

# Science Fiction & Fantasy - Your Opinions

This is a survey seeking people's opinions on Science Fiction and Fantasy literature. It follows on from the 'Science Fiction & Fantasy - Your Experiences' survey which started in November 2015. We were very interested in feedback people gave asking for more flexibility and options for in-depth answers and have followed that when designing this survey. There are fewer questions than in the previous survey but they allow for longer and fuller answers if you want to say more.

The survey takes approximately five minutes if you skip the text answers, but there is no limit to how much you can put down.

Note that your answers are completely anonymous and you cannot be identified by answering this survey.

Thank you for your participation in my project, especial thanks to those of you who took part in the first survey and are coming back for the second round!

Ben Menadue, Cairns, Australia.

## Information Sheet - The Background to this Questionnaire

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The Research Project: Science Fictions and Cultural Facts – how people's experience of science fiction and fantasy can help us build better, more considered outcomes for research through collaboration between stakeholders.

You are invited to take part in a research project about people's experience of science fiction and fantasy literature. The study is being conducted by Ben Menadue and will contribute to his PhD thesis at James Cook University. The aim is to investigate how people experience new ideas they read and if this reflects broader ideas about the world, science and our interests and concerns. For this purpose, the survey provides the researcher with information on your opinions about and experiences of Science Fiction & Fantasy literature.

This current survey adds to the previous 'Science Fiction & Fantasy, Your Experiences' survey which was started in November 2015 (available at <https://goo.gl/forms/SJV9PE0Yi3fbOk2T2> if you're really keen on surveys and want to do that one as well!), but it is not necessary to have done that survey first (or at all) to take part in this one. To continue with this survey, please click on the 'Continue' button to the bottom left of the page.

If you know other people who might be interested in taking part, please feel free to pass on the link to this survey.

If you have any questions please contact Ben Menadue and/or Richard Lansdown:

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This survey is being carried out under the terms of the James Cook University Human Research Ethics Committee Approval H6299

If you have any concerns regarding the ethical conduct of the study, please contact:  
Human Ethics, Research Office  
James Cook University, Townsville, Qld, 4811 Australia  
Phone: (07) 4781 5011 ([ethics@jcu.edu.au](mailto:ethics@jcu.edu.au))

## The survey...

The survey has list questions as well as boxes for you to make longer answers. 'Free text' answers can often be given in a few key words - we're not expecting you to write whole sentences or

paragraphs about a question unless you want to - the text boxes are the default size for the form, so don't feel we are expecting you to fill them up.

The survey is entirely voluntary and we'd rather you answer briefly or skip questions and get to the end of the survey than stop because it's taking too long to answer everything...

Finally, when you're giving multiple answers could you separate each one with a comma - otherwise we'll be looking for a book called 'Electric Sheep City' if you don't use commas in an answer like: 'Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep, City, The Quantum Thief'...

## First, some questions about what you read.

Our reading interests and choices might be influenced by what's going on in the world around us and might influence how we respond to what we see - we think that's an interesting idea for discussion.

### 1. How much do you enjoy reading compared to doing other things?

(for 'reading' please include audiobooks - in this and later questions)

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
I'd much rather be reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It fills in the time between doing other things

### 2. What sort of books do you like to read in general?

A few key words that describe your interests will be very helpful - examples might be; poetry, history, real science, science fiction, humour, biographies, fantasy... there are many many more possible answers, so put as many or as few as you like. (Please separate each sort by a comma).

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### 3. About how many books have you read in the past month?

Please include audiobooks and ebooks in this and the next questions

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### 4. How many of these were Science Fiction or Fantasy Books?

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### 5. How many magazines do you read in a month?

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### 6. How many of the magazines were about Science Fiction or Fantasy?

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**7. What sort of Science Fiction & Fantasy do you like reading?**

There are lots of themes and ideas in Science Fiction & Fantasy, ranging from 'hard' science fiction about technology and realistic science to romances, comic books, humour, space opera, gender themed, dystopian, weird, horror, existential, war, time travel, suspense, steampunk, cyberpunk... The list is almost endless, and new ones appear all the time... Please put as few or as many as you like (but please separate them by commas).

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**8. Do you generally prefer Science Fiction or Fantasy?**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Mainly Fantasy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Mainly Science Fiction

**9. How important are the types of things (rather than the plot) in a book to whether it's Science Fiction or Fantasy?**

You might consider that dragons and magic always make it fantasy and spaceships and aliens make it science fiction... or not see it as being so clear. There are some books that have both dragons and spaceships in them...

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
I don't think the specific content matters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I think the difference in content is what makes the difference

**10. Does the way the story is written (the way the plot works) influence whether you think of it as Science Fiction or Fantasy?**

'Hard' Science Fiction has often been seen as based on logic and possible realism. Other Science Fiction and Fantasy stories might have stories that require supernatural and logically impossible things to happen... Are different approaches to telling the story important in deciding whether something is Science Fiction or Fantasy?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
A story can be put together any which way and be either	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Science Fiction and Fantasy have recognisably different ways of telling stories

**11. Is your distinction between science fiction and fantasy influenced by what other people say about the story?**

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

**12. How much does the picture on the cover or the promotional material influence whether you see something as Science Fiction or Fantasy...**

Sometimes the pictures might even be the best part of the whole book...

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
I don't judge a book by its cover	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I make assumptions from the promotional material

## A bit more philosophical...

These questions ask for a more careful response than the other ones in this survey. These have mainly been included because of the feedback from people who wanted more freedom in their answers and more space to describe them rather than being restricted by selecting from a list. That feedback made us feel a bit foolish for not having expected that F&SF readers and fans might be more free-thinking than your average survey respondent. We live and learn...

**13. For you, what makes a good story?**

Sometimes we like a particular style of story, perhaps the perspective of how it is told, particular themes and ideas, types of plot. People can have very different ideas of what makes a 'good book'...

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**14. For you, what makes a bad story?**

What ideas, styles, themes or other content does not capture your interest or is just something you don't like.

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**15. Imagine what the best SF&F book ever written would be like. What would it say on the back of the book?**

So, what would the synopsis of the story be for it to make you really want to read it - this isn't a 'marketing' question, it's about what short, simple statement sums up what you really want to read...

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**16. What is it about a book that makes you think of it as fantasy?**

Trying to come up with definitions of fantasy and science fiction is very difficult - your thoughts on this could be very helpful. We asked a couple of general questions earlier about the importance of content or structure in making your decision but you might think it goes deeper than that...

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**17. What is it about a book that makes you think of it as science fiction?**

Not a question that should surprise you, considering the last one...

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**18. Now, what might be a tricky one... Is Frank Herbert's "Dune" Fantasy or Science Fiction...?**

(If you haven't read "Dune", it scores very well on lists of the best SF&F books ever, but we're not suggesting reading it before answering this question...)

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Definitely Science Fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Fantasy without a doubt

**19. Why "Dune"?**

That's a good question - it's because "Dune" is one of the most read books in Fantasy and Science Fiction and it will be familiar to a lot of you. "Dune" has a lot going on in it, in terms of plot and content, and how to define it is something we argue about here... While we're at it, perhaps you'd like to explain here why you ranked "Dune" like you did on the Fantasy or Science Fiction scale? (If you haven't read "Dune" please leave this blank).

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**Some questions about your specific interests in particular books**

You've provided some very useful information about your reading habits and your opinions on what you read in general, now we'd like to hear about your personal choices...

**20. Which ideas in Science Fiction & Fantasy do you find the most moving, or inspirational?**

These might be topics you've indicated earlier, or some new ones.

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**21. If you have a favourite author of Science Fiction or Fantasy - who is it?**

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**22. What do you like about that author?**

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**23. What are the best Science Fiction and Fantasy books of all time?**

(Please remember to put commas between them...)

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**24. Is there something these works have in common that makes these books appealing to you?**

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**25. What's your absolute favourite Science Fiction or Fantasy book of all time?**

You've had a question that lets you put down as many as you liked earlier, now we're seeing if you can pick just one...Yes, we know that's not going to be easy...

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**26. Can you describe why this book is your favourite?**

How would you recommend it to someone as a good read, or is it a very personal choice

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## Questions about the value of science fiction and fantasy to the real world...

A question that we're interested in is if Science Fiction and/or Fantasy has a purpose that goes beyond entertainment and is linked to real world events, concerns and interests.

**27. How often does Science Fiction make you think about the purpose and benefits or risks of scientific innovations now and in the future?**

This and the following questions are about how you think attitudes to Science Fiction and Fantasy might influence how we relate to new ideas and concepts in the real world.

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	All the time

**28. Would you say that Science Fiction is useful in encouraging us to consider and evaluate what's going on with real science?**

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
I don't think it is	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Yes, very

**29. Do you think reading Science Fiction and Fantasy makes 'real' science on the same topics more understandable?**

This is a bit different from the last one - it's more about if SF&F helps to teach people about real science

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Yes, very much so

**30. Do you think that science benefits from people reading Science Fiction?**

Does it make people more informed about science, more interested in it and supportive of research that is being done today...

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
It makes doing real science harder and can damage its reputation and inhibit research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It helps people understand, accept and trust science and scientists and is a tool for helping progress

**31. Do you think scientists in Science Fiction seem more human, and have more human concerns, than 'real' scientists?**

'Real' scientists are sometimes seen as being remote from other people's interests and opinions. Are they actually any different in this respect to scientists in Science Fiction?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
I think real scientists seem more normal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I can relate to fictional scientists more easily

**32. Science Fiction and Fantasy - what's the point?**

Yes - this sounds like a school essay topic... It's an opportunity for you to say what science fiction and fantasy do for people and society that goes beyond the simple questions above. We can't think of everything and, from experience, if we didn't give an opportunity for you to say whatever you like here on this important subject we'd be getting an in-box full of feedback about this afterwards...

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## Some questions about you

These are what is known as 'demographic' questions. They help us to see if people like different things in books because they are older, or live in different places, or speak different languages. You don't have to answer any of these questions (you don't have to answer any of this questionnaire) but if you do it helps us build a more accurate picture of what people like and why they might like it. As it says at the beginning, your responses are anonymous and you cannot be identified from your answers.

### 33. Where in the world do you live?

First select the region, then please put the name of your country (or abbreviation e.g. .UK, USA, NZ) in the 'other' box at the bottom of the list.

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Australia or New Zealand
- ☐ Western Europe
- ☐ North America (US and Canada)
- ☐ Central or South America
- ☐ Pacific Islands
- ☐ Caribbean
- ☐ South East Asia
- ☐ Central Asia
- ☐ Eastern Europe
- ☐ Middle East
- ☐ Africa
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 34. What is your native language?

This is the one you speak most at home.

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ English
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 35. Are you in a relationship with someone?

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ I'd rather not say
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 36. What is your gender?

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**37. How old are you?**

This helps us get a good idea if people's preferences vary much with their age. Remember the survey is totally anonymous. If you are a Time Lord, Jedi Master or a Hobbit, we'd prefer a reasonably accurate biological Earth age here if possible or you can just leave it blank...

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**38. Since we set ourselves up for this one, here is the only frivolous question in this survey. Are you:**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ A Time Lord
- ☐ A Jedi Master
- ☐ A Hobbit
- ☐ The Watcher
- ☐ The Kwisatz Haderach
- ☐ Not as frivolous as people who answer any of the above
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**39. What level of formal education do you have?**

'Professional or Technical Trade' asks if you are qualified in any specialist trade or profession for which you undertook additional, recognised, formal education to enable you to practice (as examples: an electrician, acupuncturist, mechanic, surveyor, welder, beautician, accountant, carpenter...)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ School
- ☐ University
- ☐ Post-Graduate University
- ☐ Professional or Technical Trade
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**40. How important do you think your life experience and learned skills are compared to your formal education?**

People continue to learn and develop skills through their lives outside of their career and formal education, these can be very useful in determining what we do with our lives.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very important

**41. What is your main occupation?**

If you are in more than one category, please select both  
*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Employed
- ☐ Self-Employed
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Home maker
- ☐ Volunteering
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**42. What job do you normally do, or have you done in the past?**


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**43. If you could pick any job or career at all, what would you pick?**


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**44. How good are you at working with your hands?**

Making, fixing and handling things, creative arts and crafts, DIY et. al.  
*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Putting up a picture is a hazardous operation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I could build a space-station out of coat hangers and some string

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**45. Are you happy with how much income you have?**

This is not a question about how much you actually earn, but more about how you feel about it.  
*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ I never have enough money, even for day to day things
- ☐ I do well enough but a bit more would be helpful
- ☐ I'm happy with what I have
- ☐ I'm doing well, I have more than I need
- ☐ I've got enough that I don't really have to think about it

**46. Is there anything else you would like to add about your opinions about Science Fiction & Fantasy?**

We are very interested in what you have to say about your experience of reading and enjoying Science Fiction and Fantasy in your life and how it may have influenced you. There may be things you want to say about Science Fiction & Fantasy in general. Please write anything else you feel like saying here and write as much or as little as you like. If you would like to have feedback on your comments or participate further in the project, please put your email here - the survey is absolutely confidential so we can't contact you otherwise even if you'd like to talk to us some more!

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**47. How did you discover this survey?**

This adds information about the link between the what people are interested in and how they find things out.

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ From a news article
- ☐ Referred by a friend / colleague
- ☐ A circular from your organisation / school
- ☐ From an internet search
- ☐ A blog, twitter or other social media
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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