical guide, edited by P. Parrinder. London: Longman:162-187.
- Suvin, D. 1972. On the poetics of the science fiction genre. College English, 34:372-383.
- Suvin, D. 1976. On the poetics of the science fiction genre, in Science fiction: a collection of critical essays, edited by M. Rose. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall:57-71.
- Suvin, D. 1978. On what is and is not an SF narration; with a list of 101 Victorian books that should be excluded from SF bibliographies. Science-fiction studies, 5:35-55.
- Suvin, D. 1979. Metamorphoses of science fiction: on the poetics and history of a literary genre. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University.
- Suvin, D. 1982. Narrative logic, ideological domination, and the range of science fiction: a hypothesis with a historical test. Science-fiction studies, 9:1-21.
- Suvin, D. 1983. Victorian science fiction in the UK: the discourses of knowledge and of power. Boston: G.K. Hall.
- Sweetland, J.H. 1991. Managing adult fiction collections in public libraries, in Managing fiction in libraries, edited by M. Kinnell. London: Library Association:81-100.
- Swingewood, A. 1977. The myth of mass culture. London: Macmillan.
- Syman, S. & Johnson S. 1996. Interview: the gen-x cyberati: Newsweek, 23 December:56.
- Symons, J. 1985. Bloody murder, from the detective story to the crime novel, a history. Harmondsworth: Viking.
- Taplin, I.M. 1988. Why we need heroes to be heroic. Journal of popular culture, 22(2):133-142.

- Tapply, W.G. 1991. Setting is more than place. The writer, 104:13-15.
- Todorov, T. 1976. The origin of genres. New literary history, 8:159-170.
- Toffler, A. 1964. The culture consumers. New York: St.Martin's.
- Toffler, A. 1976. Science fiction and change, in SF at large, edited by P. Nicholls. London: Gollancz:117-118.
- Triolo, V.A. 1993. A decision model for technical journal deselection with an experiment in biomedical communications. Journal of the American society for information science, 44(3):148-160.
- Tucker, W. 1958. The Lincoln Hunters. New York: Ace.
- Tymm, M.B. 1978. Science fiction, in Handbook of American culture, edited by M.T. Inge. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood:251-274.
- Vanjaar se grootste wetenskapsdrama. 1996. Beeld. 23 Desember:8.
- Van Orden, P.J. 1988. The collection program in schools: concepts, practices, and information sources. Eaglewood, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited.
- Van Vuren, A.J. 1988. Die populêre liefdesverhaal in die openbare biblioteek. M.Bibl. dissertation, Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit, Johannesburg.
- Van Vuren, A.J. & Oosthuizen, B.L. 1990. Ontwikkeling van kriteria vir die beoordeling van die populêre liefdesverhaal in die openbare biblioteek. Suid-Afrikaanse tydskrif vir biblioteek- en inligtingkunde, 58(1):59-65.
- Voller, J. 1993. Neuromanticism: cyberspace and the sublime. Extrapolation: a journal of science fiction and fantasy, 34(1):18-29.
- Wagers, R. 1981. Popular fiction selection in public libraries: implications of popular culture studies. Journal of library history, 16(2):342:351.

- Walker, M. 1995. Blade runner on electric steroids. Weekly Mail & Guardian, 8-14 September:16.
- Walter, R. 1993. Foreword, in World mythology: the illustrated guide, edited by R. Willis. New York: BCA:8-9.
- Walters, R. 1984. The science fiction boom, a shared passion for what if ...? New York Times book review, 89:27-28.
- Warrick, P.S. 1980. The cybernetic imagination in science fiction, Boston: M.I.T.
- Weintraub, K.J. 1966. Introduction, in Visions of culture, edited by K.J. Weintraub. Chicago: University of Chicago:1-18.
- Welland, J.H. 1937. Book selection: its principles and practice. London: Grafton.
- Wellek, R. & Warren, A. 1956. Theory of literature. Hammondsworth, UK: Penguin.
- Wendland, A. 1985. Science, myth, and the fictional creation of alien worlds. Ann Arbor, Mich.: U.M.I. Research Press.
- Westfahl, G. 1990. On the true history of science fiction. Foundation: the review of science fiction, (47):5-27.
- Weston, S.B. 1987. How do you tell a good science fiction story? The writer, 100:18-20.
- White, D.J. 1957. Mass culture in America: another point of view, in Mass culture: the popular arts in America, edited by B. Rosenberg and D.M. White. New York: Free Press:13-26.
- Whitehill, W.M. 1956. Boston public library: a centennial history. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University.
- Whitman, W. 1957. From "Democratic vistas", in Mass culture: the popular arts in America, edited by B. Rosenberg & D.M. White. New York: Free Press:35-41.

- Whitney, P.A. 1988. Stop when you're through. The writer, 101:9-11.
- Whitney, P.A. 1991. Hold that edge of excitement. The writer, 104:11-14.
- Wiegand, W.A. 1980. Taste cultures and librarians: a position paper. Drexel library quarterly, 16(3):1-11.
- Wiemer, A.J. 1987. The feminist science fiction utopia: faces of a genre. Ph.D. thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton.
- Williams, R. 1978. The idea of culture, in Culture and mass culture, edited by P. Davison ... [et al.]. Cambridge, UK: Chadwyck:40-55.
- Williams, P. 1990. How should the public library respond to public demand? Library journal, 115(17):54-56.
- Williams, R. 1963. Culture and society. New York: Penguin.
- Williams, R. 1978. The idea of culture, in Culture and mass culture, edited by P. Davison ... [et al.]. Cambridge, UK: Chadwyck:40-55.
- Williams, R. 1979. Utopia and science fiction, in Science fiction: a critical guide, edited by P. Parrinder. London: Longman:52-67.
- Williams, R. 1985. Culture and society: 1780-1950. New York: Penguin.
- Williamson, J. 1974. Science fiction, reading and criticism, in Science fiction today and tomorrow. New York: Harper:309-330.
- Wingrove, D. 1984. Science fiction writers: a consumers' guide, in The science fiction source book, edited by D. Wingrove. London: Longman:87-271.
- Wojciechowska, M. 1990. Random thoughts on writing fiction. The writer, 103:15-16.

- Wolfe, G.K. 1979. The known and the unknown: the iconography of science fiction. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University.
- Wollheim, D.A. 1971. The universe makers. New York: Harper.
- Womack, J. 1989. Writing science fiction. The writer, 102:15-17.
- Wood, L.A. 1988. Who buys science fiction. Publishers weekly, 4 November:41.
- Woodman, T. 1979. Science fiction, religion and transcendence, in Science fiction: a critical guide, edited by P. Parrinder. London: Longman:110-131.
- Wright, E. 1985. Modern psychoanalytic criticism, in Modern literary criticism, edited by A. Jefferson & D. Robey. London: Batsford Academic:113-133.
- Wullschlager, J. 1995. Rise of the novelist superstar. Financial Times, 29/30 April:i-iii.
- Yanarella, E.J. 1988. The machine in the garden revisited: American pastoralism and contemporary science fiction, in Political mythology and popular fiction, edited by E.J. Yanarella & L. Sigelman. New York: Greenwood:159-184.
- Yanarella, E.J. & Sigelman, L. 1988. Introduction: political myth, popular fiction and American culture, in Political mythology and popular fiction, edited by E.J. Yanarella & L. Sigelman. New York: Greenwood:1-18.
- Yarbro, C.Q. 1986. Imaginary homework. The writer, 99:11-14.
- Zaaiman, R.B. 1981. Light or enlightened reading? South African journal of library and information science, 49(2):47-49.
- Zaaiman, R.B., Roux, P.J.A. & Rykheer, J.H. 1988. The use of libraries for the development of South Africa; final report. Pretoria: Unisa, Department of Library and Information Science.

Zaaiman, R.B. & Roux, P.J.A. 1989. The use of libraries for the development of South Africa: findings and recommendations. South African journal of library and information science, 57(1):8-17.

Zebrowski, G. 1974. Science fiction and the visual media, in Science fiction today and tomorrow. New York: Harper:46-68.

Zebrowski, G. 1986. Science fiction strikes back! Harper's, 272:4.

Zelazny, R. 1988. Beyond the idea. The writer, 101(3):9-11.