



WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

SPOT: Science Fiction and Science Fantasy

*Jumping Into Genre: Fantasy
(developing wide reading)*



Engaging Teen Readers

Science Fiction and Science Fantasy themes are the inspiration for much of our popular culture, from comics, graphic novels, and movies, to computer and video games. They provide readers a glimpse into a future unlike anything they know. This is especially appealing to teen readers, who question who they are, what life is all about, and where they might find themselves as adults. These stories are written for an audience who wants the strangeness of a world that is *not* like the world in which they live.

A Bridge to Adult Reading

Themes found in Science Fiction and Science Fantasy, such as the conflict between good and evil, the struggle to hang onto joy and hope in a ever increasing harsh and scary world, and emerging awareness of death's inevitability, may offer a truer vision of reality than many realistic fiction stories do. Readers embark on journeys of self-discovery as they consider taking responsibility for actions that can do great good or cause great harm and learning that growth results from making choices. They can appreciate the story's adventure and the author's imaginative features while exploring deeper truths. Common ideas explored in Science Fiction and Science Fantasy include being different, reconciling adolescent idealism with harsh reality, self-reliance, finding a place within the peer group, and taking a place in the adult community.

Lessons From Science Fiction and Science Fantasy

What are some of the lessons learned from reading Science Fiction and Science Fantasy? One reader answered, "That all human beings, all intelligent life, past, present, and future, are worthy of admiration and respect; that racial prejudice makes no sense and that every human being must be judged as an individual, not as a member of a group; that everything changes, whether we like it or not; that through knowledge we achieve the power to control that change, for better or worse; that we spend but a brief time in this universe, and that it is a beautiful place to be alive in" (Patrouch, 1997).

References:

Arnold, M. & Kunzel, B. (2007). Speculative fiction: Classroom must-reads. *English Journal*, 97(1), pp. 118-122.

Patrouch, J. (1997). Some thoughts on American SF. *Extrapolation*, 38(1). Retrieved from http://find.galegroup.com/gtx/infomark.do?&contentSet=IAC-Documents&type=retrieve&tabID=T002&prodId=AONE&docId=A19416373&source=gale&srcprod=AONE&userGroupName=uni_rodit&version=1.0

