CHAPTER II
FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION

2.1 Introduction

Fantasy is a notoriously elusive genre. One of the definitions provided by Merriam-Webster dictionary is that fantasy is ‘an imaginative fiction featuring especially strange settings and grotesque characters’. Implied in this definition, fantasy suggests the power or process of creating especially unrealistic or improbable mental images in response to psychological need. Thus there is no critical consensus over the definition of fantasy nor is there agreement about the body of works the term should cover (Eilers 317–18; Wolfe, xiii) Most fantasy scholars seem to acknowledge this. Perhaps the only point that scholars agree upon is that fantasy literature deals with the impossible (or marvelous or fantastic or supernatural or extra-natural or non-rational or unreal or whatever one chooses to call this nebulous quality). Gary K. Wolfe’s minimal dictionary definition accordingly reads: “A fictional narrative describing events that the reader believes to be Impossible” (Fishburn Catherine 38). However, as Wolfe himself observes, not only is the term impossible imprecise, but the definition itself is hopelessly broad (38). As it stands, it can be argued to include such genres as science fiction and horror (Fishburn Catherine 38). Moreover, what the reader conceives as impossible depends, of course, on his or her historical and cultural environment (Wolfe, 2–3). Wolfe’s own solution is to expand the notion of impossibility in fantasy into an elaborate and somewhat obscure system of deeper meanings, ideational structures, affective and cognitive significances, and levels of belief (Wolfe, 6-7). Wolfe is able to specify what he means by the impossible, but whether his scheme actually captures what fantasy literature is all about remains questionable.
Eric Rabkin, in his work, *The Fantastic in Literature*, understands fantasy as having wide range of works that includes whole conventional genres such as fairy tales, detective story and fantasy. Unfortunately, as a literary term, ‘fantasy’ has been applied rather indiscriminately (75). One of the significant critics, William Irwin, in his *The Game Impossible: A Rhetoric of Fantasy* defines it in the following words: “A fantasy is a story based on and controlled by an overt violation of what is generally accepted as possibility; it is the narrative result of transforming the condition contrary to fact into “fact itself” (Irwin, x). However, the impossible is inescapable. C. N. Manlove, for example, mixes the impossible with the wondrous when he describes fantasy as a “fiction evoking wonder and containing a substantial and irreducible element of supernatural or impossible worlds, beings or objects with which the mortal characters in the story or the readers become on at least partly familiar terms”. (Manlove130). Ann Swinfen draws on Todorovian vocabulary for her definition: “The essential ingredient of all fantasy is ‘the marvelous’, which will be regarded as anything outside the normal space-time continuum of the everyday world” (D’Amassa,Don 256). For Marshall B. Tymn et al., fantasy is “composed of works in which non-rational phenomena play a significant part. That is, they are works in which events occur, or places or creatures exist, that could not occur or exist according to rational standards or scientific explanations” (Tim 89). Jules Zanger sets fantasy against realism and naturalism, and views it as “defined by those aspects of reality it denies, by representations that are not merely improbable or untrue, as are common to all fictions, but patently false” (Zanger 135). Similarly, Eric S. Rabkin posits “Fantasy” as the polar opposite of “Reality”, and describes fantasy as a genre whose defining characteristic is a continuous and “direct reversal of the ground rules of a narrative world” (23). Finally, there is *The Encyclopedia of*
*Fantasy* with yet another definition that draws on the impossible: “A fantasy text is a self-coherent narrative. When set in this world, it tells a story which is impossible in the world as one perceives it . . . when set in an otherworld, that otherworld will be impossible, though stories set there may be possible in its terms” (257). In all the definitions what could be discerned is that fantasy does not claim to subvert or represent revolutionary politics. On the contrary, it disturbs the rules of artistic representation and reproduction of the “real”.

One consequence of such an exclusive focus on the impossible is that much fantasy scholarship is founded on a romantic celebration and idealization of wonder and imagination. Tolkien provides perhaps the best example of this when he describes fantasy literature and its ability to evoke strangeness and wonder as “a higher form of Art, indeed the most nearly pure form, and so (when achieved) the most potent”(45). The impossible emerges as a value in itself, and such imagination as produces and explores the impossible is seen to represent the highest form of creativity. This is especially true for studies that seek to defend fantasy. By “realism”, it means the general aim to believably portray individual human experience. As such, “realism” makes no distinction between classic Realism and the psychological realism of the twentieth-century novel, for example. Moreover, the celebration of the impossible usually involves a diametric opposition between fantasy on the one hand, and realism and naturalism (or simply mainstream literature) on the other. This is somewhat puzzling since the same studies that celebrate the impossible often argue that fantasy is rather a reflection on the real than a departure from it.
The above approach is not only unwarranted but untenable. For one, celebrating fantasy as the high point of creativity effectively sidelines all other genres. Even more unfortunate is that this foregrounding of the impossible seems to narrow fantasy down to only one feature. The impossible is surely the feature that distinguishes fantasy from other genres, but it does not describe the breadth and depth of fantasy. It makes no mention of realistic characterization, human drama, beautifully balanced prose, skillfully spun free indirect discourse, or even gripping storytelling.

Finally, the classic opposition between fantasy and realism is misleading. It obscures the fact that even though fantasy narratives contain story worlds and story world elements that have little basis in everyday life, they nevertheless draw on the same literary conventions of realism as other modern novels.

Michelle L. Eilers’s insight into the origins of modern fantasy is particularly valuable here: “One of the most significant features uniting the earliest modern fantasies is their employment of the narrative convention literary realism . . . . the first writers of modern fantasy manifested a modern emphasis on the individual by developing original plots, particular characters, Eilers’s original definition of modern fantasy reads as follows: “fantasy is a post-Enlightenment prose fiction genre composed of narratives in which an extra-natural power plays a fundamental role and that aims to create an illusion of reality”. In this definition is added the story world clause because it finds the notion of internally coherent worlds as tantamount to the nature of modern fantasy and particular settings” (Eilers: 329 -335) So, rather than glorifying fantasy into a literary ghetto by celebrating the impossible, one should
come up with a more inclusive approach rooted in a larger claim on the real.

Literary fantasy is characterized by subversive function. It tries to upset or overturn or undermine the rules and conventions considered as to be normative.

2.2 Characteristics of Fantasy Literature

Magic, above all, is what defines the fantasy genre. From witches and sorcerers to fractures in time, the fantastical themes of fantasy stem from the unknown, the unknowable, and the mysterious. Mix magic well with a classic story of good and evil, the innocence of childhood, or a talking flock of birds, and you are sure to find a perfect fantasy story in your hands. Still, the realm of fantasy covers many more bases than those - practically anything your mind can conjure fits into fantasy, and the weirder it is, the better. What follow are the ten elements most common to popular, successful fantasy fiction.

2.2.1 The Medieval

Fantasy literature is stereotypically filled with medieval characters and themes: knights on horseback, royal families (members of which may or may not be in need of rescue), dungeons, middle-age dress, and castles. The weapons, while non-magical, are usually archaic: swords, longbows and slingshots. Motifs like these are so common because the most popular, classic fantasy stories of the English-speaking western world not only take place, but were written, hundreds of years ago. Robin Hood and King Arthur's tales are practically ancient classics that are undoubtedly still making contributions to the collective unconscious. Shakespeare helped too, with his three witches in 'Macbeth' and the creatures of A Midsummer Night's Dream.
2.2.2 Religious Overtones

Partially due to fantasy's relationship with times of old and antique, religions play a strong role in shaping fantasy stories. Catholicism and old Christian themes have most often prefigured in the making of fantasy stories. In good old days, kings were backed by the public acceptance that they were chosen by Gods. Since Knights were given their positions by kings, it was believed that they were doing god’s work. Sometimes, angels would even step in to give advice. In such a context, all heroes of a story were aligned with God. Likewise, villains are often considered to be aligned with Satan. The assumed evil nature of witches can be credited to the old church's vilification of those who opposed it. Demons of all sorts stem conceptually from hell and the devil.

2.2.3 The Good-Evil Divide

God and Satan are the ultimate components of the fight between good and evil. Fantasy often uses the notion that pure goodness and pure evil are always easy to differentiate between, and that there is no good reason not to root for the obvious.

While much of current fantasy has left religious names in the dust, the religious themes are carried on in the fantasy literature. A very common trait of fantasy is to make an epic in which good-evil are made to fight fiercely so that it becomes accessible to the moral inclinations of every single reader.

2.2.4 Magic

It is very much difficult to find a fantasy story without at least a subtle form of magic. It has become an inevitable component in the fantasy genre. Magic can be brought in many forms; from the mysterious powers of gods and goddesses to the earth-moving forces of a sorcerer's
might, and from the sprite with the ability to change the colors of the leaves in the fall. Some magic results unguided by any characters, and sometimes are directly produced by them.

Magic can do any number of functions. It can build and disassemble, create and destroy; it harnesses the elements of wind, water, fire, and electricity to be used as weapons; it can cause shape-shifting, teleportation, levitation, telepathy, corpse reanimation, and precognition. It can even warp time.

While having so many magical options, fantasy stories still remains cohesive. Regardless of what is true in the real world, every well-crafted fantasy world has 'natural,' logical rules which shape and are obeyed by its magical elements. This is what keeps a magical fantasy story easy for anyone to follow the content.

2.2.5 Real and Mythical Creatures

A great deal of fantasy, especially, that written for children, has talking animals; some even concerns talking animals exclusively. Cats, dogs, elephants, and squirrels are often personified in stories, especially allegorical ones. Their character traits often correspond to the human personalities the animals commonly remind us of. However, fantasy writers actually disguise the human motives especially when they bring in the animals so as to speak for the hidden agenda of the suppressed man.

Mythical animals arise in fantasy literature, from the popular unicorn, troll and fire-breathing dragon to the less popular. More often than not, the unreal creatures in fantasy stories are not created by the author, but pulled from numerous historical sources of mythology, often with slight changes to differentiate them from common conceptions.
2.2.6 The Quest

Fantasy literature is required to have one or more protagonists, or heroes. The heroes are usually called (by a dream, a king's demand, or a message) to complete a quest that involves travel - protect a ring, defeat an evil overlord in a distant land, rescue a princess - and the plot follows the protagonists as they complete it.

This physical, or external, quest is often accompanied by a quest of another sort: a journey into the internal world. Heroes can start out as anti-heroes, good people who have made big mistakes and a quest for repentance, strength and knowledge is just what the hero needs to redeem here. Often, this quest is successfully finished just before the hero completes the external quest. For example, the princess can only be saved if the hero learns to love, or the evil ruler will only be brought to justice once the hero achieves a level of courageous enlightenment. A true hero does not just conquer the evils of the external world, but the evils of the internal world as well. This assigns a moral authority for the hero to involve in the hazardous journey.

2.2.7 Urbanism

As more and more members of humanity moved from the country to the city, so did the fantasy story, beginning in the nineteen-twenties and flowering into popularity much later on. Modern urban fantasy has deforested the haunted marsh and moved the ghosts to the sewers and the bedroom closet. In the nineteen eighties, urban fantasy became a full-fledged sub-genre with John Crowley, Matt Ruff, and Emma Bull at the helm of the movement.
2.3 Types of Fantasy

Fantasy is a vibrant area of academic study. It is a huge genre divided into many distinct and varied subgenres. As has been pointed out in the earlier sections, fantasy commonly uses magic and other supernatural phenomena as a primary plot element, theme or setting. As fantasy subgenres are numerous and diverse, the classification is not very clear, but always vague and sometimes overlapping. Classification of fantasy into subgenres in fact depends on what other elements are found in the story besides the fantasy. There can be many views on the categorization of this very important genre. However, an overview of the main types of fantasy is described in the following sections as it would help clarify the notions regarding the genres.

2.3.1 Dark Fantasy

A Dark Fantasy is subgenre of fantasy. It refers to literary, artistic, and filmic works that combine fantasy with elements of horror. The term can be used broadly to refer to fantastical works that have a dark, gloomy atmosphere or a sense of horror and dread. In dark fantasy scary creatures like werewolves and vampires are the chief characters and also the heroes. Now they fight on the side of the right, even if they still have the urges to do something less than heroic.

2.3.2 Epic Fantasy

It is structured as a traditional hero myth with a noble protagonist, less powerful helpers, magical equipment, wizened advisor, and almost impossible tasks along with magic. Sword and sorcery books will have it; traditional knight’s tales will not. It is long and may take several books to tell completely. One or more important sub-plots support major plot
events. Antagonist may possess supernatural powers. Epic fantasy is also known as Heroic fantasy which is the subgenre that usually stresses the battle of good and evil, often in epic style (and length). These are the stories of heroes and legendary battles.

2.3.3 Historical Fantasy

Historical events with fantastical elements make the historical fantasy. Large portion of the story takes place in the past of Earth, although the protagonist is usually a modern-day person who has traveled through time. Although the plot does not have to be 100% factual, our history and that of the novel should not be as divergent as in an alternate history science fiction novel. Light magic may be present, but is used more as a mystical tool or as a means for time travel. Major events and people are often but not always the focus of the story. Real world history but affected by magic. Up until the late Middle Ages or early Renaissance, such tales would still have been considered historical since people believed that magic had an affect on the real world still.

2.3.4. Modern Fantasy

Magical creatures such as unicorns and elves often are mixed with ordinary people from our world. Humorous fantasy is included in this category because the puns are usually based on concepts only a modern reader would understand, such as computers. Magic is present, but not always explained as well as in other types of fantasy. The setting can be our world, a new fictitious country or a re-hash of a pre-existing fictitious country such as Oz.. In the modern fantasy the world is the same as we know it, only there is magic for those who know where to look. As we have to find the magical elements in the modern cities, the presence of magic has been termed as Urban Fantasy. In some cases everyone knows
about the magic, but in others the magic users are in hiding. They may be magical beings or humans who can use magic. The important factor is that there is recognition of the magic that is alive among us and also living amidst us hovering unseen in the environment.

2.3.5 Science Fantasy

The blend of scientific innovations and inventions with fantasy, coupled with imagination is science fantasy. Magic and scientific laws co-exist in the same universe, although one may be dominant over the other. Technology is viewed as the embodiment of the presence of magic in science fantasy. The everyday world may be used as a backdrop for the scientific laws. Actually it is the Future Fantasy.

2.4 Overview of Fantasy in literature

Fantasy as a genre depends on the existence of magic in a story as an integral part of the plot. Using such a simple definition of Fantasy, one sees that the roots of almost all literature are in Fantasy. From the epic tales of heroes like Gilgamesh and Beowulf, magic is an important element of literature. But even to the present, such fantastic elements are key features of the greatest literature.

The biggest difference between the modern use of the term "fantasy" to describe a genre and the earliest form of literature which used magic is the reader's attitude towards the magic in the story. Whether the magic in these early stories was functionally religious in nature or a function of their primitive understanding of the universe, the reader of these stories believed in this magic as much as the modern reader believes in physics, natural laws and the moon landing.
The early myths, especially the hero tales of Gilgamesh involve fantastic quests. The scriptural exploits of Moses the mythological literature of Homer and the Egyptian tales of Osiris and Isis also involve these quests. The line here between religion and literature shades between faith and in the supernatural acceptance of a world view that is contrary to naturalistic causes. In either case, one can easily see the similarities between these stories and the literature of fantasy in the twentieth century and the new millennium. Consider the similarities between Beowulf and Robert E. Howard's magnificent creation Conan. The difference is that the modern reader looks at Conan as a parody of Beowulf and one reads it for an escapist adventure, whereas Beowulf show us a world view that one can examine the way an anthropologist examines the attitudes of a primitive tribe.

During the Middle Ages fantasy attempted to describe works the contents of which were less believable and more efforts were made to depict the scientific perspective of the period. The Renaissance played with the medieval religious fantasy and even wilders uses of magic.

The Romantics took that medieval intense interest in magic and elevated it into a passion. Coleridge writes about curse sailors and death ships. The Arthurian legend is put on a pedestal by Tennyson in his "Idylls of the King," and "The Lady of Shallot." Wordsworth gives us a Holy Grail allegory called "The Egyptian Maid," which is a logical interpretation of the legend.

The late Romantics and Victorians blend their love of pseudo science with the Romantic adoration of magic and all things medieval to give us works like The Picture of Dorian Gray, by Oscar Wilde, Frankenstein, by Mary Shelley and Dracula by Bram Stoker. In each of
these works there is an attempt to turn the fantastic into an allegory of sublime and profound themes.

The twentieth century, began to see the Verne and Wells stories of underwater vessels and extraterrestrial invasions as more about science and less about magic, and gives rise to a sub genre of fantasy, the science fiction. The rise of pulps with the glossy and sensationalist images, and their cheap paper and cheaper literary value, blurs the fantasy genre with the same cheap ink. Writers like Chesterton, Lord Dunsany, Lovecraft and Chambers are relegated to trivial piles of literary trash. If not for a few works by the modernists like Kafka, fantasy might be completely dismissed. But Kafka gives us the great dark works of modern fantasy like *The Metamorphosis*, *The Hunger Artist* and *The Trial*.

Modern and Post-Modern writers begin to see the value of the genre. Gabriel Garcia Marquez has fathered a new literary movement known as Magic Realism. It has preserved the magical elements of fantasy in addition to social realism. Europe has brought forth great writers like Stanislaw Lem, Umberto Eco. The Post-Modernists have followed the dark traditions of Kafka and have given the works that are seen as surreal as Kafka with the addition of a bitter humor and malicious fondness. Doris Lessing and Octavia Butler continue the traditions of the romantic fantasy and they have related fantasy to explore gender issues which have recently attracted the critical attention.

### 2.5 Science Fiction

Science fiction and fantasy are the representations of the imagined reality that is fundamentally different in its nature and functioning from the world of our own ordinary experience. It is a popular form of prose narrative or fiction that is based on scientific imagination, knowledge and
theory and speculation in its plot, characters, settings and themes. The term ‘science fiction’ was coined in 1851 by an English author, William Wilson. But it came into common use only after 1931. Nowadays, the term science fiction is applied to those narratives in which an explicit attempt is made to render a ‘plausible’ the fictional world by reference to known or imagined scientific principles or to a projected advance in the technology or to a drastic change in the organizations of society.

In the phrase, ‘science fiction’, there are two terms: ‘science’ and ‘fiction’. The term ‘fiction’ suggests the ‘falsity’ or ‘unreality’ of an event or an idea. But the term ‘science’ presupposes adherence to truth or reality and usually tries to understand and explain the natural phenomena in terms of ‘cause-and-effect’ relationships. Therefore a standard definition of science includes the prime activities such as observation, identification, description, experimental investigation and theoretical explanation of natural phenomena. It is to be noted that fiction also represents natural phenomena as it appears in the writer’s imagination. So reality represented by fiction is imagined reality whereas the reality represented in science is objective reality. This reality is represented in a language peculiar to science which lends authority to fiction. The language of science is focused on non-scientific matters which are the subject matter of fiction. The fiction in ‘science fiction’ attempts to explain what science has not yet got around to explaining. Therefore it can be deduced that science fiction is the mythology of the modern world. Thus science fiction makes use of intellect to understand the phenomena of the world whereas mythologies are non-intellectual mode of apprehension of the realities.
Since the beginning of man’s literary expressions, many writers have attempted to represent their understanding of the world in fiction or fantasy literature. Science has been used by various literary writers for different purposes. Bacon in his *New Atlantis* used the authority of theology to validate the claims of science. Thus Bacon uses ‘science’ in order to lend authority to religion. In fact Bacon makes use of science metaphorically to explain the implications of technology of his day. Voltaire uses science to attack the superstitions of the organized religion. Later in the nineteenth century Charles Dickens, one of the early realists’ novelists, in his *Hard Times* seems not only to have “absorbed machine technology” but also has grappled with it in questioning the definitions of humanity and the nature of progress. Alan J Friedman points out that science serves to manifest extraordinary fictional complexity.

Basically science fiction deals with the impact of actual or imagined science on society or individual. It has as an essential orienting component a scientific factor. For the speculative component of the story it chiefly depends on scientific foundation. Earliest modern science fiction writers such as H G Wells and Jules Verne based their plot devices on extrapolations from current science and technology. Since these early science fiction writers and later writers have made use of latest advancements of science and technology in their popular fictions, this tradition continued in the twentieth century which saw the leaps of scientific inventions especially in the form of Hydrogen bomb. This situation has lead J G Ballard to declare ‘science fiction’ as ‘the authentic literature of the twentieth century’. (Gasiorek, J G Ballard, 4) He firmly believed that it occupies a special ground between the death of the written word and the dominance of the visual image. Science fiction concentrates
on the far-reaching implications of technology for everyday social life. It also offers a powerful means of accessing the unconscious.

Science also extends beyond the laboratory, the academic community, and associated scientific professions: it positions itself within popular culture. Scientific discoveries, problems and methods fascinate the general public. Museums, interactive science centres, television documentaries, toys and books have become artifacts for popular understanding of scientific facts. Interpretations and explanations of scientific phenomena may not be consistent, rigorous or accurate within such texts or institutions, yet nevertheless, many people within a wide range of communities believe themselves to be scientific in their arguments and competent in their grasp of key issues and principles due to such popularization. At the most extreme levels these beliefs constitute a communal sense: one in which scientific “truths” is promulgated, leading to a public assumption that such truths are verified by an expert scientific community. In reality, the methods and reasoning directing these assumptions are contradictory or non-existent on many occasions. Critical analysis and lateral thinking are required to place these assumptions in their correct context.

Obviously, a work in this category can simply negate or augment normal reality, and where the author can make his creation subject to scientific and pseudo-scientific laws; this is generally termed "science fiction." Alternately, he can make his world subject to a non-scientific, but rational, system; this is generally termed "science fantasy." This is also called speculative fiction
There arose a group of authors in the later fifties, that wrote works which lacked some of the obsession with correct science being distinct from earlier science fiction, but claimed more attention to the relationship between these worlds and that in which they themselves lived. In other words, they retained some of the balance to world exploration that belongs to the earlier tradition in which a fictional world existed for more purposes than just exploring science laws and principles. This greater concern with the scientific parameters of the future had always appeared as a fact of a select group of mainstream writers such as H.G. Wells, C.S. Lewis, and Olaf Stapleton who happened to write science fiction. Those mainstream writers inhabited the border territory of standard fiction; the new writers wrote for the science fiction audience but incorporated mainstream literary traditions into their work.

These new authors had two important qualities to make their fiction more prominent. Firstly, there was the traditional panoramic ability to create new worlds that had always traditionally distinguished science fiction. However, they supplemented this with a new literary awareness, and their fiction reached a higher literary quality than did that of their science fiction predecessors. They went beyond pure escape, and turned the new perspective that science fiction allowed back on the real world. They explored the non-scientific aspects of their story backgrounds, the so-called soft science and in some cases, the entire work became metaphoric. Science fiction had always allowed this kind of external vision on our world.

2.6 Science Fiction defined

Science fiction has come a long way since its early days. Science fiction as a genre has proved itself to come under the clutches of the
thinkers to arrive at a point to define in definitive terms. If Robert Heinlein regards it a realistic speculation about future events, Hugo Gernsback goes to an extent of considering it as a combination of romance science and prophesies. To define more precisely, Darko Suvin finds it a genre based on an imagined alternative to the readers’ environment (3). The plot in a science fiction novel is often based on real science and follows specific laws. The story often takes place in a real and reliable way, in a fictitious world that is not yet reality.

Isaac Asimov defined science fiction as "that branch of literature which is concerned with the impact of scientific advance upon human beings" (*Modern Science Fiction, 10*). Good science fiction, like all other forms of fiction, is about people. It examines the human condition, perhaps in a whole new landscape, perhaps from an "alien" perspective. Science fiction often addresses contemporary issues, while much science fiction focuses on the future; history is also a great source of inspiration.

It is very difficult to bring science fiction in a singular definition, as it includes a wide range of subgenres and themes. According to science fiction writer Robert A. Heinlein, "a handy short definition of almost all science fiction might read: realistic speculation about possible future events, based solidly on adequate knowledge of the real world, past and present, and on a thorough understanding of the nature and significance of the scientific method" (15).

Some of the impossible things in life are made probable in fiction with the help of scientific touch. Hence Rod Serling goes to put science fiction as ‘the improbable made possible." (Michael Drout: 6)
Science fiction (SF) has many definitions, but one of the greatest from the perspective of educators is that of Joanna Russ, who defined SF as “a literature that attempts to assimilate imaginatively, scientific knowledge about reality and the scientific method, as distinct from the merely practical changes science has made in our lives” (Russ 7). It is this imaginative approach that characterizes SF’s appeal as a widening genre that affects all who come in contact with it. The phenomenal success of the highest grossing films such as Star Wars, Independence Day, Jurassic Park, ET, Close Encounters, The Matrix and many more attest to the success of not only its value as entertainment, but its ability to excite, fascinate and encompass human values.

The dawn of the 21st century has heralded the implementation of many scientific techniques and ideals discussed in the best SF novels, leading to a unique insight that is often misread as prophetic. SF is not prophetic. Rather it is creative and innovative. It has broadened its horizons in the modern world by addressing complex human questions about our role in the cosmos which is both cross-curricular and invigorating. It is highly complex as it demands a widening knowledge of various disciplines for a better understanding. Science fiction draws its inspiration from distinct streams of science and the humanities. It makes the reader to employ scientific techniques and methods to apply in our day to day life in order to expand our knowledge through enthralling texts. SF as a literary text carries an impact on human consciousness equal to, if not greater than, that of their blockbuster film incarnations. Perceived as initially being a “Western” phenomenon, the rise of SF within the industrialized world is a reflection of the cultural modes linking society, science and technology together, growing with these forces, expressing and evaluating them, relating them meaningfully to
human existence (Franklin 1). As the world moves towards increasing dependency on industry and commerce, modern society in the process of globalization finds an outlet for its anxiety, uncertainties and angst through social criticism.

One takes for granted living in a world where technological change is so rapid that it is part of lives--continually transforming the present and the future. But this epoch of rapid technological changes, dating from the Industrial Revolution in Europe, is a mere micro instant of cosmic time.

The Earth is approximately four and a half billion years old. The ice ages ended about 10,000 years ago. Thus the age of the Earth is 450,000 times the period since the last ice age. Let us make this more imaginable by picturing the age of the Earth equivalent to 45,000 feet, the altitude of a very high flying jet airliner. In comparison, the time since the last ice age would be represented by 1.2 inches. The period of modern science, technology, and science fiction, which began with the Industrial Revolution just over 200 years ago, would then be equivalent on spatial scale to .024 inches, about the thickness of a line made by a medium ball point pen. Within that pen scratch of time, the rate of technological change has been exponential. Modern consciousness therefore is radically different from that of the peoples who inhabited the planet before the emergence of science fiction. So, one of the keys to understand science fiction is that ‘it is the major non-realistic mode of imaginative creation of epoch and principal cultural way to locate ourselves imaginatively in time and space (Michael: 12)
2.7 Features of Science Fiction

The genre of science fiction has some salient attributes of its own. It demands the minds that can not only understand the writer’s visions and missions described in the works but also the previous knowledge of the reader to respond to the evolving changes of times. There is utter desire for update information of worldly affairs and the scientific innovations to read the science fiction. There are definite characteristics that identify science fiction. And most of these are closely related to the fantasy genre although there are definite differences between them. The most prominent of these being the basis for the plot, which is, invariably, loosely based on scientific fact, although the fact is then developed into fiction to create the plot line. Characters and locations in most modern science fiction are very closely related to modern fantasy, and the only major distinguishing factor is the basis for the plot line, as character and locations are really left to the writer's artistic license. The settings for science fiction are often contrary to known reality, but most science fiction relies on a considerable degree of suspension of disbelief, which is facilitated in the reader's mind by potential scientific explanations or solutions to various fictional elements. The following features like imagination, alien and isolation go to support the writer in creating his stories.

2.7.1 Imaginative exploration into the outer space

Some of the more common characteristics of science fiction literature are of humans with superhuman powers, space exploration that goes far beyond the capabilities of man and beings from outer space visiting our earthly realm. It would be no surprise to find large numbers who believe there is life on other planets, some even believing one lives
in a parallel universe with people exactly like ourselves living light years from Earth.

Science fiction may not be reality, but it certainly has its basis in the real world in many instances. Space exploration is a fact of human life today, but science fiction takes that into dimensions that are impossible for humans to reach. There may be a similarity in landing a man on the moon and the exploits of the Starship Enterprise, but the gap between reality and imagination is very wide.

The characteristics of science fiction literature will differ from author to author, but there is understandably that constant connection to what one already knows. Simply put, science fiction is science or knowledge fictionalized and stretched to a level that is outside of reality.

Good science fiction writers lead their audience to believe that there is a scientific base for their complete fiction. General characteristics of traditional science fiction literature include the introduction of alien life forms, alien locations, alien invasions and alien abductions. However, in modern literature, it is not just the tales of alien forms that comprise this genre; society’s post-nuclear war and the mutation of animals are also included.

2.7.2 Alien

Another feature of science fiction is the presence of alien in science fiction. In the earlier stages of science fiction, this feature used to be in the form of human beings with superior intelligence and power who were the denizens from the world either from above or from below the earth. Very often, aliens used to be represented in the form of giant creatures or animals. But with the advancement of science and
technology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a new phenomenon has emerged in the form of media outlets. Earlier, the aliens threatened the humans with their gigantic size and power, and man was made to humble before such unknown powers. But in the modern world, media has taken the place of the aliens in threatening the existence of human beings. Thus with the introduction of the Internet, and its current mainstream use over the past fifteen years the outlet for science fiction has expanded still further. By and large an individual could escape into fiction through tangibly printed literature, but in science fiction people are made to live in the millennium with multiple outlets for escape. The characters in such novels are usually from another planet, or a mutated human deformed beyond recognition and they are located in the different locations especially from another planet. The science fiction genre rarely includes the use of the average human from the real world unless he plays the role of the hero or heroine (Robert Sawyer: 11).

Examples of science fiction settings include hostile alien territory, post-nuclear war communities, and isolated parks inhabited by dinosaurs. Examples of the introduction of space aliens into science fiction can include the aliens invading earth, visiting earth, or alternatively the human race invading or visiting their planet. On the other hand examples of alien humans mutated beyond recognition who are sufficiently alien to the human race - could be survivors of nuclear war affected by the fallout or superheroes who are the result of a scientific experiment. Therefore, the traditional characters to this genre tend to be alien - and as specified previously this can refer to alien beings from other planets or alien humans deformed beyond recognition. Another character that appears in science fiction literature is the non-human animal, again these generally tend to be mutated into fierce creatures, alternatively the appearance of
extinct animals is also a popular feature in this genre, for example dinosaurs. A defining characteristic of all the characters in science fiction tends to be the fear factor, dependent upon the plot line. Beings of another dimension or a being of energy is a very interesting theme which is used in such series. There is an encounter of characters with strange beings which are either beyond human or linear understanding of time. They are examples of juxtaposition; they are hostile or friendly, kind or ruthless, caring or uncaring, which is determined by kind of species. Other than that there may be energy beings which can convert into solid beings at any time, but it is not mentioned whether they are beyond human understanding of time and space. (Ben Goossan: 3)

2.7.3 Isolation

Yet another characteristic of a science fiction location is isolation. The location and the central character are isolated from modern society. This is achieved through either altering the society or locating the literature away from it usually with a substantial obstacle between the two. The location for this genre is generally completely alien to the normality’s of society, allowing the reader to escape completely into a truly fictional world. An example of this could be the deserted island location, which has been a feature in multiple science fiction stories usually home to a race of dinosaurs. Although these locations are not necessarily the most desirable of worlds, generally they will more often than not be hostile territory (Goossan: 5)

More often than not the lead character will tend to be a monstrous being, whether naturally so like dinosaurs or created like a deformed human. The degree of fear they provoke varies, and is dependent upon the plot line. As fear can be induced through ignorance, in some tales the fear
could be unfounded and revealed as unnecessary once the character is identified and developed, such as a visit from a friendly extra terrestrial. Consequently, the appearance of any being perceived as different could be present in science fiction, although the previously identified beings are more likely to be central characters to most plots. The change of personality of a person is common. The consciousness of a human either transmitted to computer or other human. There are many cases in same mind more than one consciousness can reside. Both Star Trek and Star Gate presented this theme several times. Star Trek used Hollow Deck or Hollow Suit for the implementation of the idea, Stargate applied it through alien technology or alien beings residing in the body of an SG personnel.

2.7.4 Speculation, Experiment and Exotic settings

In the beginning science fiction writers and editors focused on the hard science of science fiction, and much of that incorporates the development of advanced technology, or creative ways to utilize existing technology In addition, some science fiction writers have proven almost prophetic in predicting the rise of technology that didn't exist during their time. Noted science fiction writers like Jules Verne have foreshadowed or predicted other pieces of technology. The distinctions between humanity and machines are being challenged as technology bridges the gap between human and machine intelligence. The humans, who essentially are robots, have explored the concept of "slavery over machines". One of the most enduring preoccupations of SF is the idea of scientific progress. It features a lone inventor or group of scientists, and through its progress, there is a progress of history.
An author of science fiction writes speculative fiction. He starts with the two basics: one; he originates an idea, an innovation that does not exist. If the author is truly gifted, brilliant, then that innovation is truly original. But that is the kernel of the story, its germ. In order to bloom, the author must speculate. For example in Arthur C. Clarke's seminal 2001: A Space Odysseys, there is a discovery of an alien artifact under the surface of the moon. Now that's an innovative idea, perhaps not completely original, but close enough. What Clarke does with this idea is what makes a novel instead of a seed. 2001 A Space Odysseys speculates about what changes would occur to humans under such stimulus. In the novel, the changes to man are gargantuan, even evolutionary. (Goossan :16)

2.7.5 A Mythic Vision

Most important requirement for science fiction is mythic vision, though it is not exclusive science fiction genre. But it is still a basic requirement that science fiction must possess in order to be known as science fiction. The author of a science fiction novel must have a view of the universe as it does not exist. It must be altered. And that makes the author similar to God. The science fiction writer creates a universe. It must hold together. It must work. If it is radically different from the world in which we drudge away, then we must be able to believe in it. If there are vampires that are living next to us, that do not spontaneously combust in daylight that, in fact, sparkles like some mad fairy-dust snowglobe then the world must be changed so that our natural tendencies to disbelieve are assuaged. We must be allowed to suspend our disbelief. If, truthfully, we are constantly asking ourselves questions and looking for discrepancies and bothering the cold sore of our disbelief with the tongue of logic, then the author has failed to provide a mythic vision. In
Tolkien's 'Lord of the Rings' we are thrown into a world with so much alien and magical enchantment that it would be very nearer to that of high fantasy stable. But Tolkien's mythic vision in world building is so absolute that we are caught up in the personal struggles of real people, the epic destinies of real people, the motivations and flaws of real people. This is an integral part of the nature of science fiction (Goossan 9).

2.8 The Various Types of Science Fiction

There is more to science fiction than a story taking place in battle cruisers fight out in the dark reaches of space. In fact, not all science fiction actually takes place in the future. Science fiction, like many genres is as varied as the authors who write for it. But the one thing tying it all together is the effect of a science on the characters in the novel. Some of the popular types of science fiction are hard science fiction, soft science fiction, cyberpunk, military, steam punk, time travel, space opera, apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic and alternate universe.

2.8.1 Hard Science Fiction

Hard science fiction primarily deals with the use of technology and space shuttle explorations into the outer sky. They create a sense of wonder in the reader’s mind and also a strong desire among the readers to enter into the outer planet or other stellar locations. These types of stories are typically written by authors who have a strong background in science such as Isaac Asimov or Arthur C Clarke. In their novels the authors thoroughly discuss the process of scientific inventions or they give scientific explanations for most of the activities. They offer detailed and realistic descriptions for the events. As such, science plays such a role in these stories that the technology is actually central to the plot, not just part of the environment (19).
2.8.2 Soft Science Fiction

During the heyday of science fiction output there sprang a group of writers who did not go along with the stream of the contemporary science fiction writing. The innovative writers took a new path dealing extensively not with the physical aspects of science but moved towards other fields of human knowledge. They were inspired by the new learning emanating from such diverse fields as sociology, psychology, and philosophy. Since these disciplines were not strictly speaking science in the traditional sense of the term, these fiction came to be known as soft science fiction. They focus on the effects future technology could have on a society or individual characters. Ray Bradbury and Frank Herbert are authors of this sub-genre.

2.8.3 Cyberpunk

This type of fiction emerged in the 1970s as a form of science fiction in which the events take place partially or entirely within the “virtual reality” formed by computers or computer networks. In this type of fiction, characters are either human or artificial intelligences. Philip K. Dick and William Gibson are popular cyberpunk writers; Gibson in his cyberpunk novel, *Neuromancer* actually coined the word. Cyberpunk is about the negative, almost dystopian like societies that are dominated by computer technology (Goossan: 13)

2.8.4 Military Science Fiction

Military science fiction stories focus on interplanetary or interstellar war and usually stress traditional military attributes, aided by a soldier’s point of view. One of the staples of this genre is *Forever War* by Joe Haldeman, in which a university student is drafted for an
interplanetary war. When he returns to Earth years later, it ends up that a few years for him were a few thousands for the planet. (Goossan: 13)

### 2.8.5 Apocalypse/ post-apocalypse

Basically apocalyptic novels describe situations in which the world has already experienced total annihilation due either to natural or man-made or technological advancement. The novels’ settings are after a world-altering disaster such as nuclear war or an alien invasion and how humans overcome the event. (Goossan: 14) Apocalyptic novels depict a gloomy picture of the world. In a way these novels issue a kind of warning to the present managers of world affairs and in fact Ballard’s apocalyptic novels have been described as cautionary tales.

### 2.8.6 Alternate Universe Science Fiction

These stories revolve around the idea that something has happened in the past and the course of history changed or may involve an alternate reality that exists next to the one we live in but is defined by some differences. John Cramer and some of Philip K. Dick’s works can be considered a part of this sub-genre (Goossan: 15)

### 2.8.7 Steampunk

It is a sub-genre of science fiction that typically features steam-powered machinery especially in a setting inspired by industrialized Western civilization during the 19th century. Steam punk works are often set in alternative history of the 19th century British Victorian Era or American ‘Wild West’. It is set in a post-apocalyptic future during which steam power has regained mainstream use, or in a fantasy world that similarly employs steam power. Steampunk fictions are to be found in the works that deal with retro-futuristic inventions or anachronistic technologies. It is also rooted in the Victorian era’s views on fashion,
culture, architectural style, and art. Such technology may include fictional machines like those found in the works of H G Wells and Jules Verne or the modern authors like China Melville. Other examples of steampunk contain alternate history-style presentations of such technology lighter – than-air airships, analogue computers or such digital mechanical computers as Charles Babbage or Ada Lovelace’s Analytical Engines.

2.8.8 Space Opera

It is a subgenre of science fiction. It emphasizes romantic and very often melodramatic adventure. It is set mainly or entirely in outer space. It involves conflicts between opponents who possess advanced technologies and abilities. Sometimes the term space opera is used pejoratively to science fiction often combined with mythological themes, but its meaning can differ, often describing a particular science fiction genre without any value opinion. The characters of such stories are explorers. They travel to new planets watching and learning about new worlds. In star travel the travel is through space ship. They encounter various races which are physiologically different from humans. Space opera is actually the Science fiction equivalent of epic fantasy, meaning high adventure amongst the stars. No signing is actually involved here. Interstellar travel, wormholes, space ships, artificial gravity, energy weapons, force fields instead of iron bars and doors in prisons, sub space communication (faster than light communication), faster than light travel, drive/ hyper drive are popular concepts which help build these fictional universes (Goossan:19)

2.8.9 Temporal/Dimensional Science Fiction

Time travel or alternate dimensions are used to explore cause and affect both large and small scale. Main characters often unwittingly alter their present or future for the ill. Often used as a vehicle to explore
historically significant persons or events, such as the Civil War, Adolf Hitler, the Roman Empire, and presidential elections. The contrast between other timelines and our own is often used to illustrate social and moral insights.

2.9 Evolution of Science Fiction

Traces of Science fiction can be found from the very old days. Greek civilization gave the epics of early, where superhuman beings feature as the inhabitants with images one-eyed giants, a six-headed monster, a creature that swallows passing ships, and a woman who chemically transforms people into animals lived Mount Olympus. There is a marvelous voyage to far distant worlds.

Syrian writer Lucian of Samosata wrote Satires of epic voyages there is a detailed description about travel beyond the Earth. Icaro-Menippus sprouts wings and flies to the Moon; in The True History, the author and a shipload of companions are wafted to the Moon, the traveler’s witness an interplanetary warfare for the determination of the empire of the Moon or of the Sun gets to colonize Venus.

Lucian's works are not considered as science fiction. They are intended to be read as fantasy. There are similar works for the following fourteen hundred years. Ariosto's Orlando Furioso projected a trip to the Moon merely as a preposterous fantasy in 16th century (Goossan 20).

Events caused profound transformation in the world and the European concept of space. "Discovery" in the late 15th century, leading to a "New World"--that is, new to Europeans was an example that mainly dealt with scientific inventions like magnetic compass and advances in shipbuilding. Year 1540 saw the publication of an earthshaking
book, Copernicus' demonstration that the cosmos is vast and does not revolve around the Earth On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres,. The development of the telescope in the early 17th century, the concept of "plurality of worlds" were taken seriously. Marvelous voyages to the Moon, planets, and stars became commonplace.

  Johanus Kepler, who developed the basic laws of planetary motion, uses them in Somnium (1634) to imagine living on the Moon. Francis Godwin describes a utopia on the Moon in The Man in the Moone (1638). Cyrano de Bergerac's Comical History of the States and Empires of the Moon (1659) and Sun (1687) include marvelous inventions such as solar energy converters and talking machines. (Goossan 20)

  As the European concept of space was being reshaped so also the concept of historical time itself. Thomas Moore’s Utopia, published in 1516 introduced a concept fundamental to modern consciousness and science fiction: change in the mode of production changes the conditions of human existence. As Moore argues, the cloth industry's growing demand for fine English wool had led to the enclosure of the common land, which caused massive unemployment and skyrocketing inflation, which forced many people into crime, which in turn led to wholesale capital punishment. These ominous conditions induce Moore to coin a pun and imagine a place with a mighty host of offspring in science fiction: Utopia, the good place (eutopia) which is noplace (outopia) (Goossan: 21)

  Francis Bacon used fiction to show the wonders that could be achieved using his inductive method of scientific experimentation. In his New Atlantis (posthumous 1627) he describes the discovery of a utopian society based on experimental science, including the development of
"New Artificial Metals," vivisection, genetic manipulation, telescopes, microscopes, telephones, factories, aerial flight, and submarines.

Although when discussing science fiction it is easy for the mind to wander straight to scenes of alien invasions, mad scientists and evil robots, there is a lot more to this universally loved genre than space travel and futuristic technologies. Indeed, the success of any piece of great science fiction writing depends on the ability to explore different existences and worlds in such a rational way that the reader is able to easily suspend their disbelief. The settings for such works of fiction often differs at least slightly from the reality are known. However, such novels usually still contain elements that are at least theoretically possible within scientifically established laws of nature.

2.9.1 Science Fiction in the 20th century

Science fiction was made accessible to the mainstream when movies became a popular form of art. Many notable authors picked up on the trend and science fiction became one of the most popular genres of fiction all across the world as people loved viewing films set in the future or even in space.

Technological and social changes were accelerating so rapidly that they could be experienced within a person's lifetime. It would soon become possible to imagine an historical future qualitatively different from the past or the present. Earlier to this, there had never been a fiction set in a future period of human history.

Though there were foretelling and witchcraft which had entered the fiction it was millennial imaginings that had pictured the replacement of human history by God's kingdom. Francis Cheynell's six-page political
tract Aulicus: *His Dream of the King's Second Coming to London* (1644) and Jacques Guttin's Epigone, *Story of the Future Century* (1659) may be treated as first of its kind. Fully developed fictions set in the future appeared only in the 18th century (Goossan: 23)

Authors had profound view of the rapid technological and social change in the 18th century. Jonathan Swift presents both an extended parody of experimental science and a vision of a terrifying super-weapon, a flying island used by its rulers literally to crush any earthly opposition to their tyranny in *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). A more similar stance was seen in Voltaire’s *Micromégas* (1732), remarkable as the first known story of visitors from other planets: two giants, one from Saturn and one from a planet of the star Sirius, who mock the follies of the diminutive earthlings.

Science was not to be halted by warnings and ridicule. Benjamin Franklin reported to the Royal Society his experimental control of electricity. After a few decades, quantitative research became qualitative; in other words, there would be a true Industrial Revolution. Political revolutions in America and France find their place in writings like Louis-Sébastian Mercier's remarkable *The Year 2440* (1770) foresees a marvelous society that worships science. This has been made possible with the telescope (Goossan: 24)

Industrial capitalism conquered the world by the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. Modern science provided the technological means to develop large factories, rapid large-scale transportation, and new energy sources. Huge quantities of coal to power the steam engines of industrial capitalism led to a preconception of time as profound as the Copernican preconception of space. Coal is a fossil
from remote geological ages. Industrial society discarded the dominant theory of cosmic time. It is utterly necessary for geological evolution and then to conceive of biological evolution to comprehend the time.

Many people were spending their lives working for a handful of capitalists who owned everything they had produced covering the factories, coal mines, railroads, and ships. This resulted in people leaving their fertile lands to factories and capitalists and they started working under such capitalists in the name of employment. Human creativity took a novel form of monstrous alien forces that exerted ever-growing power over the people.

Brian Aldiss has so aptly labeled "the first great myth of the industrial age" that appeared in the form of a novel as the progenitor of modern science fiction as people acknowledge as pioneer science fiction: Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus (1818). Then, after a decade, Shelley came out with finest creation of science fiction visions of the end of the world; The Last Man (1826) who wanders alone over a dead planet, sampling the useless glory of all human society. This scene is set in the year 2100 (Goossan: 24)

Technological change metamorphosed life continually. The 19th century began with the first experimental locomotive in 1801, developed through the airship in 1852, and ended up with the first experimental airplane in the late 1890s. There came the first practical steamboat, the screw propeller, the bicycle, and the automobile. The invention of the harvester, the disc cultivator, the reaper, and the mowing machine changed the method of agriculture. The opening year of the century saw he electric battery; the electromagnet, the cathode ray tube, and the magnetic tape recorder that mark the successive quarters. Adding
machine, calculating machine, punch time clock, cash register, stock ticker, and punch-card accounting made accessible for elevating man’s endeavor of computation. Many of the leading figures of America came out for antebellum fiction—like Washington Irving, Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, and Herman Melville—who made important contributions to the development of the form. Then triumph of industrial capitalism in the Civil War was affected, there also emerged a newly literate mass audience of boys and young men who were intrigued by the opportunities of fame and fortune in science and technology. Aimed directly at this readership was the science-fiction "dime" novel, with its teenage boy genius as hero, first presented in Edward Ellis's seminal *The Steam Man of the Prairie* (1865). Between the Civil War and World War I, the most popular form of literature in America was the dime novel, and its science fiction versions were to have a formative influence on American culture. Only when it became an influential form of mass entertainment did science fiction come to be disdained as vulgar and puerile.

There are well understood terms of engagement between the people who write for publication, on the one hand, and the academics and critics who discuss it, on the other. Then the academics explain what the writer has written and the critics explain how it could have been written so much better. Thus parity is conserved and everybody is, more or less, happy. Only a reckless member of either team would attempt to usurp the functions of the other.

### 2.9.2 Significance of the study of Science Fiction

It can be appreciated from the foregoing arguments that Science Fiction is utilitarian and a tool for achieving certain educative purposes
which are not solely related to Science Fiction. It generates enthusiasm for a subject via the lessons implicit in Science Fiction and ensures participation, communication of ideas, pleasure of research, correlation and application of data, lateral thinking ability, critical analysis and social interaction along with many other key life skills such as comprehension, reading ability and increased vocabulary.

It can thus be argued that scientific, or even seemingly scientific, conceptions, when encountered in youth, can influence adult behavior. The youth of today are the adults of tomorrow. The values of our society change from generation to generation, evolving and re-evaluating what is moral, ethical and acceptable in conjunction with emerging philosophies and technologies. “In the course of our natural evolution they may or may not achieve a higher, more harmonious state in keeping with our 'civilized' concepts, but our race cannot depend on that, and the individual cannot wait for it; they must remake ourselves, and SF is a signpost directing the way” (Ettinger: 21) Isaac Asimov and Robert Heinlein both acclaim Science Fiction is the literature of change, and it is the ability to cope with such changes that will enable mankind to enter the technological future with faith in his adaptability to new challenges.

To some extent we already live in a world modeled by these motifs. Sargent claims Science Fiction has already warned us of the dangers of change, whilst at the same time legitimizing the concept (Sargent xx). SF does not hold revelation contemporary for our future; People educated with these patterns can face the future with confidence. They may not be astounded if they were to receive a message from an extraterrestrial civilization; Artificial Intelligence is commonplace, man may overcome the environmental problems they face, our children may
live in a globalized Utopian society; many of the hundreds of prognostications of SF may come to pass – the point being that they have already been accommodated to these possibilities by their implementation of the lessons inherent in SF. Such people are conscious of the outward urge of man's endeavours, clearly informed of the possibilities and drawbacks of scientific, technological, ecological, humanitarian or political progress, adapting to and comprehending a society in which they can play a dynamic, purposeful role.

2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter an attempt has been made to explore the nature, characteristics and different types of fantasy literature. Bringing out the nature of fantasy, it is pointed out, that fantasies behave in subversive way. Fantasies are the result of vision of author who views reality and presents it in obverse fashion. Magic medievalism, external or physical quest, religious overtones and urbanism are some of the prominent features of fantasy. In its evolution fantasy has diversified into different forms such as dark fantasy, epic fantasy, historical fantasy, modern fantasy and science fantasy.

The relationships that exist between fantasy and science fiction have been highlighted by projecting its salient features such as exploration into outer space, introduction of aliens into the affairs of the earthly human beings, and invasion of the earth by the aliens from the other planets, mythic vision and isolation. Presentations of alternate universe, alternate timelines and speculation have been brought to the forefronts as these forms the basic features of science fiction. It is argued that these features are responsible for shaping the vision of science fiction writers. Although Ballard does not seem to stick to any one genre it is
shown that Ballard’s vision has been shaped by science fiction. The nature and unique features of Ballard’s vision form the concern of the next chapter.