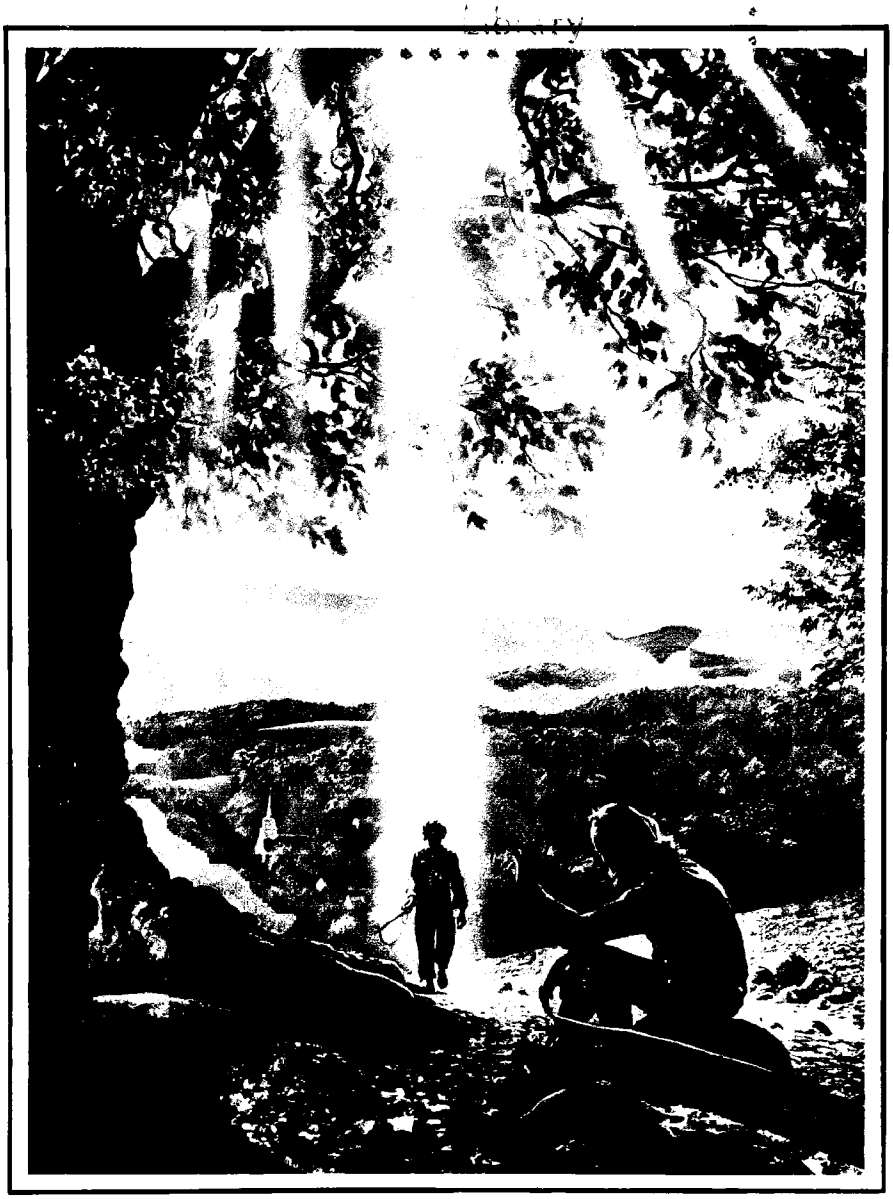
FOUNDATION

THE
REVIEW OF
SCIENCE FICTION

45



featuring Orson Scott Card and *Seventh Son*

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FOUNDATION

THE REVIEW OF SCIENCE FICTION

Contents
Number 45, Spring 1989

Editorial

At the end of June I went to my first academic conference devoted to contemporary sf. Transatlantic readers may find that difficult to imagine; but such occasions are much more infrequent over here. It was the Eaton Conference, held down the road from me at the University of Leeds and jointly organised by George Slusser of Riverside and Tom Shippey of Leeds. About two dozen people attended, the ideal number for a friendly conference, and a majority of them were from the States. The theme: "Cyberpunk" —although, in a bid to attract more British participants, the phrase "Fiction Approaching the Year 2000" was added. The proceedings began, appropriately enough, with some attempts to define "cyberpunk" and its canon. The canon on film was ably introduced by Frances Bonner, of the Open University. But we never much proceeded beyond *Neuromancer* in the discussion of the literary canon; it was generally agreed that establishing canons only established barriers, and, it was implied, what we were going to talk about would emerge in the process of talk in the coming days. That was a mistake, perhaps. The rest of the conference produced many insights on *Neuromancer* and the rest of the Gibson trilogy. There was also some detailed analysis of some other works, notably Benford's *Great Sky River*. But so determined were participants that barriers should not be erected that we did not really look at the borderland where planning permission for barrier-building might logically be sought. Nor, indeed, were several of the major figures normally associated with cyberpunk very much discussed.

The exception was Lewis Shiner, whose own paper not only informed us about his own fiction, but also provided a useful insider's guide to The Movement, to his own role within it (he has promised a "Profession" piece for *Foundation* based on this paper), and to why so-called cyberpunks are no longer writing cyberpunk. Bob Donahoo, of Texas University, himself gave us an excellent analysis of Shiner's fiction. (I thought how pleasant it was for me to be able to lecture on Bede and Gregory of Tours, and, indeed, Attila the Hun, without ever having the subject-matter sit in the front row looking quizzical.)

Despite the qualms about barriers and canons, then, St William of Cyberspace was well and truly canonised. In the next cyberpunk conference, perhaps, we may hear more about the other figures in The Movement, about its claims for preeminence within contemporary sf, about its relations to other trends in contemporary sf. The most illuminating paper from this more historical point of view was from Carol McGuirk, of the University of Florida (though at the University of Strathclyde later this year, working on Burns), which looked at the debts of cyberpunkers to their literary ancestors. As an historian, used to looking at broad trends (rather than as a literary critic, used to analysing texts), I was worried at the narrowness of the range of texts, and at the subsequent narrowing and diminishing of the whole literary movement (with a small "m"). It was symptomatic of the relaxed nature of the conference that Harry Harrison managed to disrupt a perfectly serious lecture (by Eric Rabkin, I think) with a light-bulb joke, which prompted Lew Shiner to ask how many cyberpunks it took to change a light-bulb. The answer: "One, but he thinks he's an army." Perhaps it is too early to learn about the effects that such an army has had upon the terrain; perhaps we have to look in detail at the tiny number of soldiers, while waiting for the crops to recover. But I still think a more

historical approach, looking more closely at the personalities, the publishing gambits, the marketing strategies, the audience, the cultural affinities, would have been a useful contribution to our understanding.

If I introduced a somewhat sour note, along these lines, towards the end of this very stimulating and enjoyable conference, it was nothing like the sourness produced by other participants. Harry Harrison launched a furious attack on Gibson's style, by way of a commentary on a Gibson parody that will appear in the next *Stainless Steel Rat* novel. And he, together with Greg Benford and Greg Bear, made an all-out assault on Gibson's ignorance of science and cybernetics. As Rachel Pollack says (below, p.84) "this does not imply that *Neuromancer* was a fake, not at all, but rather that Gibson's real concern was with language." (And, *pace* Harrison, that language is powerful stuff.) To make accurate science the main criterion of the worth of an sf novel does, it seems to me, put limits on the free speculation which is at the heart of sf. Anyone venture to disagree?

Those who read (and remember) my editorials will note that I promised a "Foundation Forum" piece from Brian Stableford in this issue. That has been squeezed out (sorry, Brian), but will appear in no. 46 (out in the Autumn). 46 will also have a "Profession" piece from M. John Harrison, the second Keith Roberts article from Nicholas Ruddick, Bailey on Stapledon and Suvin on Cyberpunk, and the reviews will include Gwyneth Jones on Gene Wolfe's *There Are Doors* and Roz Kaveney on David Zindell's *Neverness*. I have also commissioned a review myself, without going through the Review Editor. The book? *Strokes: Essays and Reviews 1966-1986* by John Clute (Serconia Press, Seattle; available in the UK from Andy Richards, 136 New Road, Bedfont, Middlesex TW14 8HT, at £6 for the paperback).

I used to think that I was quite good at proof-reading. Then I received, from a kind professor of French, a list of the errors in my chapter of *The Oxford Illustrated History of Medieval Europe* (1988), and he followed it up with a page and a half of proof-reading errors from my *The Franks* (1988). I know that *Foundation* is not perfect: apart from the fact that I always find things Valerie Buckle misses, she always finds things that I miss. But now, depressingly, comes a letter from Gregory Feeley, complaining about the "desperate number of misprints" in *Foundation* 44, including the spellings of familiar names like Raccoona Sheldon, Hieronymus Bosch, and General MacArthur, and mispunctuated titles for stories like "Poor Little Warrior!" and "Who Can Replace a Man?" And, appallingly, Gregory Feeley's own review of two novels by Jonathan Carroll, "aside from the flyspecks I am resigned to in *Foundation* (never-closing parentheses and the like)", had "that good life Carroll's novels so lovingly and unknowledgeably evoke" instead of "lovingly and knowledgeably". My apologies to Mr Carroll, Mr Feeley and all readers. You cannot *imagine* what pains we have taken in proof-reading Gregory Feeley's review of the Gunn *Encyclopedia* in this issue, in which he takes James Gunn and team to task for *their* errors.

Edward James
July 1989

In issue 44 we looked at how Harlan Ellison "graduated" to science fiction stardom via male magazines. A different correspondence course, an earlier stage of apprenticeship, is the theme of Sam Moskowitz's intriguing study of the way that many notable authors commenced their careers by "pubbing their ish" as fan editors.

Mr Moskowitz has been continuously involved in the sf and fantasy field for the past 56 years and is author or editor of some 60 books. He edited Science-Fiction + *under Hugo Gernsback, put on the first World Science Fiction Convention in 1939, and taught the world's first college-level sf class in 1953 at City College of New York. Currently completed and scheduled for publication are a book of uncollected William Hope Hodgson fantasies (from Donald Grant), a new printing of* The Immortal Storm, A History of Science Fiction Fandom *(from Hyperion Press), as well as lengthy studies of the little-known horror fiction of W.C. Morrow; of the fantasies of David H. Keller, M.D. as opposed to his sf; of T.S. Stribling (author of "The Green Splotches"); of* Weird Tales *contributor Nictzin Dyalhis; of the correspondence between Hugo Gernsback and Henrik Dahl Juve, which Mr Moskowitz believes will radically alter our perception of the former; and of Bernarr Macfadden, publisher of* True Story *and* Physical Culture, *a figure obsessively involved with sf publication and sf people who forced Gernsback into bankruptcy and thus took over* Amazing Stories *– this latter study has been appearing serially in* Fantasy Commentator.

Mr Moskowitz is strongly committed to presenting material that was previously quite unknown or little known. The following essay is another earnest of his researches into the roots of the sf field.

From Fanzines to Fame: SF Figures Who Began as Fan Editors

SAM MOSKOWITZ

Probably no more savage and effective blow was ever delivered at a segment of the publishing industry than that of Frederic Wertham, MD, in his 1954 book *Seduction of the Innocent,* targeted at the comic books of that era. Itemizing the cruelty, torture, terror, deceit, criminality, sexual abnormalities on an item-by-item basis, the book forced an entire shake-up of the comic magazine industry and the adoption of a comics code which completely altered the character of that business.

That same psychiatrist announced that he was publishing the results of a thirty-year study of science fiction and fantasy fan magazines or fanzines, and there was understandable curiosity when it appeared under the title of *The World of Fanzines* in 1973 from the Southern Illinois University Press. In his introduction he said of them:

Fanzines are a little-known, particular kind of publication. The name derives from the common term *fans* and from *zine* which is the last syllable of magazine. The word *fan zine* was originally an ingroup slang expression used loosely and interchangeably with "fan-mag", that is fan magazine. It has gradually become a regular term which belongs—or should belong—in the dictionaries and in the general language.

Briefly defined, fanzines are uncommercial, nonprofessional, small-circulation magazines which their editors produce, publish, and distribute. They deal primarily with what they call fantasy literature and art. The fact that they are not commercially oriented, may come out irregularly, and are privately distributed differentiates them from the professional newstand magazines. Their writers and readers belong chiefly to the under-thirty group.

In so much that is offered to us today we read about what is negative, we are entertained by what is morbid, we are surrounded by what is contrived. Fanzines which are sincere and spontaneous we have overlooked. Most academic and general readers do not know about them. The same is true of most libraries, as checks of libraries and literary indices show. Even many dictionaries do not include the word. The Library of Congress subject listings have no heading at all for fanzines.

The vast majority of sociologists, psychiatrists, and educators, quite apart from knowing about them, do not even know the term.

I have been asked—and have asked myself—where my empathy with such an unusual and unrecognized subject comes from. Having seen, in my years in psychiatry, so much of the general flaws in our human relations, I was attracted to something that was so positive and was not acknowledged as such. I felt that it was essentially unpolluted by the greed, the arrogance, and the hypocrisy that has invaded so much of our intellectual life.

In my analysis the editing of fanzines is a constructive and healthy exercise of creative drives.

On that premise, can evidence be shown, that well-known and meritorious writers of science fiction, and for that matter editors, artists and scientists too, edited fantasy fan magazines before they went on to make a name for themselves in the professional field?

The first science fiction fan magazine to be published outside the United States was *Novae Terrae* (New Worlds), edited by Maurice K. Hanson and published under the auspices of the Nuneaton Chapter, England # 22 of The Science Fiction League, with the issue of March, 1936. At the first British Science Fiction Conference held January 3, 1937 in Leeds, England, the British Science Fiction Association was formed and *Novae Terrae* made its official organ. Hanson obtained a government job in London at the end of August, 1937.

Though it should be superfluous to give Arthur C. Clarke's credentials for inclusion in this opus, for the sake of the uninitiated, if not for a consistent format, he first achieved international attention when his exposition *The Exploration of Space* became a Book-of-the-Month-Club selection in 1952; his fiction achieved critical acclaim with *Childhood's End* in 1953 and he virtually became a household name for his collaboration on the script of the film *2001: A Space Odyssey* with Stanley Kubrick, released in 1968.

Arthur C. Clarke, who had been a contributor to *Novae Terrae* and resident in London with a government job of his own, was present with Hanson at the inaugural meeting of the London Chapter of the Science Fiction Association, October 3, 1937 and made treasurer. Clarke was also made Associate Editor of *Novae Terrae* with the October, 1937 issue. At the time of the July 1938 issue Clarke had rented an apartment together with Hanson and William F. Temple at 88 Gray's Inn Road, London, and converted this apartment into the publishing headquarters of the magazine. Clarke wrote articles, stencilled, mimeographed, collated and even collaborated on the artwork of one of the covers with Harry Turner. In those days he had a magnificent head of hair, standing almost straight up; a fine collection of science fiction by British standards; and a self regard so elevated that he was nicknamed "Ego": some of his fan articles were signed Arthur

"Ego" Clarke. His first three science fiction efforts appeared in *Amateur Science Stories,* a mimeographed magazine published by the association in 1937 and 1938 to encourage British writers.

William F. Temple, who roomed with Hanson and Clarke, was also a working Associate Editor of *Novae Terrae,* and he went on to receive recognition as a science fiction writer. His best known work, *The Four-Sided Triangle,* which appeared as a novelette in *Amazing Stories* for November 1939, was expanded into a novel for Frederick Fell in 1949 and was made into a British moving picture in 1953. A profile, written by Clarke, appeared in the January 1939 issue of *Novae Terrae;* he was characterized as an eternal procrastinator, a wide-ranging intellectual despite his obsession with films and film making, and an early member of the British Interplanetary Society.

Another active fan, contributor to *Novae Terrae* and friend of Clarke's was a diamond firm's public relations man named Christopher Samuel Youd of London, better known as John Christopher. He became an instant celebrity in the science fiction world when his novel *The Death of Grass* (1956) was serialized by *The Saturday Evening Post* in the United States as *No Blade of Grass* (in seven instalments beginning in the issue of April 27, 1957); he received a reputed $80,000 for it, an amount easily in excess of half a million today. It was made into a motion picture in 1970 and as recently as 1984 he scored a phenomenal success with *The Tripods,* a British science fiction television series based on his juvenile books.

Before the armed services embraced him, he began publication of the mimeographed fan magazine *The Fantast* with the issue of April 1939, which featured a poem by Arthur C. Clarke that received the cover illustration, and stories by two other fan magazine publishers of *The Satellite:* David McIlwain, better known as Charles Eric Maine, and John F. Burke. *The Fantast* ran fourteen good-size issues, incorporating McIlwain and Burke's *The Satellite* with its ninth issue. It was very heavy on fiction, poetry, letters and an occasional "revolutionary" article. It also made a speciality of fiction *about* science fiction fans, some of them of serial length. Prominent among them was Arthur C. Clarke's *A Short History of Fantocracy,* signed as by Arthur Ego Clarke.

There is circumstantial evidence that Christopher, who started out a pacifist and then became a militant, was inducted into the Royal Signals at the time the August, 1941 issue revealed Douglas Webster of Scotland as editor, though contributions by Christopher/Youd continued right through to the July 1942 issue.

One of the most valuable contributors to *Novae Terrae* from its second issue on was Edward J. (Ted) Carnell. Before his death in 1972, he had become renowned for having raised his own financing to launch the long-lived British science fiction magazine *New Worlds* and its successful companions *Science Fantasy* and *Science Fiction Adventures.* His hard and soft cover series of "New Writings in Science Fiction" in the United Kingdom ran for 21 collections. He made the selections for the British Science Fiction Book Club and through his magazines played a major role in establishing the reputations of Brian Aldiss, J.G. Ballard, John Brunner and Michael Moorcock among many others. He was also an outstanding literary agent specializing in science fiction.

When *Novae Terrae* closed with its December 1938 issue, starting again from Volume I No. 1 he relaunched it as *New Worlds* with the March 1939 issue and took along with it as associate editors Arthur C. Clarke, Maurice K. Hanson and William Temple! He also obtained the services of the cover artist Harry Turner. The magazine was very provoca-

tive, with articles like "Is Weinbaum Over-Rated?" by Frank Arnold, "The Inscrutable American Angle" by Sam Moskowitz about hypocrisy and penurious behaviour towards American fans by the British (which elicited considerable rebuttal). There was much better balance of material, with both British and Americans, and professionals as well as fans. Among those represented that would be recognized today were John Russell Fearn under his own name and under the pen name of Thornton Ayre, John F. Burke, Ray Bradbury, Donald A. Wollheim, and Robert W Lowndes. With the declaration of war in September 1939 the Science Fiction Association voted to close down all their activities for the duration, and the fourth and last issue of *New Worlds* was dated Autumn 1939.

Those who evidence surprise at Ray Bradbury being included in *New Worlds'* roster at that early date should be informed that the item was "Mathematica Minus", a reprint from the July 1938 issue of the Los Angeles fan magazine *Imagination!* That magazine had been started in October 1937 and under the influence of Forrest J. Ackerman had been published in simplified spelling or phonetic English, except for the issue mentioned which was guest edited by Charles D. Hornig, former editor of Hugo Gernsback's *Wonder Stories*. The Bradbury of that era was well padded, with big ears, red nose and thick glasses. He maintained an unending stream of puns, one-liners, outrageous word play and black humour and liked to play the role of the buffoon. All this was reflected in "Mathematica Minus". For example: "Dear Students of Science: I have been reading a textbook by a fellow named Darwin called "The Organ of the Spices", or "I find that a planet is a body of earth surrounded by sky" or "a human passes through all life stages from infancy to adultery", or "Nitrogen is not found in Ireland because it is never found in a free state", or "when you breathe, you inspire. When you do not breath, you expire." Actually, that was the first time Ray Bradbury's work had ever been printed abroad.

It was a completely different Ray Douglas Bradbury that edited and mimeographed his own publication, *Futuria Fantasia,* introduced with the Summer 1939 issue. Well aware of his consciously created role of playing the fool, he made a point of saying in his opening editorial: "But best of all—there is nothing humorous in this issue by the editor himself —which should cause huge, grateful sighs of relief from Maine to Miske [a prominent Cleveland fan] and back! Bradbury just has a poem, and a serious one at that."

The entire issue was neatly printed in green ink. It had a cover by "Hans" Bok, an artist Bradbury had discovered and was trying to promote. The inspiration of the issue was a long article on the glories of Technocracy by T Bruce Yerke, and Bradbury made it a point to say that one of his major objectives was to spread the gospel of that movement. Technocracy was a theory of government, promoted most heavily by Howard Scott, that would place the United States under a dictatorship of scientists, who would use their knowledge to run the nation along cost-efficient lines. It was estimated that under this system, each worker would earn the equivalent of $20,000 a year (which would buy what $200,000 a year would today). On the back of each issue Bradbury pasted foil, two-colour seals promoting Technocracy, Inc., a study course. It is interesting to note that Bradbury, whose themes would be anti-scientific and anti-dictatorship, initially was enthusiastic about scientific progress and was not beneath accepting dictatorship to get it! In addition to his poem, he had a short-short story in the issue under the pen name of Ron Reynolds (a name which appeared in almost every issue).

The second issue had a story by Henry Kuttner and the original version of Bradbury's story "The Pendulum", his first professional sale, in collaboration with Henry Hasse

(Super Science Stories, November 1941) who had a poem in that very issue.

Further issues contained stories by Ray Bradbury under his own name and under the Ron Reynolds name, a story by Robert A. Heinlein in the guise of Lyle Monroe, further material by Henry Kuttner, J. Harvey Haggard, Joseph E. Kelleam, Damon Knight, Henry Hasse, Ross Rocklynne and Emil Petaja. Bok suddenly blossomed into Hannes V Bok, with his work improving in every number. With the fourth and last issue dated Winter, 1940 Bradbury announced a series of stories by Robert A. Heinlein coming up as well as material by August W. Derleth and Willy Ley. *Futuria Fantasia* has become one of the more difficult to find and worthwhile of the fan magazines of that era.

Undoubtedly one of the most famous comic magazine characters to appear in this century is Superman. The creators of that strip were Jerome Siegel, who wrote the script, and Joe Shuster, who did the artwork. As teenagers Siegel, writing under the pen name of Bernard J. Kenton, aimed an endless stream of stories at the science fiction magazines and Joe Shuster shuttled around his artwork, both to no avail. They started a mimeographed fan magazine together out of Cleveland titled *Science Fiction*—the first publication of any type to carry that title—undated, but it appeared in October 1932. Most of the stories were by Siegel under the pen names of Herbert S. Fine, Eugene I. Frank and Bernard J. Kenton, and the artwork was by Shuster. For the record, considering that Shuster's work was traced on a stencil with a stylus, it was as good as his initial professional strips *Slam Bradley* in *Detective Comics* and *Superman* in *Action Comics* in 1938. The magazine lasted five issues, the last appearing in 1933. It obtained material by Raymond A. Palmer, David H. Keller, MD, and Clare Winger Harris, all of whom had sold professional fiction at the time. Interestingly, the magazine ran a very fine news column titled "The Scientifan-Atic" by Ian Recgtez, a pen name of Mort Weisinger. In March 1941, Mort Weisinger was to become editor of *Superman Comics,* guiding it through its most prosperous period even against the fierce competition of similar character strips.

Probably the professional whose fan magazine publishing and first commercial sale were the closest thing to a dead heat was Raymond A. Palmer. He is best known for his infamous perpetration of the Richard S. Shaver aberrations as editor of *Amazing Stories* (June 1938 to December 1949), as well as his editorship of *Fantastic Adventures* during the same period. At one time or another he owned and published *Other Worlds Science Stories, Universe, Imagination, Science Stories, Fate, Flying Saucers, Mystic, Space World* and *Search.* His greatest strength was as a writer, however, not only under his and Shaver's name, but as Frank Patton, A.R. Steber, Henry Gade, G.H. Irwin, J.W. Pelkie, Morris J. Steele, Robert N. Webster and Rae Winters.

In 1928, as a result of *Amazing Stories* printing the addresses of the letter writers in their "Discussions" column, two science correspondence clubs were formed and merged in September 1928 becoming The Science Correspondence Club. Raymond A. Palmer was made Secretary. In May 1930 they produced the first issue of a club organ titled *The Comet* with Palmer as editor. This was the era when activists believed it was the destiny of science fiction readers—who were mostly male—to become scientists and in that role work for a better world. *The Comet,* which title was quickly changed to *Cosmology,* reflected that aspiration, but in actuality it was a prelude to the regular science fiction fan magazine. Among their members and contributors were science fiction writers of the period Lilith Lorraine, Miles J. Breuer, MD, Clare Winger Harris, P Schuyler Miller, Lloyd Arthur Eshbach, R.F. Starzl, and Charles Cloukey.

The reason the race between fan magazine editor and professional writer was almost a dead heat was because in the June 1930 issue of *Wonder Stories* appeared Palmer's first story, "The Time Ray of Jandra". There were elements of the later Shaver stories, when the men of the city of Jandra drill a mile-wide tube to reach the hollow interior of the earth.

Back in the depression days of the 'thirties, the most wondrous dream of a young fan editor, author or artist, was that some publisher would read or see his work and be so impressed that he would demand his services. Back then it was not just a matter of doing something one loved, but a faint hope of survival in an era when jobs and means of earning a livelihood had been reduced by the economics of the time to a nadir. That happened to a 17-year-old high-school boy named Charles D. Hornig. He had been buying and reading science fiction regularly since the September 1930 issues of *Amazing Stories* and *Wonder Stories*. In January 1933 he decided to publish a fan magazine and contacted Conrad H. Ruppert, who was then producing on letterpress with handset type the splendid fan magazine *The Science Fic-Digest*. The first issue of Hornig's magazine *The Fantasy Fan,* appeared July 29, 1933 and Hornig dutifully sent a complimentary copy to Hugo Gernsback, publisher of *Wonder Stories*. As fortune would have it, Gernsback had just fired his editor David Lasser for spending more time promoting The Workers Alliance and organizing the unemployed than on his editorial work. As Lasser was told quite candidly, Gernsback felt a much better job could be done assisting the unemployed if he was unemployed himself and could therefore devote full time to it.

Now he had to find a new editor and preferably at a wage below the generous $75.00 a week he had been paying Lasser. The very professionally produced first issue of *The Fantasy Fan* with articles like "How to Collect Fantasy Fiction" by Julius Schwartz; "Famous Fantasy Fans: No. 1, Allen Glasser"; "My Favorite Story" (*The Second Deluge* by Garrett P. Serviss) by Mortimer Weisinger; "Science Fiction in English Magazines" by Bob Tucker; "My Science Fiction Collection" by Forrest J. Ackerman; as well as the chatty news and editorial columns impressed Gernsback, so he telegraphed to Hornig to drop by and see him.

Though taken aback by Hornig's youth, Gernsback hired him anyway at $20.00 a week and he reported for work August 7, 1933. The first issue he produced was November 1933, with the help of veteran associate editor C.P Mason. This gave Hornig the resources to continue *The Fantasy Fan* which would have been economically difficult otherwise. Taking a fantasy rather than a science fiction slant he produced one of the finest fan magazines of all time. H.P Lovecraft had stories, poems and his opus "Supernatural Horror in Literature" in 17 out of the 18 issues! Clark Ashton Smith was almost as generous. Robert E. Howard thundered forth with a rousing story in the tradition of Conan; Lovecraft's cohorts and correspondents August W Derleth, R.H. Barlow, William Lumley, F. Lee Baldwin, Duane Rimel, Emil Petaja and Robert Bloch rallied to make background "music" for their mentor and such professionals as David H. Keller, MD, J. Harvey Haggard and Eando Binder were supportive.

Gernsback had no idea that Hornig was continuing the magazine; he had reasonably thought the project had been dropped when the teenager came to work for him.

When Hornig gave up *The Fantasy Fan,* a hyper-active young fan of the period, Donald A. Wollheim, inherited some of the editorial material that had not been published. Technically Wollheim does not qualify for a place in this article since he had

sold and had published under the pen name of Millard Verne Gordon "The Man From Ariel" in the January 1934 *Wonder Stories* before he contributed to or published any kind of a fan magazine. But he was *directly* responsible for inspiring a 14-year-old James Blish to publish a fan magazine. This was thanks to a letter Wollheim had in the "Brass Tacks" department of the November 1934 *Astounding Stories* suggesting that a companion magazine be issued, and that the magazine be built around a major character: "You might call the character and the magazine *The Planeteer,*" he wrote. "It would contain a novel a month about a space flyer known as that."

Towards the end of 1935, Wollheim received a fan magazine titled *The Planeteer,* dated November 1935, featuring "Neptunian Refuge", blurbed as "A Tale of The Planeteer, adapted from the annals of the Space Patrol by Jim Blish." It was 12 half-letter-sized pages, hektographed in purple ink, with a cover and crude interior illustration by Blish, and eschewing staples, held together with a straight pin! The Planeteer is a criminal who escapes from the Neptune prison planet with his friend nick-named The Asteroid, ruthlessly killing two guards. In a frightening confrontation with other-dimensional hexagonal life forms, they rocket into space, to begin a new life of murder, robbery and pillage. The writing was quite good for the now fifteen-year-old Blish.

The third, January 1936 issue ran an appreciative letter from Donald A. Wollheim: "You seemed to have grasped the idea of The Planeteer that I outlined to *Astounding Stories* rather fully but I still hope—vainly I fear—to see the real Planeteer that only Street & Smith could do come out. Meanwhile however your pleasing little publication will do to keep up the good work."

After six constantly improving issues, the magazine foundered when they tried to go letterpress, just when they had actually rounded up material by H.P Lovecraft, David H. Keller, MD, Clark Ashton Smith, August W. Derleth and R.H. Barlow. Apparently Wollheim was able to use some of this in his neatly printed little publication of that period, *The Phantagraph.* In 1939 James V Taurasi took over the title from Blish and turned out one issue, dated March, but Blish was no longer writing for the publication.

Blish would, of course, eventually produce the popular *Case of Conscience* and his "Cities in Flight" series; *The Planeteer* may have been psychological preparation for his fictionalizations of the "Star Trek" series produced near the end of his life.

In 1936, Wollheim had already formed a coterie of friends about him which included Frederik Pohl, then all of sixteen years old. While Fred had contributed to fan magazines and was active in the New York Area clubs, he had not delved into publishing.

When he did, he exerted what was apparently a minimum of effort, turning out in mimeographed form a little publication, one quarter the size of a letter sheet, titled *Mind of Man,* under the auspices of EGO publications (later *The Mutant* and *Legion Parade* would appear as members of that conglomerate). The publication was subtitled "The Magazine of Vapid Verse and Pointless Prose" It was an avant garde publication, inordinately influenced by Lewis Carroll. A sample:

A wistful sabrant quoth, "I trow
I hardly ken the virdous gwill
Of all the istrous vreets I know
The gresket Uldwa is the Tsill

A weeping tirtleq then replied,
"Speak you of vreets in accents ulv?
A whurriwug is stortified,
Whereas the vreet is merely tulv!

Much of the material was written by Pohl under pen names, although some was written by a few of his friends. It lasted but four issues; its first was Summer 1936, and its last Spring 1937. Within a few months, Fred Pohl was technically to become a professional; his preoccupation with poetry in *Mind of Man* was evidently sincere, for his first sale was a very conventional poem "Elegy to a Dead Satellite: Luna" under the disguise of Elton V. Andrews, which appeared in *Amazing Stories* for October 1937. No one dreamed that they were reading the debut of one of today's top-ranking authors until his collaboration with Cyril Kornbluth on *Gravy Planet.*

Cyril Kornbluth several times made noises as though he would publish his own fan magazine, but never did. If Robert W. Lowndes had been more generous he should have awarded Kornbluth the title of Associate Editor of his weekly fan magazine *Le Vombiteur,* for Kornbluth was probably represented in a majority of its 37 issues, most commonly with poetry, enough of it to make a respectable volume as poetry collections go.

Lowndes has edited so many professional and fantasy magazine titles that it is a feat to remember them all and to get their names right. They include *Science Fiction, Science Fiction Quarterly, Future Fiction, Dynamic Science Fiction, The Magazine of Horror, Startling Mystery, Famous Science Fiction, Bizarre Fantasy Tales* and *Weird Terror Tales.* He made the science fiction selections for the long list of Avalon hardcover books and wrote a substantial amount of fiction under his own name and a wide variety of pen names including Michael Sherman, Wilfred Owen Morley, Arthur Cooke and Mallory Kent. A. Merritt was generous in his praise of Lowndes's poetry.

Le Vombiteur was not the first fan magazine Lowndes published before he cracked the professional ranks, nor the last, but it was particularly distinctive, most of its issues hektographed a sombre dark purple, and cultivated in its outlook and a portion of its material the pose, if not the reality, of decadence. It was a weekly, launched with the issue of December 1 1938. It was intended, in part, to be a news magazine, but its coverage was never comprehensive and it went in for analysis and commentary more than did its formidable contemporaries *The Science Fiction News Letter,* published by Richard Wilson, and *Fantasy News,* published by James V. Taurasi. It occasionally used illustrations by Leslie Perri (for a while married to Fred Pohl) and David Charney. In addition to the numerous poems by Kornbluth, it also ran verse by Donald A. Wollheim, Frederick Pohl, Robert Lowndes and Duane Rimel. It was a very self-indulgent publication, running what the editor wanted to run and at the end was sporadic and irregular in appearance.

Richard Wilson, who ran a competing paper, the weekly *Science Fiction News Letter,* had pioneered the weekly news magazine in the science fiction fan world. In recent years he was known for his short stories and novelettes, a novelette "Mother To the World" winning the Nebula Award in 1969. Well known also were his Ballantine paperbacks *The Girls from Planet 5* (1955) and a collection of short stories *Those Idiots From Earth* (1957). As a public relations man for Syracuse University, one of his outstanding achievements was to convince their George Arents Research Library to make a determined effort to collect science fiction and they today have one of the nation's outstanding collections, including manuscripts and publishers' own records.

The first issue of the *News Letter* was dated December 4 1937 and it was to run through 78 issues to May 29 1939. Of many affairs that occurred in the science fiction world during the period its coverage is the only public record extant. Some of the things which were

considered picayune at the time are now extremely valuable, for example a weekly list with commentary of all the fan magazines received, or a close coverage of fantasy on radio, moving pictures, comics and even toys. In editorial viewpoint it was consistently on the side of The Futurians headed by Donald A. Wollheim and against the New Fandom group which was identified with Sam Moskowitz.

Despite this, Wilson, who owned a small handpress, for a sum of $3.00 printed Moskowitz's first fan magazine *Helios* with the issue of June 1937 (52 years ago), it ran material by Donald A. Wollheim, an interview with James Blish and an autobiography of the artist Morris S. Dollens. The latter two had not attained professional publication at the time.

After two issues *Helios* adopted the hektograph and greatly increased its size and its quality, running fiction by David H. Keller, MD, poetry by Clark Ashton Smith, a film column by John Russell Fearn, a lengthy news scoop from Farnsworth Wright, editor of *Weird Tales,* on all the posthumous H.P. Lovecraft material he had purchased; it engaged in political satire, with cartoons within the field, originated the science fiction fan story, where the fan is the protagonist, gave the only comprehensive report of the First National Science Fiction Convention held in Newark, N.J. in 1938 and ran a filk song by Milton Asquith, possibly the first published.

David A. Kyle, allied closely with Wollheim, Lowndes, Kornbluth and Wilson, has in recent years emerged as a remarkably good successor to Edward E. Smith, carrying on his super science epics to actual critical acclaim, as well as editing the graphically outstanding coffee-table volumes *A Pictorial History of Science Fiction* and *The Illustrated Book of Science Fiction Ideas & Dreams* (1977). One of the reasons the selection and impact of the illustrative material in those books was so great was because Kyle had initially started out to be an artist.

The first fan magazine he published, *Phantasy World,* dated April 1936, was almost entirely filled with science fiction comic strips by Kyle with titles like "Zacton of the Red Planet" and "Barry in the Future" Producing comic strip art on a stencil was extremely difficult, so with the second issue Kyle began experimenting with hektographed covers which enabled the use of full colour and the third and final issue dated February 1937 mixed hektographed pages in with mimeographed pages. By that time Kyle was giving a number of other artists space, including Clay Ferguson, Jr, Morris S. Dollens and John Forte, and the feature of the issue was a scientific detective story by Eando Binder called "The Sign of the Scarlet Cross"

Technically, David A. Kyle came within a hair's breadth of not being eligible for inclusion here. *Before* publication of his first issue, he had a short story "Golden Nemesis" accepted by Charles Hornig of *Wonder Stories.* An illustration by Frank R. Paul was drawn for it and the story was announced as forthcoming in the February, 1936 *Wonder Stories.* The magazine was sold to Standard Magazines and the story was returned and never paid for. It would eventually appear in *Stirring Science Stories,* edited by Wollheim, in the issue of 1941, but again was not paid for.

A latter-day Futurian who wrote science fiction's first "exposé" book, appropriately titled *The Futurians* (1977), was Damon Knight. He was to become a highly regarded short story writer, novelist, editor (the *Orbit* series), founder of the Science Fiction Writers Association of America and would marry Kate Wilhelm, a science fiction author of some significance in her own right. But like David Kyle, when he started out he wanted to be a

cartoonist and illustrator and that he had some ability in that direction he demonstrated when he produced *Snide,* which was slanted towards irreverence, satire, humour and only very mild criticism.

The publication was hektographed, the first issue was undated but appeared in May 1940, and frequency was announced as "at no intervals at all". As a hektographed magazine in full colour, Knight's well-done illustrations, headings and cartoons were the most distinctive feature of the publication and besides himself and Walter Sullivan, Bob Tucker had two pieces in the issue, one under his pen name of Hoy Ping Pong.

The second and last issue was supposed to have been dated March 1941, was published in cooperation with William H. Evans and actually arrived May 10 1941. Again the issue was very nicely illustrated in full-colour and had a silk-screen process cover, but the most remarkable thing about it was that the magazine would pay space rates to contributors in the future at the magnanimous schedule of 1/25th cent per word! Since there never was a third issue the editors did not have to make good on their promise. The first fan magazine known to have paid anyone for material was *The Planeteer.* James Blish bought a 1,000 word short-short "The Coal Thief" from Laurence Manning and paid him the same rates paid by *Wonder Stories,* one half cent a word or $5.00, and ran it in his April 1936 issue.

The second issue has a short story by Ray Bradbury, "Tale of the Mangledomvritch", about a man with 17 children whose wife disappears into a dime store sale and never emerges; the children he sends after her never return and finally he pushes in. And when the dime store locks up at 10.00 pm, he has not emerged either! A sample of his writing of this period, describing the disappearance of his wife and the first ten children goes like this: "And all of them were blurted out of sight by the ravenous creature inside the door, the sardonic, silk-clad, tentacled, ravenous, awful monster of fat legs, thin legs, breasts, lips and torsos, of armpits and crotches and other nausea, of bargains and basements and pants half off, of Jewish women with beards and Irish women with bulbous scarlet noses, of n----- women with slick black and sweaty arms and legs, of buck teeth and no teeth and yells and cries and chaos."

Bob Tucker, full name Arthur Wilson Tucker, who contributed so generously to *Snide,* had a considerable amount of fan publishing to his credit at the time. As early as December 1932 he had issued a tiny, four-paged fan publication titled *The Planetoid,* subtitled "for the enlightenment of weird and science fiction fans—" It was of interest that he did not try to separate science fiction from weird fiction. Apart from a plug for membership in the old International Scientific Association (new name for the Science Correspondence Club), the issue was made up of one paragraph items, such as: "Lots of Science Fiction mags are taking the final curtain now. Astounding, TTT (The Time Traveler), and Strange Tales kiss the world goodbye."

In 1934 and 1935, fed up with reader's requests for even edges, better paper, reprints and a variety of other things in the magazines, Bob Tucker launched The Society for the Prevention of Wire Staples in Scientifiction Magazines. Donald A. Wollheim entering into the mood of the proposal organized a counter group, The International and Allied Organization for the Purpose of Upholding and Maintaining the Use of Metallic Fasteners in Science Fiction Publications of the United States of America, and in its official organ *The PolymorphanucleatedLeucocyte* ended with the slogan: "Better death than Tuckerism" In order to respond, Tucker was forced to create a new fan magazine which he titled *D*Journal* and dated Spring 1935. It was mimeographed, letter size, five

pages. He castigated Wollheim, listed the names and addresses of 45 members, ran an ode to staple haters by J. Harvey Haggard, offered alternatives to wire staples and news of the formation of anti-staple chapters. It was inadvertently a spoof on the official organs of existing science fiction related associations of the time.

In 1939, Tucker created a second incarnation of *D'Journal,* which was a humour publication. Predominantly written by Tucker, it lasted only three issues and an uncompleted fourth issue was bound in with the one and only May, 1939 issue of a more elaborate magazine titled *Nova,* which had a stenciled cartoon drawn by Ray Bradbury, who also aspired to be an artist.

Tucker's antics during this period did not indicate the very thoughtful man who would write the effective science fiction novels *The Long Loud Silence* (1952), *The Lincoln Hunters* (1958) or *The Year of the Quiet Sun* (1970).

One should not get the erroneous impression that it was just members of First Fandom that blossomed into professionalism from fan magazine apprenticeship. A substantial number of the popular writers currently active in science fiction graduated from the same source. Though Algis Budrys is probably better known as the mean-spirited critic from the pages of *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* or as the rotund Santa Claus conferring good fortune on beginning authors for L. Ron Hubbard's "Writers of the Future" on-going contest, he has achieved some critical attention for his novel *Who?* (1958), made into a moving picture in Great Britain in 1974, and for *Rogue Moon* (1960), a novel expanded from a novelette in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* and though he produces at a rather turgid pace now, there was a period in the 'fifties when he found a half-dozen pen names handy to keep up to his output. He belongs to a group in the field who have had a compulsion to do reviews and criticism, even though they were capable of selling most of the fiction they chose to write. Among those past have been P. Schuyler Miller, Damon Knight, James Blish and Alexei Panshin. Their one common denominator seems to be that they have been active contributors to the fan magazines either before or concurrent with their professional writing careers.

In 1946, barely turned 15, he produced three issues of *Slantasy,* in which he duplicated the experiences of the fans of the 'thirties by producing one issue carbon-copied and the remaining two on a hektograph. These were received from Dorothy, New Jersey, a town of under one thousand population, literally out in the middle of nowhere on the fringe of a farming area. The magazine was a Thor/Alou Publication and the first issue required an out-sized staff to produce its three carbon-copied pages, listing Curt Michaels, James Korjus, Ed Gliesberg and George Reinze as well as Budrys. Since none of the others were ever heard of again after the magazine discontinued publication, we suspect they were all one man. Judging by the dating, the magazine intended to come out every two weeks, the first issue was January 11 1946, the second July 14 1946 and the third also appeared in 1946 but undated.

There were excellent reasons for the erratic publication. Between the first and second issues Budrys had contracted diphtheria and had an appendicitis operation. As if that were not enough his father had a serious heart attack and his mother was involved in an accident which smashed up the truck fender like "an accordion". Just as he was making progress on his second issue, his father confiscated the typewriter for his own business.

He had glowing plans to form a South Jersey Club, turn out a club bulletin as well as a

quarterly and annuals for both for starters. Then there would be *Slantacard,* a news postcard. There would also be a two-page supplement to the magazine at 1½ cents each or 20 for 35 cents. The most interesting thing in the magazine's third issue was a poll of favourite fans taken by the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society and published in their magazine *Shangri-L'affaires.* It also asked for votes on the most unpopular fan and these were subtracted from the positive ones. I noted that in 1946 I ranked Number 9 but the worst ranking was Donald A. Wollheim who received *minus* 18 votes!

On some of the authors covered, brief reminders of highlights of their works have been given because it is only sheer folly to assume that everyone has heard of, remembers or cares about names that happen to be landmarks to the author. But in the case of Robert Silverberg, it would seem that if this audience is unfamiliar with his name or some of his accomplishments they shouldn't be interested in this dissertation. He is no longer the tireless typist who was always inquiring how much money the people he met were making because he strongly suspected that with the volume of his output and quantity of sales he was doing better than they were and wanted to confirm it. He is now an urbane gentleman, with tasteful streaks of grey beginning to appear in his usually well-trimmed European-styled beard and seems to be coming to terms with himself after a furious reaction to the lack of reaction to his "best" work. He has taken to heart Samuel Johnson's admonition: "If the customer is not satisfied there is no sense in telling them why he should have been", and has settled down to turning out books that as far as advances and total sales are concerned rank in the bestseller class.

He began reading science fiction in 1948, and in 1949, with a friend named Saul Diskin, both conveniently resident in Brooklyn, New York, determined to publish a fan magazine without ever having previously seen one! The first issue of *Space Ship* was dated April 1949 and the two editors filled it with their own fiction which wasn't hard to do since both of them had been pounding it out and piling it up for a year. The magazine was mimeographed, half letter size, eight pages on one side of the sheet. Distribution was about 20 copies until Silverberg joined The Fantasy Amateur Press Association and with October 1949 started new numbering with Vol A Number 1. The magazine was issued quarterly after joining FAPA, but it left that group by January 1951 and began to publish provocative feature articles such as "How Not to Swallow Dianetics", by Silverberg, a denial of the belief that fans had superior intelligence by Bob Tucker and a critique of those who claimed they weren't reading science fiction any longer by David Ish.

The magazine featured the lengthy book review of two to five pages which gave some detail and depth to the opinions. Well-known authors such as Mack Reynolds and Robert Bloch began to show up.

Silverberg returned to FAPA with his 25th June 1954, fifth anniversary issue. On its contents pages the names of fans who would become professionals appeared, names like Marion Zimmer Bradley and Terry Carr.

Though Bradley's writing career would get underway in 1953 and by 1954 she was accelerating, she could scarcely have anticipated that she would make the New York Times fiction bestseller list with a book based on the Arthurian legends, *The Mists of Avalon,* or with her Darkover books create a series so popular that it would have a cult following, and conventions and fan magazines devoted to it. She had married Robert Bradley in 1949 and taken up residence in Tahoka, Texas. The following year fans received in the mail a mimeographed magazine titled *Mezrab,* dated Summer 1950, and if

you wanted to continue to receive it subscriptions were useless: you had to send it a letter or card of comment.

That issue featured fiction and a bibliographical sketch of Thyril L. Ladd, unknown to most today, but then acknowledged as one of the world's leading collectors of lost-race stories whose articles on the subject in *Fantasy Commentator* were treasure troves of reference material. She had met him in Albany, NY, when only 16, and he had become a much admired friend. The third issue, Spring 1951, took a different tack, definitely leaning towards myth and legend. Robert Bradley wrote "The Lost City of Carcosa", based on the references in Robert W. Chambers's book *The King in Yellow;* there were excerpts from a manuscript on the ten lost tribes of Israel and an article on myths of the New World. Even a poem by Lin Carter mourned of a mythological city beneath the sea. The magazine lasted six issues and publication was disbanded due to the Bradley's personal problems.

Terry Carr's reputation rests primarily on his editorial work, particularly in his many series of annual anthologies. He had gone to work for Ace paperbacks in 1964 under Donald A. Wollheim and this gave him the insight in securing contracts for science fiction and fantasy anthologies. He edited *The Best Science Fiction of the Year* for Ballantine after 1972; *Universe* after 1972; *World's Best Science Fiction* from 1965 to 1971 and many others that totalled close to 60 before his untimely death in 1987. He also published novels and short stories both in book and magazine form.

From 1958 to 1960 Carr published 11 issues of a fan magazine titled *Innuendo* with the emphasis on science fiction fandom itself. Despite humorous touches it was not a frivolous magazine, boasting a high level of readability, and it was a valuable record of conventions and personalities. Harry Warner, Jr. had a regular column "All Our Yesterdays", and Robert Bloch was frequently in evidence. The letter column was big, gossipy and irrationally provocative.

Despite his relatively diminutive size, Harlan Ellison is bigger than life as a personality. He rates with figures like August W. Derleth who are in many ways more fascinating than the material they write. But after many years of writing and learning his craft, his reputation will not have to depend on interest in his uniquely eccentric personality or his *Dangerous Visions* anthologies. He has fashioned some very fine short stories, a favourite of which, and probably his very best, is "A Boy and His Dog", which after several abortive attempts was made into an excellent movie. It was quite a feat, against the competition of so many excellent post-holocaust stories, for him to write one which remains so memorable.

Like all the previously mentioned writers, Harlan once edited his own fan magazine. One of the founders of the Cleveland Science Fiction Society, he took over the editorship of their bulletin with its March 16 1952 issue, changed the name to *Science-Fantasy Bulletin* with the June 1952 issue and *Dimensions* with the May – July 1954 issue (possibly a good new anthology title for him would be *Dangerous Dimensions?).*

He put so much effort, interest and imagination into the publication that one would need this entire article to give its back-ground, but selecting one admittedly outstanding issue, March 1953, will transmit the idea. The publication was mimeographed, letter-sized, 88 pages. He had a short story by Algis Budrys, articles by L. Sprague de Camp, Lester del Rey and Robert Silverberg, a column by Marion Zimmer Bradley. There was a symposium of several knowledgeable fans on the appearance of Hugo Gernsback's

Science Fiction Plus in March, 1953 which was timely and appropriate though devastatingly critical.

Best known for his Conan-like sword and sorcery-style tales of Thongor and collaborations in completing a number of Robert E. Howard's stories, critics have generally overlooked Lin Carter's deep love of the genre and the many excellent works and anthologies he has produced to popularize it. His "Adult Fantasy" series for Ballantine returned a score of great writers and even more classics of the field to general availability. His non-fiction works like *Imaginary Worlds: The Art of Fantasy* and *Lovecraft: a Look Behind the Cthulhu Mythos* or anthologies like *Discoveries in Fantasy* and *The Young Magicians* have done much to make adult fantasy respectable.

Inevitably there had to be a long background interest in the field and as far back as August 1947 Carter produced *Spaceteer* a 16-paged, mimeographed publication to which he contributed artwork (not bad) and poetry. He had fiction by the leading fan of the day, Joe Kennedy (fame is fleeting), but serious pieces on the fiction of Thorne Smith and a lengthy review of *The Fox Woman* by A. Merritt and Hannes Bok which had just appeared. The magazine lasted three issues, closing down with the Winter 1948-49 number "The First Anniversary Issue" The average quality and neatness of production wasn't bad for a 17-year old.

In a letter back in 1948, the wife of David H. Keller, MD, Celia, wrote that on an automobile tour which included Texas, they had met "the most wonderful boy", who proved to be none other than pre-publication Chad Oliver. He had taken up anthropology and would teach it a good part of his life, but he would attain a welcome standing in science fiction with novels like *Shadows in the Sun* (1954) and *Unearthly Neighbors* (1960) and periodically would produce new ones on weekends and sabbaticals.

Apparently inspired by the Kellers, Oliver (whose first name Symmes, like that of the famed hollow earth exponent, he kept a secret) turned out a fan magazine titled *The Moon Puddle* with a feature article by Keller as well as a rave review of Keller's collection of then recent vintage, *Life Everlasting*. The publication was 38 well ditto'd pages (like hektograph), dated June 1948 and as its title indicated was heavy on humour. Only 50 numbered and signed copies were published. He was then atypical of the average teen-age fan, soaring to a height of 6 foot three inches, 187 pounds, fullback on "a championship football team" as well as "being voted the owner of the most beautiful legs in Crystal City High School", and was editor of the *Texas Literary Quarterly*.

But probably "the most wonderful girl" fan of the period was Julian May, who recently catapulted into prominence with her quartet of books leading off with *The Many-Coloured Land*. Multi-talented, effervescent, she had a delightful personality. She married Ted Dikty in 1953 when he was co-publisher of Shasta Publishers, one of the early specialist science fiction publishers and who is today producer of the Starmont Books, a series that presents material on leading figures in the science fiction field in academic format.

She succumbed to the lure of the fan magazine and became publisher and ostensibly founder of *Interim Newsletter*, "Official Organ of Science Fiction International" introduced with the August 1949 issue. May was President of the Association from the word go, and the aim of the group was to contact and get correspondence going with science fiction lovers throughout the world. To facilitate this, the world was divided into five districts: Afro-Europe; Australasia; Canada; Great Britain; and United States and

Possessions. The Chairman of the Board of the Association, Lyell Crane, resided in Canada which is what initially made the group International. All checks were to be made payable to a *Mr* J.C. May, which makes one wonder if Judy should not have been spending more time as a feminist!

Ken Slater, later to become a prominent British book dealer, was in the army of occupation in West Germany and sent back reports on science fiction there. The need to revive dormant fan activities in Australia was raised as a priority.

Success quickly destroyed Science Fiction International. The fifth, August 1950 issue announced that it was throwing in the sponge and returning some of the recent memberships, because so many foreigners had written in that no one could handle or coordinate the correspondence! The issue called itself "Interim Newsletter, The Ex-Official Organ of the Science Fiction International". Two more issues were produced and sent free to those who requested it. In the final, seventh, April 1951 issue, which was edited by Lyell Crane out of Toronto, it was announced that after a course in Dianetics Crane was going to England and gave a London address. In that issue Judy May had a column titled "Mayonaisse" in which she admitted "my work has been appearing anonymously in *Interim Newsletter* since its inception."

London was a good place for Crane to go, for Ted Carnell was publishing *New Worlds,* and a science fiction convention was scheduled May 12th and 13th at the Bull and Mouth Hotel: memberships 35c, single room with breakfast about $3.00. A half-dozen British publishers had geared up to publish hundreds of frightful science fiction novels, paying authors up to $100.00 each for them. Among those joining the contributors was Kenneth Bulmer. He is probably best known for his numerous DAW books today and for his Dray Prescott series under the pen name of Alan Burt Akers. He has written roughly 150 novels and even more short stories.

While England was at war he published seven issues of a little fan magazine mimeographed in blue ink (April to December 1941) titled *Starparade.* It was a strange combination of fiction, poetry, reviews, with a strong emphasis on speculative science, particularly on developments that could advance the war effort. It had jet planes down as definitely in the works before any were known to have engaged in combat and accurately described their principles of propulsion. It even had a short piece by Arthur C. Clarke on a related subject. There were numerous pieces on what the social makeup after the war would be like, with strong ambiguities about either communism or capitalism. The most interesting thing about it was its method of distribution. J. Michael Rosenblum, a leading British fan in Leeds, England, turned out a monthly magazine titled *Futurian War Digest.* Those who would send him typed stencils, he would mimeograph for them and staple together as many as half-dozen publications as a single mailing. Bulmer's publication, being undersized, was put in the envelope with the others separately. This was mailed monthly from October 1940 to March 1945, skipping an occasional month here and there. Its contents obviously represents a remarkable war record of British science fiction.

In the past 25 years the extremely versatile and prolific Michael Moorcock has produced an impressive range of interplanetary adventure, sword and sorcery, satirically critical and experimental works of fantasy and science fiction ranging from imitations of Robert E. Howard and Edgar Rice Burroughs to the very original and mind-stimulating novels of the "Dancers at the End of Time" series. He subsidized the publication of the "New Wave" experimental writing with his own funds. But he started off as a fan

magazine publisher. Most of the information concerning these fanzines comes from Moorcock himself, because despite the fact that he claims to have published at least nine different fan magazines, at least three of them in the fantasy field, even *Burroughsiana* which saw 18 issues from 1954 to 1958 and reflected his youthful enthusiasm for Edgar Rice Burroughs is not something that turns up, while British fan Peter Ogden's *Erbania* is to be found in all the leading Burroughs collections. A companion, *Fantasiana* which saw at least three issues in 1957 and ran bibliographical material on Robert E. Howard is no more common.

Where you can be certain of finding Moorcock in the fan field is in the early issues of *Vector,* official magazine of the British Science Fiction Association. In 1959 he is listed as a member of the editorial staff, involved not only in editorial but in production. There we find expressed great admiration for L. Sprague de Camp in his article "The Complete Enchanter" (Winter, 1959), which is to some extent reflected in his "Dancers at the End of Time" series. We find him doing film reviews and in his article "Architect of the Extraordinary," discovers "a real artist and writer—one of the great ones" in Mervyn Peake, author of the famed Gormenghast series. At the end of each of his articles he appends bibliographies of some value. Of course, in those days, he could feel comfortably at home in the magazine since Brian Aldiss was the perennial president of the association and E.C. Tubb had guest-edited the first issue (Summer 1958) to get it off the ground.

The British pros seem no less inclined to start off by publishing fan magazines than the Americans. I recall when Ejler Jakobson, then editor of *Galaxy,* and his wife were treating the author and wife to dinner during the 1973 World Science Fiction Convention in Toronto. He was going quietly mad over a serial novel he had coming up titled *The Inverted World,* by an author who had excited no one previously, Christopher Priest. When the novel appeared (*Galaxy Science Fiction,* December, 1973 to March, 1974) it justified all his hype and created a new reputation for Priest.

It was hard to believe that it was the same Christopher Priest who had modestly turned out the British fan magazine *Con,* dated August 1964. His hope was to "attempt to print articles which although not directly connected to sf, will be written in a manner that should interest the science fiction reader, fan or otherwise" Except for a story by Phil Harbottle (later to edit *Vision*), all the contents were written by Priest and they dealt with Russian scientists who claimed we were being signalled from Cygni, the illogic of extrapolating current trends to an extreme, and a final one on the mysteries of the solar system. At the end of the issue he complained that he could not go on writing entire contents by himself. He also said he would *pay* for stories he used (but not how much).

As a novelty, book matches with "Con" inscribed on them were distributed with the first issue of Priest's magazine. The post office failed to catch it; if they had they would have stopped mailing of the publication. Walt Willis, renowned Irish wit, in reviewing it for *Zenith Speculation,* December 1964 (page 18), commented: "This fanzine comes complete with a book of matches, a striking innovation, but the editor himself feels it needs a lighter touch. This shows a commendable talent for self-criticism . . ."

There was an undated second issue with a lead-off story by Charles Platt, "Dead End", concerning a test to determine whether properly protected men could live on the surface after an atomic war. Platt had mimeographed both issues. Priest would show up again editing the second issue of *Tangent* (September 1965) , a British Science Fiction Association publication that was devoted almost entirely to fiction.

Platt would go on to publication of a number of short stories and novels but would become best known for two collections of highly perceptive profiles of leading men and women in the science fiction world (*Who Writes Science Fiction?* Savoy Books, 1980; and *Dream Makers Vol. II* Berkeley Books, 1983). During the same period as *Con* in 1964 and 1965 he was engaged in a flurry of fan publishing, the most ambitious of which was a publication titled *Beyond* which began at an indefinite date as a hektographed magazine for three issues and then with the fourth undated issue switched to the mimeograph. It seems likely that these early issues appeared in 1964 since the last, 8th issue was dated April 1965. He was early known for provocative material; surveys of what members thought of the British Science Fiction Association evoked much comment, and interviews of John "Ted" Carnell as he was bowing out of *New Worlds* and *Science Fantasy* and Brian Aldiss when he was just working up a head of steam on a long-term professional career are historically valuable to this day. Platt closed down *Beyond* when the London College of Printing which he was attending backed out on an offer to offset the magazine for him after he had already prepared the negatives and plates for printing.

Examples of outstanding and popular science fiction authors who started out actually editing or printing a fan magazine, with a little embelishment, could make a full-size book.

George Zebrowski is well known to his peers because he has been active in editing The Science Fiction Writers of America *Bulletin* for many years. Only in recent years has he begun to obtain deserved critical attention for his fiction, predominantly because of the appearance of his imaginative novel with adumbrations of Olaf Stapledon titled *Macrolife* (1979). It is a daring imaginative probe of the future of man when earth has become only an episode.

As a fan magazine editor he published *Viewpoint,* a photo-offset magazine, whose first issue was dated January 1964. It was composed mainly of book reviews. The title was changed to *Epilogue* with the second issue. The magazine only lasted three numbers but the last two were excellent models of solid discussion of science fiction by people with something to say including Lester del Rey, L. Sprague de Camp, Judith Merrill, Frederik Pohl, James Blish. The announcement of the contents of the never-published fourth number looked just as good.

Jack L. Chalker has scored an amazing success with several dozen books which combine the "quest" element of the Tolkien heroic fantasy with some attempt to establish a rationale so it could still be called science fiction or science fantasy. His "Well World" novels of Nathan Brazil have particular appeal.

In the world of science fiction fans, he elicits considerable respect for his fan magazine *Mirage,* founded on a numbered rather than a dated basis in 1961, with a pronounced Lovecraftian slant. His material often touched a flashpoint, an article by David H. Keller, MD, causing August W Derleth—who was also Keller's publisher—to lash out at him. Comments on religion and use of religious symbols eliciting similar sparks from Avram Davidson. Keller, undaunted, then tackled Sturgeon directly.

Chalker got more new material on Clark Ashton Smith than all that had been obtained previously, so much that he was able to publish a separate volume on that author. Between material by and about H.P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith and David H. Keller, MD, Chalker produced a magazine that was missed when with the 10th issue in 1971, with the announcement of the death of August W. Derleth, he ended that phase of

his development.

There have been literally thousands of fan magazine titles. It could be asked, why did not even *more* of their editors go on to careers as writers, editors and artists if it is such a fertile ground for development? The answer is that not everyone in the world ends up making a living writing or editing or even wants to. Not everyone wants to stay in the world of fantasy in writing and editing. There are thousands of publications and book companies. Only recently has science fiction been a field lucrative enough for more than a few to make a full-time living.

Even writers of the stature of Isaac Asimov have in the past had to stay in fields other than science fiction for better money. Clifford D. Simak held down a reporter and feature writer's job on a newspaper all his life while ranking as one of the leading science fiction writers. Were it not for reasons of health Robert A. Heinlein would have preferred to remain a naval officer, writing science fiction, if at all, as the spirit moved him. A. Merritt could not even consider giving up his job as editor of *The American Weekly* to write science fiction and fantasy, no matter how he loved it.

Confirmation of the foregoing statements was provided by Gerald Feinberg speaking on a panel at L. Ron Hubbard's "Writers of the Future" Third Annual Award Program, held at the Windows of the World, World Trade Center, New York City, April 24 1987. Feinberg is a physicist who popularized the concept of tachyons—theoretical particles that *only* travel faster-than-light—in 1967 and received considerable scientific attention as a result. He was a member of the science fiction club of the Bronx High School of Science in 1949 and on the staff of the first issue of their fan magazine *Etaoin Shrdlu* published that year with an interview of Alfred Bester as a feature. He stated that the germ of the concept of what came to be called tachyons was implanted in his mind by reading "Never the Twain Shall Meet", a story written by Edmond Hamilton under the house name of Brett Sterling for the Fall 1946 issue of *Thrilling Wonder Stories.*

Later Gregory Benford was to use the concept of tachyons in one of his novels. He had himself been one of the editors of a long-lived fan magazine *Void* beginning in 1958 and had edited on his own the magazine *Daybreak* for the Fantasy Amateur Press Association in the 'sixties.

To underscore the point that fan magazine editors do not necessarily fail to go on to editing or writing careers through lack of capacity, Feinberg's companion editors, who continued *Etaoin Shrdlu* after he graduated in January 1950 included Morton Sternheim, Sigurd Larsen, Selwyn Rosenthal, Ezra Shahn and Menasha Tausner. Five issues of the magazine were published (not counting Volume 1 Number 2 which was misnumbered Volume 1 No. 3) and forgotten. The publication was issued on pink and brown as well as white mimeograph stock.

The April 1950 issue found Bester defending himself from Feinberg's demand that he demonstrate a point in his interview that science fiction was a dead end, which reply was convincing in 1950 but scarcely so today. The magazine had interviews with John W. Campbell, Willy Ley and H.L. Gold. It had an article by Ray Bradbury on "Where Do You Get Those Ideas" and one by Henry Kuttner analyzing the validity of clichés. There was a number of articles on Dianetics, with one of the editors, Morton Sternheim, doubting its validity, as the magazine closed out its publication history.

We do not know what ever became of the top editor Stephen Taller, but we do know that Gerald Feinberg became an outstanding physicist. Of the others, Feinberg provides

the following information: "Morton Sternheim and Sigurd Larsen are now physics professors, Selwyn Rosenthal is a chemist, Ezra Shan a biologist and Menasha Tausner a physicist turned lawyer. I have lost track of the others, but they all were once students at the High School of Science. I have sometimes thought of organizing a reunion in the year 2000 of the people involved in *Etaoin Shrdlu,* possibly on a space station if such trips are then commercially feasible."

If, then, fan magazines are not a stepping stone to science fiction professionalism for most—though they undeniably are that for some—what entices so many to expend so much effort and time to edit and publish them? Frederick Wertham, MD, provides his answers, which he regards as valid even though the fan magazine publisher may not be consciously aware of them. The fanzines are a method of communication, not to the masses, but to small groups, he states. They offer independence, freedom of expression and creativity without supervision.

Anyone may publish a fanzine. In doing so they take pleasure in the doing, and freedom from contrivance and he finds both direct and implied sincerity and idealism expressed in them. It is an excellent method of reaching those with similar interests and they are uncommercial.

The fanzines, Wertham is convinced, "are not an opposition but an assertion, not a protest but a resistance", of those who refuse to accept processing and manipulation.

While he considers that modern society demands mass organization to solve problems both locally and regionally, "that does not mean that we should not recognize and acknowledge quantitatively limited aspirations and achievements such as fanzines that are worthwhile and constructive. Communication is the opposite of violence and every facet of communication has its legitimate place."

Professor Hammerton last appeared in our pages in issue 38 with an essay on the amazing voyages of Jules Verne. Now he considers the technological forecasts of that other begetter of modern sf, H.G. Wells, not least in the realm of warfare. Originally a physicist, Professor Hammerton worked for some years as a weapons designer before becoming a psychologist. He is currently Head of the Department of Psychology at Newcastle University.

Wells as Prophet

M. HAMMERTON

Part 1: The Fantasias

Of all the writers who have worked in the field of Science Fiction, H.G. Wells (1866 – 1946) was easily the greatest as a literary artist. It is not a distinction he would especially have relished: he affected, more or less sincerely, to despise literary "art" in the

narrow sense; and certainly was more concerned with the ideas he propagated than in the form which that propagation took.[1] Nevertheless, genius will out. It is some 90 years since *The War of the Worlds* was written; and though we now know that there is no life on Mars that can launch an invasion of earth, and though we now have weapons which make the "heat ray" and "black smoke" look fairly small beer, it can still excite and move in ways which lesser works vainly strive after.

However, no man has all the virtues; and perhaps as a result of that indifference to form which he proclaimed, Wells could be very careless about detail. He was never, of course, guilty of such shocking bad craftsmanship as Tolstoy, who could allow a character to change age half way through a book;[2] but he nevertheless displayed a cavalier disregard for any nice accuracy, which distressed Verne, when he read him.[3] He cared far less than Verne for well-argued plausibility; and relied far more (too much, some would say) on his ability to sweep his reader along on such an exhilarating spate of words that any absurdities are not noticed.

For example, it is as certain as anything can be that any substance like "Cavorite" in *The First Men in the Moon,* which passively shuts off anything behind it from a gravitational field, is impossible. Our old enemies, the conservation laws, ensure this: you could get work for nothing by putting a mass on a sheet of "Cavorite", lifting it as high as you liked, and then pushing it off to gain energy by falling. And if one thing is well established in Physics, it is that you cannot cheat on so basic a matter as that.

(Of course, there is nothing in Physics, so far as I know, which rules out a device for defeating gravity, so long as energy has to be expended to make it work. At the moment, there isn't the faintest prospect of any such thing.)

Wells does not stop to argue us down. He introduces the buzzing, absorbed, enthusiastic Mr Cavor; and soon we are caught up by his infectious prose, breathlessly watching the forming Cavorite glowing in his laboratory, waiting with the slow-thinking Mr Bedford to see what Cavor means when he cries "It must be a sphere!" and whirled away to—alas—a most un-astronomical Moon, caring nothing for conservation laws, or any other damned laws either. Happy is the writer who can do this. But much less happy are those who wish to separate prediction from pure entertainment, or serious intent from exuberant fantasy.

Clearly, we must set aside those works which depend upon a disregard of really basic Physics: *The Invisible Man, The Time Machine* and *The First Men in the Moon,* for example. Enough are left. For, although Wells was sometimes prepared to ignore Science for the sake of a good tale, he had such a deep grasp of, and belief in, it that his imagination could leap forward to envision the applications of findings which were scarcely out of the laboratory.

It may surprise many who think of Wells as he was in his middle years—the passionate idealist urging, pleading and hoping against hope for the unity of Mankind in a single World state—to learn that a recurrent concern of his earlier books is war. Yet it is so: there is enough combat in his early works to satiate the most bloodthirsty. His attitude to war at that time seems to have had a certain ambivalence: he was appalled, yet fascinated. Being appalled, he usually presented it as horrifying; being fascinated, he let his powerful, informed imagination rip, and produced some of the most astonishing forecasts ever written.

The reader who wishes to understand the kind of problems and ideas Wells considered

must tolerate a brief excursion into the state of military technology and theory during the 20 years before 1914.[4] Let us particularly think of war on land.

Technology as applied to war during the nineteenth century produced highly divergent results in strategy and tactics. In strategy, the dominant fact was the great network of railways that covered the advanced world. This made possible strategic movements of greater speed and volume than had ever been attempted before. Masses of men, many times as numerous as Napoleon's Grand Army, could be fed and moved, with all their horses, guns and impedimenta, over hundreds of kilometres, literally to a timetable. Distances which had once taken days to cover could now be travelled in as many hours. Yet with this increase in speed and bulk went a decrease in flexibility. A force moving along roads upon its own legs could, with a little trouble, alter, or even reverse its direction in a moment.[5] When movement was by rail, this was immensely difficult.

But whilst strategic movement had become swift and easy, if rigid, tactical movement had become ever more paralysed. Firepower increased enormously during the nineteenth century, until the magazine rifle and the machine-gun endowed the defence with tremendous strength. Armies could cover their fronts with a storm of lead through which open advance was suicidal.

This presented the great military problem of the time. It was easy to bring a huge force a thousand kilometres from its base to a front, and there to feed, clothe and supply it; but how was it to cover the last few km to its objective if an entrenched and competent enemy was in the way?

Among the many writers who discussed this state of affairs, we know that Wells had read and meditated upon one of the most profound: the Polish banker I.S. Bloch. In 1897, Bloch published *The War of the Future,* which is worth extensive study in its own right, though we cannot pursue it here. We shall merely quote a few salient lines.

> "At first there will be . . slaughter on so terrible a scale as to render it impossible to get . . a decisive issue War . will become a kind of stalemate . it will be a great war of entrenchments the ultimate decision is in the hands of famine."

We shall pursue in Part 2 Wells's serious published thoughts on Bloch; but in fact his shrewdest comment is implied in his short story "The Land Ironclads" (1903). Wells grasped what Bloch, for all his brilliance of analysis, did not: *technical problems have technical solutions.* The problem is displayed in the opening lines of the story. A war correspondent and a young lieutenant are in a front-line trench, where

> " it seemed as if the whole machine of events must have run down." The lieutenant says "It's Bloch."; and later the correspondent ". . . surveyed the darkling lines in perspective, the tangle of trenches one behind another 'No troops on earth could do it' he said."

But in the night the enemy launches a squadron of armoured cross-country fighting vehicles—the "land ironclads" of the title—which break through to a decisive victory in the dawn.

This, of course, is the Tank idea; and the machines are described in some detail.

> "They were essentially long (100 ft), narrow, and very strong steel frameworks carrying the engines, borne upon eight pairs of big pedrail wheels, each about 10 ft in diameter, each a driving wheel and set upon axles free to swivel around a common axis. This arrangement gave them the maximum of adaptability to the contours of the ground . the captain . had lookout points all round the upper edge of the adjustable skirt of twelve-inch (!) iron plating which protected the whole affair "

The machine was armed with a number of automatic rifles, and

"The riflemen each occupied a small cabin . (which were) slung along the sides of and before and behind the great main framework along the centre of the monster ran a central gallery . (in) which worked the big compact engines . Two small electric lights were all the illumination the air was thick with the smell of oil and petrol."

Pedrail wheels were a forerunner of the true caterpillar track. They were wheels whose rims bore a set of broad, flat, flexibly sprung plates, or "feet", which spread the load over a greater area and greatly improved cross-country performance. The multiple, independently suspended and driven wheels would certainly give a long-chassis vehicle a respectable ditch-crossing ability, if not as good as a fully tracked one would have.

Of all Wells's inventions, this is the most detailed; and paradoxically, we can at once see how brilliant it was, and how a sensible down-to-earth engineer of the time might have rejected it as impossible.

The first thing our sceptical engineer would have done would have been to make a few quick passes with his slide-rule, and remark that Mr Wells's juggernaut would weigh at least 600 tons. (The heaviest tank ever designed—though not completed—was the German "Maus" of 1945, which would have weighed about 190 tons). He would have done a few more sums on the power-to-weight ratios of contemporary petrol engines, and on the breaking strains of the best available suspensions, and finally shaken his head and smilingly agreed that it made a good story. Light armoured motor cars for reconnaissance along good roads—such as the one Mr Simms had recently displayed at the Crystal Palace[6]—might have their uses; but "Land Ironclads" for assaulting entrenched positions were simply impractical.

One might, indeed, stop and ask why Wells thought a 12" armour belt was called for; after all, the vital need was to be bullet-proof, and 12mm would suffice for that. Also, the numerous automatic rifles rather than a few machine-guns and guns seem odd. Nevertheless, these may, at most, be accounted minor blemishes. The only valid objections at the time depended upon the "state of the art". Engines and suspensions needed improving, and, most important, something better than the pedrail wheel was desirable for trench crossing. Above all, as we now see, the central idea was brilliant; and the unnamed battle described by Wells foreshadowed Cambrai and Amiens.

Indeed, we are inevitably lead to ask, was this story directly causal in the genesis of the Tank? Unfortunately, we cannot be sure. Swinton admitted to having read the story when it appeared; but claimed to have forgotten it, at least consciously, when he thought of tanks in October 1914.[7] Liddel Hart, in his history of the tanks, suggests that Wells's story did in fact provide the germ of the idea.[8] For the rest, we know that Churchill, the enthusiastic backer of the first machines, read Wells with pleasure. So we must register a "probable"

At about the time when Wells was imagining his land ironclads, the Wright brothers were developing their "Flier", and Count von Zeppelin was raising funds for his second rigid airship. As all the world now knows (though, despite "glasnost", the Russians do not admit) the first successful heavier-than-air flight took place in December 1903. Owing to unfortunate reporting and—in part at least—to their own understandable secretiveness, the Wrights' achievements were not fully appreciated until their overwhelmingly successful visit to Europe in 1908.

In the year before that visit, Wells wrote *The War in the Air*. He was then only partially informed of the Wrights' activities; and he refers to them in chapter 1 only as having done

some remarkable gliding. He knew of Langley's unsuccessful machine of 1903, of the box-kite canard in which Santos-Dumont had "hopped" in 1906, of Voisin's first—and unsuccessful—machine of 1907, and, of course, of all the earlier efforts of men like Chanute and Lillienthal.[9] Likewise, he had read of the impressive, if only partially successful flights of Zeppelin's first ships, and of the similar excursions of the Lebaudy brothers' semi-rigids in France. These were more than enough for a mind such as his, and he wove a grim warning.

He afterwards denied, reasonably enough, that his prime interest was in the purely technological aspects. In a preface written for the 1921 reprinting, he explained that

> "the main idea is not that men will fly . . or how .the main idea is a thesis . . that with the flying machine war alters its character; it ceases to be an affair of fronts and becomes an affair of areas; neither side . remains immune to the gravest injuries, and while there is a vast increase in the destructiveness of war there is also an increased indecisiveness "

It would require some hardihood to deny the general validity of that broad thesis; but let us, nevertheless, pursue the technology.

On one point, Wells fell in with a majority error. Seduced by their immediately superior lifting capacity, he expected airships to be the main long-range load carriers, with heavier-than-air machines acting as their auxiliaries.

Even quite small airships have an impressive volume; and the last Zeppelins—Hindenburg and Graf Zeppelin II—were the largest objects which have ever flown, with their length of 245m and diameter of 40m. Wells's German airships would have dwarfed even these. About 600m long, and "as big round as Trafalgar Square" (100m in diameter?), they were "fish-like in appearance", and are described in enough detail to enable us to form a clear picture. They were

> "held together by . skeletons of steel and aluminium and a stout inelastic outer-skin, within which was an impervious rubber gas-bag (divided into) a hundred compartments . filled with hydrogen there was a steel axis to the whole affair . . which terminated in the engine and propeller, and the men and magazines were forward in a series of cabins under the expanded head-like forepart roll was partly corrected by a horizontal lateral fin on either side, and steering was . by two vertical fins which normally lay back like gill-flaps on either side of the head. (They were) capable of 90 mph in a calm The habitable part was . . 250 ft long and the rooms in two tiers, above these metal turrets with big windows and air-tight double doors that enabled one to inspect the gas chambers. Aft was the magazine of bombs—mostly in glass (!) . . . a gallery ran back underneath the gas chamber to the engine room (and) a ladder . . in a kind of gas-tight fire-escape (ran up through) the great forward air-chamber to the little look-out gallery with a telephone (and a 37mm machine-cannon)."

We could hardly ask a novelist to be more explicit than that. Viewed as straightforward engineering suggestion it is very good; and if any organization with money to burn thought it worth-while, such a ship could probably be built today—save for one feature which he also included: internal ballonette is neither necessary nor possible in a multi-cellular rigid. The single tail-mounted engine might present some structural problems; but otherwise it is merely a question of scale. Wells had realised that, with airships, resistance, sail area and weight are all roughly proportional to the square of the length, but the lift is proportional to the cube; so, the bigger the better. Such gargantuan ships were never actually built because, by the time adequate power was available, aeroplanes had matured to an extent that made them unnecessary.

It is curious that this prediction, which in the end was not fulfilled, was the one which conservative contemporary engineers would have found least objectionable. It was common opinion amongst them[10] that airships would grow to vast sizes; and the sceptic

we imagined as scorning the tank idea might well have said "Of course, it will be some time before we can manage that size; but it looks quite likely."

Again curiously, the rival "Sino-Japanese" airships were of a form twice contemplated, but never in fact built. The description is much less detailed, but still clear:

> "(It was) also fish-shaped, but . . on the lines . . of a ray or sole. It had a wide flat underside, unbroken by . . any opening except along the middle line. Its cabins occupied its axis, with a sort of bridge deck above, and the gas chambers gave the whole affair the shape of a gipsy's hooped tent, except that it was much flatter . . (it flew) with much greater velocity if with considerably less stability (than the German airships.) They carried fore and aft guns and had nests for riflemen on both the upper and the under side."

Recognisably similar suggestions were put forward some years ago in the USA by some who contemplate the resurrection of the big airship: they are known as "lifting body" designs.[11] Similar ones were floated in the late '20s by Sir Dennistoun Burney, the enthusiast who god-fathered the ill-fated R101.

But if Wells was in tune with interested engineers in his airship designs, it is not at all clear that he was when writing of heavier-than-air machines. This is simply because his descriptions are not clear; indeed, of the four machines which feature in the book, only one could be unambiguously sketched. This is the "American Aeroplane", briefly glimpsed during an air battle over New York:

> "It was of the Colt-Coburn-Langley pattern, with double uptitled wings and the screw ahead, and the men were in a boat-like body netted over. From this very light long body, magazine guns projected on either side."

That is all, but with the proper name "Langley" as a clue we can see that it was a tandem-winged tractor biplane. That type has found no favour: both aerodynamically and structurally it combines the disadvantages of orthodox biplanes and monoplanes without compensating advantages.

The German "Drachenflieger" (Kite-aircraft) receives only a couple of sentences:

> "They looked like big box-kites of an exaggerated form . They had long, square heads and flattened tails, with lateral propellers" [which might describe a twin-engined version of Voisin's machine, or might not. But what can we make of the 'Butteridge machine?'] : "(It looked like) a bee or wasp. Parts of the apparatus were spinning very rapidly, and gave one a hazy effect of transparent wings; but parts, including two peculiarly curved 'wing cases' . . remained expanded stiffly. In the middle was a long rounded body and on this (the pilot) could be seen sitting astride."

Even odder is the "Japanese aircraft";

> "They had curiously curved, flexible side wings, more like bent butterfly's wings than anything else (and) a long humming-bird tail. The solitary rider sat between the wings above a transverse explosive engine below was a single large wheel. The big curved wings on either side Flapped."

An ornithopter? Would any brave reader care to essay a sketch?

Whatever engineers of the time might have made of these, surely few would have gone along with his confident prediction that the advent of a viable strike aircraft would spell the doom of the battleship. Those huge handsome fighting ships were approaching their zenith at that time, HMS Dreadnought having but recently set a new and revolutionary standard of power, speed and strength. We can only admire the imagination that could see such vessels and assert that aircraft would make "An end of them altogether, smiting out of the sky."

Broadly, then, Wells tended to err when he agreed with the experts—they, necessarily,

erred too—and was scarcely explicit when independent. It is doubtful whether he would have cared. He claimed, as we have noted, only to care about the general consequences; and here, with one qualification, we must admit that he was only too correct. In the agony of his bitterly disappointed old age he wrote another preface, demanding: "Is there anything to add to that (1921) preface now? Nothing except my epitaph (which) . . will manifestly have to be 'I told you so. You damned fools.'"

Indeed he told us so, and more truly than he knew when he wrote that sour line. For the thesis of *The War in the Air* makes the same mistake that almost every other exponent of air power made down to 1945: a gross over-estimate of the destructive power of "conventional" bombs. But he, before anyone else (so far as I can find) foresaw the next tremendous step: the military application of nuclear energy

Wells wrote *The World Set Free*—an unintentionally but grimly ironic title—in 1913. Although the prose vibrates with his astonishing gift for conjuring up scenes, it must be admitted that, as a novel, it is pretty poor. It begins didactically, with a brief and brilliant, if patchy, review of the history of Science and Technology. There follows a sequence of episodes which outline a "History of the Future" from around 1930 to about the end of the twentieth century. It is all rather disjointed, and would hardly be read now, but for the inspired brilliance of the prophecy.

Just what an intellectual leap Wells made can only be appreciated if we consider the state of the relevant sciences when he wrote.

The equivalence of mass and energy had been stated by Einstein in 1905. Rutherford had since established the nuclear nature of the atom; and Bohr was preparing his first papers on quantum theory even as Wells wrote. The first artificial splitting of a nucleus was twenty years away. Only a very few men had seen a distant glimmer of a great light. One such was Frederick Soddy of Glasgow—who appears, thinly disguised, in Wells's pages as "Professor Rufus of Edinburgh"—who published, in 1909, a text which we know Wells read, and at which he took fire.[12] Said Soddy: "(In) fourteen ounces of Uranium . . there lies . . . the energy of at least 160 tons of coal[13] . . it can scarcely be doubted that one day we shall come to break down and build up elements . . . and . . the world will then throb with a new source of strength as immeasurably removed from any we at present control as they in turn are from the natural resources of the human savage . . (but) at present we have no hint of how even to begin the quest"*

These lines, hopeful but cautious, were enough for Wells, even though he knew how extravagantly optimistic most scientists thought them. As late as 1933, Rutherford, who was probably the greatest experimental physicist of the century, dismissed the release of nuclear energy as "moonshine". But Wells knew his fellow men better than most—however hard he tried to deny that knowledge in his middle years. He saw that the release of nuclear energy would at once be applied to the making of weapons. He imagines the experiences of a survivor:

> "And then it was as if thunder broke . There was nothing else in the world but a crimson-purple glare and sound, deafening, all embracing She had an impression of a great ball of crimson-purple fire like a maddened living thing that seemed to be whirling about very rapidly amidst a chaos of falling masonry "

That was written 32 years before Hiroshima.

* Soddy lived to see his words come true. He died in 1956, aged 79.

The bombs, it is explained, are made of the "artificial element, Carolinium" which detonated in a "continual explosion" It is almost irresistably tempting to read this as a chain-reaction in the artificial element Plutonium! And, we read, although the radioactivity

> "diminishes towards the imperceptible, (it) is never entirely exhausted, and the battle fields are sprinkled with radiant matter, and so centres of inconvenient rays.

How oddly diminuendo that "inconvenient" reads, especially in contrast with:

> "From the crater puffs of heavy incandescent vapour and fragments of visciously punitive rock and mud, saturated with Carolinium, and each a centre of scorching and blistering energy, were flung high and far."

Certainly, there are oddities to a modern eye. The bombs are carried in open-cockpit machines and bodily heaved overboard by the navigator, who activates the trigger mechanism by biting off the cover! Nevertheless, there echoes in our minds as we read that agonised cry: "I told you so. You damned fools."

We have written mainly of war. Yet Wells also wrote accounts of futures at peace. *A Modern Utopia* (1905), and *Men like Gods* (1922) are, as their titles imply, ideals. The future in *The Sleeper Awakes* (1899), like the very similar one in the novella *A Story of the Days to Come* (1905), is far from ideal, though thoughtfully described. But there is much less hard detail for us to get our teeth into than in the tales of conflict.

Two explanations may be offered for this. One is simply that there is in man a belligerence which saith amid the trumpets ha ha! and causeth the imagination to bubble furiously at the thought of combat. For all that the science of human behaviour can tell us, this may or may not be so: it does not seem intuitively improbable. The other is that Wells reckoned that, by the early decades of this century, there was enough science and technical know-how available to enable mankind to live a tolerable existence if only it were fully and properly applied. The essential problem, as he saw it, was not to further control over the physical world, but to get H. Sapiens to behave reasonably. This remains an unsolved problem.

Wells's peaceful futures nevertheless contain some interesting notions.

Like Verne before him, and like many since, he was concerned with the problems that would arise when stocks of fossil fuels were exhausted. The world of *The Sleeper Awakes* solves them by the use of wind power:

> "The whole expanse of the Downs escarpment . was set with wind wheels . the Wealden heights . . with a second row of wind wheels that seemed striving to rob the downland whirlers of their share of the breeze."

The reader has already glimpsed a twenty-first century London wholly roofed in, the roof covered with rank upon rank of windmill generators. In this Wells was more clear-sighted than many of those who urge the use of wind power today, and who seem to imagine a discrete scattering of neat little mills, unobtrusively providing the current needed. It is doubtful whether he did any sums; but intuitively he had grasped the matter of scale: if you are going for wind power, then you will need mills by the army. Thus:

> "On every crest and hill, where once . cottages, churches, inns and farmhouses had nestled wind wheels cast their whirling shadow."

In *Men Like Gods* the population of the "other earth" is substantially less than that of this earth today—about 250 million altogether. The power needs are met, apparently,

largely by hydro-electric means; and the power is transmitted, apparently by radio, to numerous power-points, where one can plug in such appliances as are in use. The twice-repeated adverb "apparently" is intentional; for in that most agreeable of his Utopias, Wells was less concerned than elsewhere with hardware. A combination of eugenics and education had achieved an earthly paradise.

Inevitably, we wonder how far Wells believed in his own formulas for a utopian world. Somehow, his disagreeable prophecies always seem more convincing than his pleasing ones. The more insistently he declared, in his middle years, that education could, that it surely would make splendid beings of every person on earth, the more one suspects that the person he was most keen to convince was not doubting Thomas but doubting Wells. In the harsh future of *The Sleeper Awakes,* an advanced educational technology, hinting at present-day "programmed learning" but leaning heavily on hypnosis, is described; but its inherent limitations are acutely noted:

> "In fact all operations *conducted under finite rules, of a quasi-mechanical sort that is,* were now systematically brought to an unexampled pitch " (My italics)

It is still a matter of dispute what are the scope and limits of the kind of teaching methods discussed. The weight of current opinion, though, seems to be that Wells had hit on those limits very accurately.[14]

The rest of the "peaceful" technology, as far as it can be judged, is reasonable enough. Wind-powered generating systems, so long as their scale and geographical extent is great, are entirely possible; but may well be bypassed by other means. Hydro-electric schemes are familiar; and, if the world population were at the level Wells posited—a consummation devoutly to be wished—they might well suffice. The beaming of power would be very wasteful, but possibly workable in a state of superfluity.

When we look at Wells's predictions as a whole, their protean nature seems to escape a simple summary. How seriously should we take his disclaimer, that the details did not concern him, only the broad consequences? I submit that it must have been true sometimes: no other explanation really accounts for a man so deeply committed to science disregarding it as carelessly as, on occasion, he did. On the other hand, some devices are described in what can only be called loving detail. Within that restricted field we must grant him two amazing bullseyes: the atomic bomb and the tank. If his other excursions into technology, narrowly regarded, show him as less sure-footed, nevertheless they are enough to sustain his reputation as the greatest seer of the age of applied science.

Part 2: Mr Wells is serious

However much H.G. Wells tended to decry his own purely literary gifts—which were great—he took himself very seriously indeed as a man of foresight: one who predicted, warned and urged. Undoubtedly, he had cause. In many areas he did, as he claimed, "tell us so". Besides his many prophetic novels and short stories, he presented his views in numerous serious discussions of developing tendencies, from *Anticipations* (1899) to the final, despairing *Mind at the End of its Tether* (1945).

The brilliant series of novels he produced in the later '90s established him in the estimation of the reading public as the outstanding producer of exciting "futures"; and, as the century drew to its close, he was invited by the editor of Pearson's Magazine to write a series of articles discussing the changes he expected in the century to come. The nine long articles he produced were published in book form as *Anticipations,* and were a great

success: my own copy is dated 1902, and already a 7th edition.

The opening lines leave no doubt of his serious intent:

> "It is proposed in this book to present . . an imperfect and very hypothetical, but sincerely intended forecast of the way things will probably go in this new century."

and he swiftly gets down to business:

> "It is extremely convenient to begin with . the probable developments and changes of the means of land locomotion during the coming decades."

Once again, we must adumbrate the background against which these essays were written. In the first place, almost all his readers would, as he remarked, take the steam locomotive drawing a train upon rails as part of an established and triumphant order of things. A decade later, the famous 11th edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* devoted a 41-page entry to "Railways", with never an iota of doubt that their future was utterly secure. What doubt, it seemed, could there be? Every year, in Britain, more than a billion passenger tickets (not counting season tickets) were sold, and more than 400 million tons of goods carried. The motor vehicle seemed, by comparison, a mere toy for the rich. In 1902, C.S. Rolls—who had not yet formed his historic partnership with Royce—wrote of them as essentially machines for sport. At that time, in France—which, in pre-Ford days was the leading country in motor vehicles—there were fewer than 1700 motor vehicles of all kinds, of which 1438 were classed as "for pleasure"

Wells was neither overwhelmed by the success of the railways nor inhibited by the primitive state of the motor.

> "Railway travelling is at best a compromise. The ideal . is surely a highly mobile conveyance capable of travelling easily and swiftly to any desired point, traversing, at a reasonably controlled pace, the ordinary roads and streets "

He explains that he expects the motor truck will soon be distributing goods far and wide, and

> " . . next . there will develop the hired or privately owned motor carriage. This . . will add a fine sense of personal independence to . . . travel. One will be able to dine where one chooses, leaving when one chooses . And thirdly, there will be the motor omnibus . All this seems fairly safe prophesying."

Contemporary comment makes it clear that "safe" for Wells was over-bold for many. Even bolder seemed his certainty ("I am absolutely convinced . ") that there would have to be special long-distance motor-ways:

> "They will be very different from macadamized roads" (i.e., original, not tarred macadam roads, but ones with a surface of loose chippings)" perhaps they will be made of very good asphalt sloped to drain They will have to very wide . traffic in opposite directions will probably be strictly segregated . . where their ways branch the streams of traffic will not cross at a level, but by bridges "

Slightly more than half a century was to elapse before the opening of the first stretch of motor-way in Britain.

Thus far we have looked at Wells dealing with general matters, and being broadly, indeed amazingly, right. He next concentrated his attention more narrowly; and became both specific and wrong.

No contemporary of ours could be more eloquent than Wells in his denunciation of the crowding, stink, filth, noise and traffic congestion of city streets. (At least, we are spared the clatter of iron horse-shoes and the all-pervading aroma of horse-dung.) He hankers

after the universality of the bicycle; but has his own vision of intra-city transport in the late twentieth century:

> "(a) means of transport that is not simply frequent but continuous is the moving platform[15] Let us imagine the inner circle (of the London Tube) adapted to this conception . . . The tunnel is . . about 24 ft wide. If we suppose the space given to six platforms of 3ft wide and one (the most rapid) of 6 ft . . each platform going 4 mph faster than its slower fellow . we should have the upper platform running around the circle at a pace of 28 mph . . . (another refinement) . could very easily add a speed of 6 mph a man in a hurry would be able to add his own 4 mph If the reader will imagine that . tunnel, swept and garnished, lit and sweet . perpetually ready to go off with him and never crowded . . . he will get an inkling . of what he perhaps misses by living now instead of 30 or 40 years ahead."

Again and again since that anticipatory paean have the "moving ways" appeared—but always in works of fiction. Such a system could doubtless be built, but the power requirement would be huge; and there would be the development problem of making it really reliable. The reader may let his un-Wellsian imagination wander over the consequences of a failure in a drive mechanism.

Having discussed surface travel, he turned to its consequences, devoting a chapter to the Probable Diffusion of Great Cities. He points out that the size of cities is limited by two factors: the area upon which each can draw for food, and the distance a citizen can reasonably travel from home to work. Both of these are functions of the transport available. With the coming of motor transport, he confidently predicts that cities will spread until virtually the whole of lowland Britain is a system of interlinked conurbations —as we have come to call them. He seems to find the prospect quite attractive; although he concedes that "there may be a certain lack of solitude"

In the following chapters he continues to examine the consequences of technological change, on the way scoring some of his amazing bullseyes. In discussing the professional family of the mid-twentieth century, he remarks that

> "They will probably not keep a servant for two . reasons, first they will not want one, second they will not get one if they do."

He discourses of the "mod cons" of the twentieth century house, most of which are now so commonplace that it requires a real effort to realise how utopian they then seemed. Who gives a thought to the washing-up liquid? But, as Wells says

> "Washing up consists of a tedious cleaning and wiping of each table utensil in turn, whereas it should be possible to immerse all dirty table ware in a suitable solvent . . then run that off for the articles to dry There remains cooking . . a very serious business; the coaling, the ashes, the horrible moments of heat, the hot black things to handle one always imagines a cook working with a crimson face and blackened arms. But with a neat little range, heated by electricity cooking might be made a pleasant amusement."

It is as well to be reminded of some of the most disregarded blessings of technology. Without our multiplex "mod cons", simply running a home would still be the drudgery it long was. Since the movement of coals and fussing with fires and so on had to be done, there were only two alternatives. Either one member of the household had to be a domestic drudge (in practice, this almost always was the wife or daughter) or there had to be a servant. From both these disagreeable alternatives, technology—*and technology alone*—has liberated us, as Wells foresaw it would.

Another prediction, which must have been even more startling—for the old Queen still reigned, whether amused or not—was of a marked liberalising of sexual mores. Would the society of the mid-twentieth century, he demanded

" retain its present feeling for the extreme sanctity (of marriage)? . in the case of the unmarried mother . . who may be holding her own in the world, where will the moral censor find his congenial following to gather stones? . there must be a movement towards the relaxation of the marriage law and of divorce "

Wells returns to technical questions and (suspiciously?) attains an enhanced liveliness of style in the paper on "War"

Here we see him at an earlier stage of the thinking which lead him, three years later, to the tank idea discussed in part 1. He sees tactics adapting to, rather than dissolving the Bloch stalemate. He sees the problem, but not yet a solution. He expected fronts to be held by chains of small mutually-supporting sections, lying up in foxholes and armed with a self-loading rifle or light machine-gun. They would be supported by a sparse but long-ranged artillery, which would be "fought with the aid of balloons". Such infantry would rely upon bicycles rather than feet, and when in position they " . . could stop the most multitudinous attack in the world (a short withdrawal) would simply restore to them . . their enormous advantage of defence."

He is clear, with a kind of gloomy relish, that twentieth-century war would be total:

" . the whole mass of the state will have to be at work there will be a very considerable restriction of the rights of the non-combatant the state will be organized as a whole to fight as a whole "

Such remarks sounded like a prediction of a return to the savagery of the ages of faith—which, indeed, it was. Unfortunately, it was also correct.

It is in this section that we first come across a certain hesitation which sometimes marked Wells in his more serious moods. It is interesting to compare the exuberant engineering confidence of, e.g., *The War in the Air* with the defensive:

"Few people, if any, who know the work of Langley (and others) but will be inclined to believe that long before the year A.D.2000, and very probably before 1950, a successful aeroplane will have soared the new invention will be applied to war."

It could be claimed that this was *literally* correct but what are we to make of the navigable balloon which is then adumbrated?

"If a gas-bag were enclosed in a net of closely interlaced fibres . . the ends of these fibres might be wound and unwound, and the effect of contractility attained. A row of such balloons, hung over a long car which was horizontally expanded into wings . if the balloon at one end were contracted and that at the other end expanded . . the whole apparatus would . glide From some such crude beginnings a form like a soaring, elongated, flat-brimmed hat might grow (with) an engine-driven screw."

This strange device could carry little armament, but

" there will be a steel prow with a cutting edge and conceivably this aerial ram will be the most important weapon of the whole affair."

Set down thus baldly, this makes the modern reader blink. Yet it is followed by an imaginary battle-piece so vivid that we almost wonder that things did not turn out that way. But however bizarre the machinery may be, the discussion of consequences is, as ever, not absurd at all.

"Once the command of the air is obtained all over the losing country, not simply at his frontier but everywhere, the victor will soar . the victor's aeroplanes will sweep down . so that no apparatus or camp or shelter will any longer be safe a general advance will occur under the aerial van "

Having dealt with land and air, Wells turned to the sea; but here he was all at sea

indeed. For once his shrewd insight, and even his awareness of general possibilities, seems to have deserted him. We must suppose that he was a land animal.

The main technical facts influencing warship design at that time were the ever increasing range and power of big guns and of torpedoes.[16] The former was forcing a movement to the all-big-gun (Dreadnought) design; the latter, to the discerning, threatened to circumscribe and eventually to end the reign of the battleship, at first when carried by submarines, and eventually when airborne.[17] None of this seems to have impinged upon Wells. On the contrary, he reappears as a technical reactionary:

> "I seem to see a light type of ironclad . . with a ram . . . she will have little to fear from the submarine . . (or) torpedo . I confess that my imagination refuses to see any sort of submarine doing anything but suffocate its crew and founder at sea."

His general vision is equally blinded:

> "The struggle on the high seas will not last more than a week or so . The commerce-destroyer will have a very short run . . a few weeks will carry the effective frontier of the stronger power up to the coast-line of the weaker . The military advantages of command of the sea will probably be greater in the future than they have ever been . . *Landings will be enormously easier than they have ever been* " (My italics)

Well, it is true that the side with command of the sea won both the world wars of this century. But things were hardly as swift, easy and torpedo-proof as Wells promised.[18]

During the decades that followed, Wells remained immensely prolific. For the rest of his long life, never a year passed without at least one new title. They included the brilliant novels to which we adverted in Part 1. They included also his famous, if now oddly neglected *Outline of History* and *The Science of Life,* the summary of biological knowledge he wrote in collaboration with his son, G.P. Wells and J.S. Huxley. Much was consciously ephemeral; but in the scores of essays and articles there were many intriguing insights. A collection of his papers was published in 1914 under the title *An Englishman looks at the World.*

Perhaps the most noticeable thing about this collection is the note of caution and doubt which informs them all. He observes that flying, submarines and radio have been achieved, and that the poles have been reached;[19] but continues:

> "No one expects to go beyond (the) atmosphere for some centuries at least . . Science has got samples now of all its crops, and what lies before . . is chiefly to work them out in detail but nothing, I think (of) dramatic novelty There remains, of course, the tapping of atomic energy, but I give 200 years yet before that."

We are inclined to ask: "Is this the Wells we knew?" But he remains full of suggestions in various areas:

> "It is in quite other directions that the scientific achievements to astonish our children will probably be achieved the physiologist and the organic chemist may make the physician's sphere the new scientific wonderland."

The note of doubt recurs:

> "Please understand I do not consider this concentration of activity and these vast "artificializations" of the human body as attractive or desirable things but the business of this paper is to discuss things that may happen and not to evolve dreams of loveliness."

But he forces cheerfulness into his peroration:

> " it may be a greater undertaking but no more impossible to make ways to goodwill . in men than it is to tunnel mountains . . The way that leads from the darkness of the cave to the electric light is the way that will lead to light in the souls of men, that is to say, the way of free and fearless thinking, free and fearless experiment, organized exchange of thoughts and results, and patience and persistence and a sort of intellectual civility."

The striking thing about this series of essays is that, broadly speaking, the hopes have proved dupes and the fears liars. "Flight outside the atmosphere" took place within the lifetimes of many of his readers; and his fictional treatment of atomic energy proved far closer than the cautious 200 years of his serious estimate. On the other hand, his hopes have, upon the most optimistic assessment, been only very partially fulfilled.

Certainly, medicine has made very great advances. Whole classes of disease, once deadly, are now curable; whilst others have been stamped out altogether. Nevertheless, it is questionable whether these advances, admirable as they are, constitute as great a proportional advance as that brought about by the public health measures—especially mains drainage and clean drinking water—of the nineteenth century. Curiously, perhaps, neither Wells nor (so far as I am aware) anyone else predicted the most civilizing and liberating of all advances in pharmacology: the cheap, reliable contraceptive pill.

As to the making of ways to goodwill, it remains easier to tunnel through mountains. Since Wells "looked at the world", so many human beings have been slain by their own kind that they cannot reliably be numbered. And though no man could rationally deny the validity of his prescription for any kind of advance in knowledge or decency—the way of free and fearless thinking—yet the emphasis must be placed on the word "rationally", which describes a mode of procedure which is hardly popular. Whilst writing this, I received a letter from a respected scientist urging that certain research should not be published, in case it should be misapplied to a moral issue to which it is logically irrelevant. Or, in other words, lest the faith of the flock be weakened.

Wells continued to write both fiction and discussion as long as he lived. His serious work forms a sad progression from confidence, through doubts more-or-less noisily suppressed, to final despair. His last work was a little pamphlet entitled *Mind at the End its Tether*. It contains no guesses about the future of science, no jolly or eccentric or even dotty mechanisms, no "future" at all. He had concluded that

> " this world is at the end of its tether. The end of everything we call life is close at hand and cannot be evaded there is no way out or round or through it is the end."

"Close at hand" is, of course, a relative term. Those words were written over forty years ago; and it is not absurd to hope that they may yet prove to have been mistaken.

When we consider Wells's predictions as a whole—fictional and serious together—certain general characteristics seem to emerge. We have noted a certain carelessness about detail and a deep, intuitive feeling for the workings and potentialities of science. However, although any very sharp distinction between "science" and "technology" is misleading, it does seem to be the case that, the further Wells moved from the "science" end of the spectrum to the "technology" end, the less he was at home, and the less reliable his intuitions were. Apart only from his inspired "tank"—and that with reservations—his machinery has an almost Heath-Robinson air when closely examined. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that he did not have a strong feeling for engineering in the narrow sense.

Support for this somewhat surprising view comes from a passage in *Anticipations* in which he discusses the early history of the steam engine.

> " none of the many minds concerned in the development strikes one . . as being that of unprecedented man Newcomen and a host of other workers, culminating in Watt, working always by steps that were at least so nearly obvious as to give rise again and again to simultaneous discoveries . . developing . . pumping engines . . made the steam locomotive well-nigh inevitable."

Set aside for the moment, the rather gross historical inaccuracy.[20] There was no "host of workers", unless Smeaton be counted a host in himself, which perhaps he may; there were virtually no "simultaneous discoveries". Much more to the point, why did Wells not wonder why, if the steps were "so nearly obvious", did more than fifty years elapse between Newcomen's engine and Watt's fundamental improvement? But the real point is that to examine Newcomen's or Watt's pioneer engines with any serious understanding is to be astonished at the genius embodied. "Unprecedented" is, perhaps, too doubtful a word; but "towering" would certainly be justified.[21]

It feels almost sacrilegious to question Wells's technological insight; but unless we attribute to him a more than ordinary want of care—which is not likely, since he was not writing fiction—he certainly displayed some strange lacunae.

However, it would be meanness of a despicable kind to end our discussion of Wells on a carping note. It is natural to be more conservative in serious essays than in entertaining fiction: hence, no doubt, the 1950 date for aircraft. The reality he always sought to emphasise was that of change. Like Bacon in the seventeenth century, he realised that the greatest single cause of change was the applications of science; and these can be beneficial and jolly as well as harmful: the choice is up to us. If he often had doubts, amply justified doubts, let it be remembered that he held before his readers a vision of hope which, even should it never be fulfilled, is the only *possible* one that has been found. If there is to be further amelioration of the human lot, if there is to be any comfort and joy, they must rest upon the applications of science; and science in its turn rests upon "free and fearless thinking . experiment and a sort of intellectual civility" At a time when many seem to be crying for the light to be turned off, for the mind-numbing comfort of dogma to be substituted for the chill uncertainties of reality, let us honour the memory of a man who could see and point to the only viable road.

Notes

1. See, e.g., his correspondence with Henry James and his *Experiment in Autobiography.*
2. Compare the ages of the Rostov sisters in Parts 1 and 2 of *War and Peace.*
3. Verne expressed his criticism in an interview published in *T.P.'s Weekly* for 09/Oct/1903.
4. There is a simply enormous literature on this subject. The interested reader might start with J. Weller, *Weapons and Tactics,* or J.F.C. Fuller, *Armament and History,* and thence proceed for the rest of his life.
5. As, e.g., Marlborough before the lines of Brabant in 1705.
6. See, e.g., B.T. White, *Tanks and other Armoured Vehicles, 1900 – 1918.*
7. Sir Ernest D. Swinton, *Eyewitness.*
8. B.H. Liddel Hart, *The Tanks.*
9. For all of these—and much fun besides—see C.H. Gibbs-Smith, *Aviation: an historical survey.*
10. See, e.g., F.T. Jane, *The British Battle Fleet* Vol. II.
11. See, e.g., R. Jackson, *Airships.*
12. F. Soddy, *The Interpretation of Radium* (1909!)
13. If this figure seems low, remember that Soddy was thinking of the energy released only by natural decay, not by fission. (It is sad to think that Soddy ended as a good man fallen among economists.)
14. See, e.g., A. Cleary, and D. Packham, *Educational Technology.*
15. Wells attributes this suggestion to one Professor Perry. I have not been able to trace it.
16. See, e.g., P. Padfield, *Guns at Sea.*
17. See, e.g., A. Hezlet, *The Submarine and Sea-Power* and *Aircraft and Sea-Power.*
18. See, e.g., S.W. Roskill, *The Strategy of Sea-Power.*
19. He may have been wrong about the N. Pole. See D. Rawlins, *Peary at the North Pole.*
20. See, e.g. E. Ferguson, "The Origins of the Steam Engine", *Scientific American,* Jan. 1964.
21. See, e.g., D. Cardwell, *Technology, Science and History.*

Nicholas Ruddick, whose essay on science fictional deluges appeared in Foundation *42, has since moved upward to Associate Professor at the University of Regina, Canada, as well as becoming Division Head (Science Fiction) of the International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts. Besides writing recently on Aldiss's relationship with Mary Shelley and on Philip Larkin, he has also embarked on a study of Keith Roberts—partly researched at the Science Fiction Foundation—first fruits of which appear below. (Part II will appear in* Foundation *46.)*

Flaws in the Timestream: Unity and Disunity in Keith Roberts's Story-Cycles

NICHOLAS RUDDICK

1. Defining Terms: The "Nontraditional" Story-Cycle

Keith Roberts's best work, it seems to me, is precisely that which offers the reader most problems. *Pavane, The Chalk Giants* and *Kiteworld* have aroused the most critical admiration; yet this has been tempered by doubts about the generic nature and aesthetic unity of these works, doubts intensified by Roberts's own admissions of structural flaws in them. Let me begin with an admission of my own: I find Roberts's best work, most notably the three examples at issue here, to be fascinating and provocative, far superior to most of what passes for contemporary science fiction. These works are flawed, to be sure; but so are most works which break the boundaries of genre to present a complex, disturbing vision unsubmissive to the desire of the publishing industry to market fiction in tidy categories. I offer here an attempt to settle, briefly and finally, what kind of work *Pavane, The Chalk Giants,* and *Kiteworld* are, and then a lengthier analysis of each of the works in turn, focussing on the problem of their aesthetic unity that arises from their unconventional structure.

A brief survey of Roberts's oeuvre will remind us of the tendency of his fiction to elude easy generic categorization; it will also provide a clue to what the three works at hand have in common. Those of Roberts's works which because of their unity of character and plot may be described as novels—*The Furies* (1966), *Molly Zero* (1980), *Gráinne* (1987)—reveal when traced chronologically an increasing tendency towards narrative disjunctiveness. Those works which have a unity of character but not of plot—*Anita* (1970), *Kaeti & Company* (1986)—show an analogous tendency: compared to Anita, the central figure referred to as Kaeti in the more recent work is so unstable as to be only in a very limited sense the "same person" from chapter to chapter Those works which offer themselves as short story collections—*Machines and Men* (1973), *The Grain Kings* (1976), *Ladies from Hell* (1979), *The Lordly Ones* (1986)—paradoxically retain certain continuities that undermine our comforting assumption that in such a collection, a fictive world is remade

afresh with each new story.[1] In *The Inner Wheel* (1970), the device of the Gestalt entity that so questionably links three very different stories is itself a metaphor of the problematics of unity. Finally, the historical novel *The Boat of Fate* (1971) and the collection of poems *A Heron Caught in Weeds* (1987) reveal an author unwilling to restrict his energies to the vigilantly-guarded boundaries of contemporary science fiction. *Pavane, The Chalk Giants* and *Kiteworld* do not have the unity of plot and character typical of novels, yet they do have obvious continuities that set them apart from most collections of short stories—even those collections by Keith Roberts. These three are also Roberts's most ambitious works and, I would contend, his finest achievements.

The problems of genre are usually the chief concern of critics who seek to bring works into the sphere of the familiar, to domesticate them, so to speak. That science fiction criticism tends to be obsessed by such problems is usually the result of insecurity, manifesting itself as a desire to define the separateness and distinctiveness of the province of science fiction, and to assert its indifference to the demands for homage from the empire of the mainstream. Keith Roberts chooses not to think in such terms. He is not a science fiction writer;[2] he is a writer who for a variety of reasons, both literary-historical and socio-economic, writes fictions most of which are marketed as science fiction.[3] The critical attention his work demands, but has not yet, except at the hands of Paul Kincaid,[4] properly received, is of the traditional and fundamental kind: criticism which "sets out the basic coherence of literary works, their 'unity' or 'basic pattern' or 'overarching meaning' ",[5] rather than which seeks to contain or neutralize them by placing them in sterile generic categories. I confess that, in choosing these three works, I share an academic "preference for the not-yet-coherent"; but this at least ensures that the works are approached as phenomena which "leave us baffled and confused until we apply the proper procedures to them"[6] rather than dismissed as a "bloody muddle" [7] Roberts produces texts that are full of discontinuities with which one must struggle to make a meaning; the best of them are "writerly",[8] inhabiting a shadow-world between genres and provocatively challenging the reader to find pattern and coherence in what is offered as a series of tantalizing fragments.[9]

Pavane, The Chalk Giants and *Kiteworld* have a triangular relationship with each other.[10] *Pavane* and *The Chalk Giants* are set chiefly in the Isle of Purbeck, with Corfe Castle as its focus. *Pavane* and *Kiteworld* both trace the downfall of rigid, church-dominated societies.[11] *The Chalk Giants* and *Kiteworld* are both set in worlds after a nuclear holocaust. It is worth recalling at this early stage the relationship between the works that Roberts himself has noted. Twice he has referred to *The Chalk Giants* as a "black *Pavane*" [12] He has also remarked that these two works are "about the same locale, and us [e] very similar characters", while insisting that *The Chalk Giants* is "as different from *Pavane* as chalk from cheese" [13] The following statement is of particular interest:

> Both *Pavane* and *The Chalk Giants* are first and foremost story cycles, interlinked closely in space but fairly loosely in time; each piece can be read separately, and is hopefully fairly interesting and exciting in its own right and the real relationship is thematic rather than structural. They're not novels, and were never intended to be; though with the well-known low sales of short story collections both the respective publishers tended to push them as such.[14]

A story-cycle is a term usually applied to a group of stories, often by different authors, based on traditional material and centring on a single character (such as King Arthur or Charlemagne), which over the years comes by a process of accretion to form a continuous

narrative. With certain modifications, the definition fits *Pavane, The Chalk Giants* and *Kiteworld* well enough. So, given that we have above a clear statement of authorial intention, it should be clear enough, especially in the light of evidence to follow, what to call the three works at hand.

Roberts's descriptions of the genesis of the three works are of processes of accretion analogous to the development of the traditional story-cycle. *Pavane* was "back-constructed" from the last story in the cycle, "Corfe Gate", in a manner Roberts has described in detail.[15] *The Chalk Giants* was written in the order in which it first appeared (in the British edition),[16] but the italicized links were revised retrospectively,[17] presumably to give the narrative the kind of loose continuity typical of the story-cycle. *Kiteworld* evolved from the first story in the cycle, "Kitemaster", by "a process of addition".[18] One of the best-known of all traditional story-cycles is the Arthurian Matter of Britain, based on Celtic sources. It is obvious to most readers that in *The Chalk Giants* and to a lesser extent in *Pavane,* Roberts alludes frequently to Celtic, and particularly British-Celtic, history and mythology. Moreover, though *Kiteworld* is set in an unspecified location, Roberts has tentatively identified the Realm with Brittany, the ancient refuge of the British Celts.[19] The experimentation with point of view in all these works produces a narrative analogous to the traditional story-cycle by different hands. Finally, the term *cycle* is apt for a narrative structure that emerges naturally from the vision of time and history that informs all these works: namely, that time itself is cyclical, not linear. According to such a vision, all "progress" is towards an apocalyptic event that marks the end of one cycle and the beginning of the next, and that introduces a great discontinuity into human history that can only be bridged by the historian who achieves a long temporal perspective. Each of the three works at hand tries in its own way to express this vision of the underlying shape of time, a vision that not only provocatively challenges the linear temporality of the Judeo-Christian tradition,[20] but also tends to come into conflict with the linearity of traditional narrative itself.

In short, then, we are dealing here with three nontraditional story-cycles, not with three flawed novels or short story collections. The generic description I have just offered does not, however, help us tame these fictions by identifying them with something old and familiar. On the contrary, these cycles demonstrate a willingness to challenge the most elementary assumptions of the reader concerning the nature of time, history, and the proper shape of narrative. We sense in consequence something of the ambitions of the writer who shaped them, ambitions demanding of the critic a serious and sympathetic scrutiny.

2. The Fairy at the Transmitter: *Pavane*

> There is a structural flaw in *Pavane*. I was guilty, slightly, of changing boats in midstream; I started with the idea of a parallel world, and then decided some cyclical view of history would become useful plot-wise to make the point that the Church was actually aware that it had all happened before; but it's not brought out strongly enough.[21]

Roberts's statement here leads us directly to the problems of unity besetting his most famous story-cycle. First, the "Prologue" implies that the assassination of Elizabeth I occurred in the year 1588 of common history, so that the subsequent text comes to be read as a history of an alternate world after a timefork. Yet in the "Coda", a letter from Sir John Falconer to his son notes that "beyond our Time, beyond all the memories of men,

there was a great civilisation. There was a Coming, a Death, and Resurrection; a Conquest, a Reformation, an Armada. And a burning, an Armageddon."[22] That is to say, this passage implies that our common history *preceded* that of the *Pavane* cycle, and is separated from it not by a timefork, but by a traumatic discontinuity—the Armageddon of nuclear war. Second, Roberts's reference to "changing boats in midstream" is an allusion to the story "The White Boat", whose status as part of the *Pavane* cycle has long been in doubt. Third, the state of "true Reason" achieved by humanity by the time of the "Coda" is the result, according to the seneschal Sir John, of the Church's refusal to release scientific knowledge until men were ready for it (pp.281-82). Yet the vision of achieved utopia in the "Coda" works strongly against the vision of cyclical history present not only in *Pavane* but in all Roberts' story-cycles. Indeed, Roberts is being perhaps a little disingenuous when he refers to "some cyclical view of history" being "useful plot-wise".

Is *Pavane* an alternate history? The editors of *Alternative Histories* (1986) include the "First Measure" of *Pavane,* "The Lady Margaret", in their anthology of stories "of the World As It Might Have Been".[23] L.J. Hurst, on the other hand, states flatly that *Pavane* "is not an alternative history but a future history" and as such is "more like Keith Roberts's other Dorset fantasy, *The Chalk Giants,* than it is like his own 'Weihnachtabend'."[24] I think that, viewed in the context of Roberts' other related story-cycles, *Pavane* will come to be seen as a flawed—or better, nontraditional—future history. But let us first consider the accepted view that *Pavane* is, in R. Reginald's words, "perhaps the best conceived and most human of those enterprises in destiny", the science-fictional alternate history.[25]

In his "*Afterword:* Allohistory in Science Fiction" to the anthology *Alternative Histories,* Gordon C. Chamberlain manages to avoid many of the pitfalls of overprecise generic definition. Nevertheless, he mentions two strains in allohistorical fiction which evoke in him the contemptuous irony of the critic faced with the all-too-predictable formulae of subliterature. On the one hand, there is the sentimental archaism of some allohistorians, the love of "kilts and horned helmets, dirigibles and steam"[26] which Chamberlain associates with the "antiquarian nostalgia of Miniver Cheevy"[27] This is what he claims has generated the steam-cars and semaphors of *Pavane.* On the other hand, there is the tendency of science fiction to write Whig history, "to praise revolutions provided they have been successful, to emphasize certain principles of progress in the past, and to produce a story which is the ratification of the present".[28] So, in "The Lady Margaret", political whiggery is reinforced by the socioeconomics of Max Weber", even though the idea that the Reformation fostered the Industrial Revolution was condemned by Weber himself as a "foolish and doctrinaire thesis".[29]

Now clearly "antiquarian nostalgia" and "political whiggery" are not easily compatible. Yet *Pavane* does contain something of both of these allohistorical tendencies. The archaic road trains and semaphors are lovingly and brilliantly described;[30] yet the existence of both is the result of political and religious oppression. There are fairies in *Pavane;* but one of them is ultimately found sitting at an illicit radio transmitter to aid the revolt against the Church for the sake of enlightenment and progress (pp.258-59). The tableau of the fairy at the transmitter is an image of the powerful and fruitful ambivalence that is the dynamic of *Pavane*, and that finally ensures that the work escapes facile and reductive generic categorization.

Roberts has noted that the "real relationship" between the stories in *Pavane* is "thematic rather than structural": *Pavane* returns "again and again to the theme of unquestioning and excessive loyalty" [31] This, of course, begs the question why the stories are ordered as they are—what the central unifying principle of the story-cycle is. Roberts has also admitted that "critics are quite correct in saying that ["The White Boat"] doesn't really fit the rest of the cycle." [32] This strongly suggests that there is a natural order to the stories which is disrupted by "The White Boat". Another statement by Roberts supposedly clarifies the matter:

> *Pavane* was conceived largely as a 'wonder tale', and to express something I felt about the Dorset people at the time; a wonderful blend of honesty, loyalty, and dourness. If you think back to the stories, I think you'll find they all take loyalty of one sort or another as a secondary theme; the loyalty of Jesse Strange to his ideals, Rafe Bigland to the Guild of Signallers, John to his visions, Eleanor to her liege sovereign. Becky, of "The White Boat", is the odd girl out; she's not really interested in anything further than the womblings of her own adolescent stomach. [33]

Three main issues arise from this. First, if loyalty is a "secondary theme", then Roberts must be suggesting that the cycle has some other primary theme—which casts into doubt his earlier-quoted statement about *Pavane*'s thematic unity. Second, Roberts does not mention here the story "Lords and Ladies", which is hardly concerned with the "excessive loyalty" of its rebellious central figure, Margaret Strange; yet Roberts has noted that this story was "written deliberately to tie up the loose ends I had found myself with" after the other stories were finished. [34] Third, if "The White Boat" is really so out of place in the cycle, why was it included in the American edition from the beginning, and why was it recently added to the British one?

I propose that an answer to the questions both stated and implied here may be found if the unifying principle of *Pavane* is sought in the vision of time and history suggested by the cycle (but not in its "Prologue" and "Coda", which are the source of the real flaws in the design). The stories in the cycle, chronologically arranged as they are, describe a temporal arc upon which may be projected the great cycle implied by several passages in *Pavane,* including the one from the "Coda" quoted earlier—even though the achieved utopia in the "Coda" works against the cyclical vision. It is important at this stage to distinguish between time as cycle and time as circle. Towards the end of "Corfe Gate", the last story in *Pavane*, Eleanor expresses her fears that life is "all totally pointless, it would make just as much sense backwards as forwards" (p.255); in fact, the arrow of time determines that the cycle turns in one direction only, and that though humanity may be fated to recapitulate its history, it will never suffer a precise repetition of it, nor a reversal of the cycle. This irreversible cycle may offer little consolation to either the Miniver Cheevys or the apostles of progress; but because it is an analogue of the natural cycles of day and night, the seasons and the motions of the stars, it gives reassurance of rebirth after death, regeneration after decay. [35] Let us now turn to the stories constituting the *Pavane* cycle, and trace the arc they describe.

The fate of the Strange family, whose name suggests their estrangement from their society's values, sketches the shape of the time they inhabit. "The Lady Margaret" introduces us to Jesse the haulier, whose forename marks him as the source of an epoch-making lineage (see *Isaiah,* 11:1) that will unite a divided people—in this case the people of Britain, purposely kept divided by the Church of Rome (p.25). Jesse is animated by desire for Margaret, the barmaid at Long Tun Matravers, but she rejects him and he must

"leave the grown-up world where people married and loved and mated and mattered to each other, go back for all time to his child's universe of oil and steel" (p.48). In this way, the archaic technology of the steamcars becomes identified with regression and sterility. Jesse's frustrated desire for Margaret is transferred to her namesake, the steam locomotive that gives this story its name—a machine which, early in the story, is described as "a speck of light and warmth, forg[ing] through the waste like some vessel crossing a vast and inimical ocean" (p.25). The road train is the means Jesse uses to destroy the treacherous *routiers,* the highwaymen who tacitly collaborate with the Church to keep Britain a land divided by fear. Thwarted of its original object, Jesse's desire is reborn in a new form—as it will be reborn again as the Margaret Strange of "Lords and Ladies"—leading to a small victory for self-sovereignty in the face of a Church deeply opposed to any form of sovereignty but its own.

Rafe Bigland in "The Signaller" dies young, but before he does so succeeds in slightly enlarging Jesse's victory. The son of a clerk, he can hardly hope to aspire to the prestigious Guild of Signallers, whose relative freedom is guaranteed by the wealth and power generated by the Guild's complex and secretive function as transmitters of information. The Guild alone has the potential to transcend the divisionalism fostered by the Church to secure its authority. Rafe's extraordinary qualities of strength of will and self-discipline prevail, however, and he is inducted into the Guild. His subsequently being mortally wounded by a wildcat is on the face of it a tragic waste of youthful promise. But before Rafe dies, he is vouchsafed a vision of the consoling timelessness beyond time granted by a long perspective on history. The Fairy reveals to him the "beautiful blasphemy" (p.94) that names both Christ and Balder the Fair as equivalent avatars of the God Who Died on the Tree to Save Mankind, He who will come like the springtime to a world presently in winter (p.95). The Fairies who spin the "huge legend" (p.96) for Rafe are the true indigenes of the land and act as tutelary spirits over it. In their relationship to the Roman Church of *Pavane* they are analogues of the ancient Britons who withdrew from the conquering and alien Romans to the wild extremities of Britain. The Fairies' maintenance of the old rites naturally threatens the exclusiveness of Church doctrine, and hence the power of the institution itself. Thus the Fairies are the allies of those who dissent from the oppressive dominant ideology of the Church and seek the liberation of Britain from the foreign yoke.

In "Brother John", Rafe Bigland's subversive vision becomes partially realised, a mere seventeen years after the death of Eli Strange that initiates the cycle.[36] John is an artist-monk whose involuntary collaboration with the Inquisition leads to his rebellion against the Church he serves. He comes to lead the nationalist forces (p.123) that we recognize as an analogue of those which precipitated the English Reformation. However, in *Pavane* a mystical and essentially pagan relationship with the land itself, rather than a desire to reinterpret scripture, is the dynamic of revolution. The Pope is "burned in effigy at Woodhenge and Badbury Rings", (p.123) an act which symbolizes the pre-eminence of the ancient rites over imported dogma. The Archbishop of Londinium,[37] as he peruses the document forbidding association with the heretic John,

> seemed to see the whole vast fabric of the Church stretched like a glittering blanket, a counterpane of cloth of gold, across the body of a giant. At times like this the giant moved and grumbled, turned in a restless sleep. Soon, he would wake. (p.125).

The metaphor of the Giant as symbol of the autochthonous folk of Britain will become

central to Roberts's later story-cycle, *The Chalk Giants;* in *Pavane,* the dynamic immanence of the land and the sources and extent of its power is merely hinted at. Meanwhile, folktales begin to associate Brother John with the Fairies, "the People of the Heath" (p.129). John has become literally a heathdweller; but his sufferings as a result of his alienation are compensated for by his coming into knowledge of the wisdom of the Fairies. He learns of time's endlessly recurring cycle punctuated by apocalypse, and of what the Christian myth shares with its precursors—similarities the Church conceals to preserve the exclusivity of its power. (p.136-137) Like Rafe, John is obliterated, but the achievement of the vision is more important than the life of the individual who is granted it; the "lone spark in the hostile wilderness" of "The Lady Margaret" has become a blazing dawn to awaken the sleeping Giant of the land.

"Lords and Ladies" returns us to the Strange family, though it ought now to be clear that all the central figures in the *Pavane* cycle are honorary members of the clan. Margaret Strange is the daughter of the Margaret whom Jesse Strange once loved, by her first, now dead husband. She was later adopted by her mother's second husband, Tim Strange, Jesse's brother. She is therefore not a Strange by blood; but she is worthy of the name, for she derives enough knowledge and power from the rebellious spirit that possesses her to continue the work of reanimating the Giant. She reaches a state of defiant scepticism about Church doctrine on her own account. Then, after her seduction and abandonment (because of her inferior social status) by Robert, Lord of Purbeck, she is vouchsafed at her adoptive uncle Jesse's deathbed a Fairy-induced vision similar to Rafe Bigland's, in which she learns her role in the cycle of the ages:

> The flower grows, the flesh corrupts, the sun circles the sky; Balder dies and the Christos, the warriors fight outside their hall Valhalla and fall and bleed and are reborn. All are within the Will, all are ordained. We are within it; our mouths close and open, our bodies move, our voices speak and we are not their masters. The Will is endless; we are its tools. (p.178)

The story ends with Margaret's prevision of Robert coming to claim her, helpless to resist the great Will that wants the artificial hierarchies and social divisions fostered by the Church broken down. Margaret is as much an incarnation of this implacable Will as she is an individual: she is filled with the energy that Jesse Strange drew on to destroy the *routiers,* Rafe to transcend the social limitations imposed by his birth, and John to challenge the monolithic oppressiveness of the Church.

Roberts has noted that Becky in "The White Boat" is "actually the first appearance [in his work] of the character Michael Coney later christened 'multigirl' "[38] His implication is that she is less of a rounded character, more of an archetype, than the other characters in *Pavane.* But we have already seen that the estranged characters of the earlier stories—Jesse, Rafe, John, Margaret—have a powerful "family" resemblance; that human beings and inanimate objects—Margaret of Long Tun Matravers and her locomotive namesake—can have similar functions; and that the deeper reality is not individual freedom but what Hardy called Immanent Will.[39] In fact, Becky of "The White Boat" is by no means out of place in this company. This story was written "some five months" after the others, though Roberts has tended to exaggerate this temporal gap.[40] I suspect that the difference he finds between Becky and the other central figures in *Pavane* is the result of his having become aware, in the intervening time, that a partially deindividualized female character—the "multigirl"—was better able to bear the symbolic freight of his new concern than more deliberately individualized male characters. This, however, is speculation;

it is more appropriate here to consider more general reasons for the origins of the multi-girl. The following are some which come to mind. Women, being more disempowered by the oppressive feudal patriarchy than men, are more likely to offer a truly countervailing principle. Women, as bringers forth of new life, are more symbolically connected to the earth, and hence to its literal manifestation in the land—in which all vital social and political movements must remain rooted. Women more clearly manifest through their biology the idea of humanity as vessels of a great Will that operates in natural cycles of death and rebirth. Finally, in the relationship between the male author/narrator and female central character there is a sublimation of the intersexual desire that shows the great Will most clearly in operation—a theme explored more profoundly in *The Chalk Giants*.

"The White Boat" may therefore represent a new awareness by Roberts of the direction his work was to take, but the story is still profoundly at home in the *Pavane* cycle. It is set in a coastal village near where Brother John made his doomed embarkation for Rome, an incident that has already been mythologized by the denizens of the coast. The heretical spirit of John has touched Becky, for it has become part of the numinosity of the place to which she alone, as possessor of an independent mind, is fully sensitive: "Full of the signs and ghosts of other life, the ammonites she collected as a child, till Father Antony had scolded and warned, told her once and for all time if God created the rocks in seven days then He created those markings too" (p.186). The mysterious White Boat becomes for Becky a symbol of freedom and transcendence, a spirit opposed to the blackened land[41] that seems to cast a dark pall over all its inhabitants (p.189). Once aboard the Boat, however, she finds herself an alien encumbrance to the "tightly male and ordered world" (p.196) of the smugglers, and her dreams of escape seem rudely dispelled, for the Boat seems no more than a microcosm of the shore world. Yet before she is put back ashore she steals a sample of contraband, a small piece of electronic equipment —perhaps the Fairy's radio transmitter—that she recognizes as "the tiny heart of the Boat" (p.204). She saves the Boat from ambush because she knows intuitively that the smugglers' business is hastening the demise of her cramped world. The illicit technology will ultimately undermine the authority of the Church; her action is one with Brother John's rebellion, and her sacrifice points towards the eventual prevailing of those forces opposed to the Church.[42]

"Corfe Gate", the story from which the *Pavane* cycle originated, is nevertheless the appropriate climax of the cycle, because the story marks the movement of the rebellion against the Church from the level of the individual to that of the people as a whole. The Revolt of the Castles is abortive, but it is merely the first of a series of popular uprisings that will finally break Rome's stifling grip on the West (p.280). Roberts has revealed that his *donné* for the story was a barmaid's claim to be the reincarnation of Lady Mary Bankes, the defender of Corfe Castle during the siege of 1643.[43] "I realized that by using an alternate history device," he continues, "I could make the siege happen in the twentieth century."[44] He also wanted to capture "the sheer contrast between that great growing ruin and the modern tourists, the beer, ice-cream and all the rest".[45] That is, the "alternate history device" seemed useful, when the author was embarking on the *Pavane* cycle, to express his sense of the persistence into the present of "the fear and terror the place had inspired".[46] But his historical imagination was fired not only by the castle, but also by "the present day feel of Dorset and its inhabitants".[47] There was something atavistic and

indifferent to the twentieth century about the place; yet while it had a timeless quality, it was also deeply scarred by time. We can appreciate, I think, that this paradox can better be explored, not by the device of alternate history—typically concerned with either righting historical "wrongs" (If the South had won the Civil War!) or offering dreadful warnings (It could happen here!)[48]—but by the adoption of the long perspective of the cyclical view of history.

Eleanor in "Corfe Gate" has the necessary qualities to initiate a rebellion against Rome. She is "beloved of the Fairies who according to popular report assisted at her very conception" (p.223). Her deep connection with the guardian spirits of the land is manifested in her closeness to her Fairy seneschal, John Falconer. As a child, she exhibited in her sympathy with her peasants and her adoption of their archaic speech a potentially subversive lack of class-consciousness as well as a solidarity with the indigenes of the land (p.225). Like Becky, but more positively, she feels "an odd sympathy with the fabric of the land itself", noting once that "she was made right through of stone, dark and stern as the Kimmeridge cliffs and as indomitable" (p.225). She is also attuned to the liberating influence of technology: at sixteen she is caught with her father's bailiff, not sexually misbehaving, but learning to drive—conscious perhaps that the barriers the Church places between women and machines show how jealous the patriarchy of the Church is of its power (see p.225).

In fantastic literature that cleaves closely to generic norms, fairies and machines are as incompatible as the Virgin and the Dynamo of Henry Adams. In *Pavane*, however, the Revolt of the Castles is aided by the Fairy seneschal, Sir John as he works the illicit and heretical electrical telegraph (p.258).[49] So the ancient and modern, the supernatural and the products of human ingenuity, conspire to rouse the sleeping British Giant. But before there can be resurrection there must be sacrifice: both Corfe and its mistress fall before the land can be unchained. Just before the final catastrophe the seneschal contemplates Corfe at sunrise:

> At this dawn hour it seemed as always that Time might pause, turning and flowing in on itself before speeding again, urging in the new day. The castle, like a great dim crown of stone, seemed to ride not a hill but a flaw in the timestream, a node of quiet from which possibilities might spread out as limitless as the journeyings of the sun. (p.257)

On the face of it, this "flaw in the timestream" might seem to be that phenomenon capable of generating alternate worlds (see n.36), whereby a single fate can apparently be avoided. But in the context of the cyclical vision of history that informs *Pavane*, the phrase comes instead to signify that the very concept of a linear timestream is itself flawed, and so apparently unique and terminal events—such as the deaths of Rafe Bigland, Brother John and Eleanor Purbeck—become in the longer perspective part of an endless and consoling pattern of death and rebirth.

But what of the flaws in the design of *Pavane* itself? They are the result, we may surmise, of the author's partial yielding to the pressures to conform to conventional genre. The *Pavane* cycle springs from a single source, Corfe Castle,[50] a vast and numinous ruin that speaks to the author's historical imagination of an immanent and timeless will. Yet the author is a science fiction writer: his first novel, *The Furies* (a deliberate homage to John Wyndham) has marked him thus; moreover, he is happiest producing fictions of novella-length, and novellas sit awkwardly in the literary mainstream in Britain.[51] Perhaps at first the science-fictional device of alternate history seemed appropriate to

Roberts as a way of rendering the bloody history of Corfe Castle more literally "present" than a historical novel could.[52] But the completion of the novella "Corfe Castle" had not exhausted his impulse to explore, for example, what forces might have been responsible for reducing the Castle to its present-day ruined state, and yet paradoxically make the Castle seem so much of a "presence" still. These explorations led quickly to the idea of cyclical history; the "Coda", produced right after "Corfe Castle", expresses this idea.[53] But the "Coda" and, more particularly, the "Prologue", also imply that the cycle has at the same time the quite incompatible structure of alternate history; this inevitably leads to the kind of allohistorical criticism that, quite understandably, wants to know how nylon stockings can be produced without an advanced petrochemical industry.[54] In short, the "Prologue" and "Coda" do far more damage to the aesthetic unity of *Pavane* than, say, the presence (or absence) of "The White Boat".

With due respect to the author, then, loyalty is not the unifying subject or theme of *Pavane*. Instead, the cycle is an affirmation of the ability of the individual to refuse to yield to a rigid and oppressive state, and of the connection between self-sovereignty and that of the nation. The *Pavane* cycle traces chronologically a series of rebellions on the level of the individual that may seem doomed to futility, but which viewed in the long perspective of cyclical history take on a new and weightier significance. This long perspective is not that offered by the linear temporality of the Judeo-Christian tradition, in which the earthly vale of tears is merely an antechamber to heaven, and mortality is consoled by promises of eternity. Instead, it is that provided by the more ancient and now suppressed shape of time as a cycle, a great wheel rolling forever onward, on which a God of many names is forever being broken, slain and reborn. Such a vision of time is far more in tune with the natural movements of the cosmos, and consoles in that it brings what is eternal in human existence both literally and figuratively down to earth. The flawed "Prologue" and "Coda" of *Pavane* make the movement of the work seem to describe an ascending parabola towards Enlightenment; instead, its essential shape is that of a truncated arc of a circle which, extended through the temporal axis, becomes a spiral. There is no longer any "progress"; but at the same time, no human action comes ever to seem entirely in vain.

Notes

1. For example: In *The Grain Kings,* "The Trustie Tree" and "The Lake of Tuonela" have a common setting, while "The White Boat" is (as we shall see) a *Pavane* story; the same character, Alec Boulter, appears in both "Boulter's Canaries" in *Machines and Men* and "The Big Fans" in *Ladies from Hell;* in *The Lordly Ones,* the title story and "The Comfort Station" have a common setting, while "The Checkout" is an *Anita* story.
2. " . I don't classify myself as an SF writer at all": Keith Roberts, "The Chalk Giant: Reflections by Keith Roberts", *Vector,* 132 (June/July, 1986), p.6 [hereafter, "Reflections"]; see also "Keith Roberts," in Charles Platt, ed., *Dream Makers: The Uncommon Men and Women Who Write Science Fiction* (New York: Berkley, 1983), p.87.
3. The chief being: "In the sixties, sf offered at least a relative freedom; so in a way the choice was made for me": "Of Men and Machines: Keith Roberts interviewed by Paul Kincaid", *Vector,* 108 (1982), p.7.
4. See especially Paul Kincaid, "The Touch of Phantom Hands: The Science Fiction of Keith Roberts", in Paul Kincaid and Geoff Rippington, eds., *British Science Fiction Writers: Volume Two: Keith Roberts* (Kent, U.K.: British Science Fiction Association, 1983), pp.7-41.
5. Peter J. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell UP, 1987), p.141.
6. Rabinowitz, p.146.
7. See David I. Masson, "A Bloody Muddle" [review of *The Chalk Giants* by Keith Roberts], *Foundation,* 7/8 (March, 1975), pp.60-65.

8. "Why is the writerly our value? Because the goal of literary work . . is to make the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text": Roland Barthes, *S/Z* [translated by Richard Miller] (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), p.4 and ff.
9. Hence Paul Kincaid's metaphor of the mosaic for Roberts' work: see "A Mosaic of Words" [Paul Kincaid interviews Keith Roberts], *Vector,* 132 (June/July, 1986), p.5 [hereafter "Mosaic"].
10. Bernie Peek, "Exercises in Landscape: An Overview of the Works of Keith Roberts", *Vector,* 132 (June/July, 1986), p.13, notes the strong connections binding these three works.
11. "*Kiteworld* is a deliberate looking back to *Pavane*": "Mosaic", p.5.
12. "Of Men and Machines", p.10; "Reflections", p.7.
13. Keith Roberts, [entry in] R. Reginald, ed., *Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature,* II (Detroit: Gale, 1979), p.1051 [hereafter "Reginald"].
14. "Of Men and Machines", p.11.
15. Reginald, 1050-51; note that Roberts reveals here that he added the "Coda" to "Corfe Gate" before writing the rest of the cycle.
16. The differences in the American edition of *The Chalk Giants* reveal something of the pressure the author was under to produce material conforming to generic norms: see "Mosaic", p.5.
17. See "Mosaic", p.5.
18. "Mosaic", p.4.
19. See "Mosaic", p.4.
20. For the relation between the cyclic and linear visions of time, see W Warren Wagar, *Terminal Visions: The Literature of Last Things* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1982), pp.33ff.
21. "Reflections", p.7.
22. Keith Roberts, *Pavane* (New York: Ace, 1966, 1968), p.281. All subsequent references to this edition will appear parenthetically in the text. I use this edition in preference to the British one for reasons that will become clear in my discussion of "The White Boat".
23. Keith Roberts, "The *Lady Margaret*", in Charles G. Waugh and Martin H. Greenberg, eds., *Alternative Histories: Eleven Stories of the World As It Might Have Been* (New York and London: Garland, 1986), pp.131-64.
24. L.J. Hurst, "A Timeless Dance: Keith Roberts' *Pavane* Re-examined", *Vector,* 124/125 (April/May, 1985), p.18; this reexamination was prompted by the publication of *Pavane* "in full for the first time in Britain" (i.e. including "The White Boat"). Hurst is strongly rebutted in the next issue of *Vector* by Stephen Tew: see Paul Kincaid, "Second Glance", *Vector,* 126 (June/July, 1985), p.11.
25. R. Reginald, "*Pavane*", in Frank N. Magill, ed., *Survey of Science Fiction Literature,* Vol. IV (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Salem Press, 1979) p.1660.
26. Gordon B. Chamberlain, "*Afterword:* Allohistory in Science Fiction", in *Alternative Histories,* p.290.
27. Chamberlain, p.292.
28. Chamberlain, p.290.
29. Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (1931), quoted in Chamberlain, p.291.
30. Roberts admits that "there is a certain nostalgia to do with old machinery": "Mosaic", p.5.
31. "Of Men and Machines", pp.10-11.
32. "Reflections", p.7.
33. Reginald, p.1051.
34. Reginald, p.1051.
35. See Wagar, p.35, on the consolations of the cyclic vision of history.
36. Eli Strange dies in 1968 (p.11); the Archbishop of Londinium dates his warrant for John's capture 21 June, 1985 (p.126). These dates strengthen Stephen Tew's argument that *Pavane* is an alternate history; I think we may view them as relics of Roberts's later abandoned intention.
37. The retention of the Romanized forms of British place-names in *Pavane* represents the superimposition of an alien power on the indigenous folk, rather than any nostalgia for the past.
38. "Of Men and Machines", p.10.
39. The beginning of *The Dynasts* offers interesting parallels between Hardy's and Roberts's visions of this Will:

    It works unconsciously, as heretofore,
    Eternal artistries in Circumstance,
    Whose patterns, wrought by rapt aesthetic rote,
    Seem in themselves Its single listless aim,
    And not their consequence.

    (Thomas Hardy, *The Dynasts* (London: Macmillan, 1965), p.1. With some justification,

Douglas Barbour has called Roberts "the Thomas Hardy of Science Fiction": see Curtis C. Smith, ed., *Twentieth Century Science Fiction Writers,* 2nd ed. (Chicago and London: St James Press, 1986), p.606.

40. Kincaid, p.19, gives five months; Roberts stretches this to "some six or eight months" ("Reflections", p.6) and to "nearly a twelvemonth" (Reginald, p.1051).
41. Kincaid, pp.19-20, deals well with the significance of the black/white contrast in the story.
42. If Becky's heroic self-sacrifice is a dream, as suggested by passages on pp.191 and 208, then it is a dream with the force of reality, for White Boat does escape in the end.
43. See Reginald, p.1050; "Reflections", p.7.
44. Reginald, p.1050.
45. "Reflections", p.7.
46. Reginald, p.1050.
47. Reginald, p.1050.
48. See Chamberlain, p.288, on the "main lines of allohistory"
49. Judith Hanna has offered the best interpretation of the metaphorical function of the Fairies in *Pavane*: see "Second Glance", p.11.
50. See *Dream Makers,* p.88.
51. See "Mosaic", p.4.
52. Roberts has stated plainly that "In the broader sense of the term *Pavane* is actually cyclic rather than alternate, although the point isn't laboured" ("Of Machines and Men", p.10). He goes on to suggest (though the transcript of the interview is ambiguous and could be interpreted differently) that "sf, in particular the English 'disaster' school" was responsible for the allohistorical elements in *Pavane.*
53. See n. 15 above.
54. See "Reflections", p.7

Norman Beswick is using his retirement from his post as Librarian of the Institute of Education in the University of London very profitably as far as Foundation *is concerned. In no. 42 he offered us some Footnotes on Religion and sf; here he thinks about the relationship between Orson Scott Card's fiction and the religion in which Card grew up. Card, one of the runaway successes of sf in the 1980s, has yet received very little serious critical attention, and Mr Beswick has undoubtedly picked one of the most interesting angles at which to begin.*

An earlier draft of this article was sent to Orson Scott Card. His comments arrived in time for some of them to be included in the Notes at the end.

Amblick and After: Aspects of Orson Scott Card

NORMAN BESWICK

Are you interested in marvellous technology? Here is the father of Nephi, in the Middle East, several centuries before Christ, opening his tent door for a dawn discovery:

> 10. And it came to pass that . to his great astonishment he beheld upon the ground a round ball of curious workmanship; and it was of fine brass. And within the ball were two spindles; and the one pointed the way whither we should go into the wilderness.[1]

A compass? Perhaps, but a very remarkable one. Not only did it lead them into "the more fertile parts of the wilderness", but:

> 28. . it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld the pointers which were in the ball, that they did work according to the faith and diligence and heed which we did give unto them. 29. And there was also written upon them a new writing, which was plain to be read, which did give us understanding concerning the ways of the Lord; and it was written and changed from time to time, according to the diligence which we gave unto it.[2]

This remarkably sensitive and prescriptive gadget, later named the Liahona, and certainly likely to arouse a sense of wonder, is described in *The Book of Mormon,* the sacred text of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, established in the USA by Joseph Smith in 1830. The book traces the history of the Nephite people, who several centuries before Christ are already faithful believers in His message. Persecuted, they cross the ocean to North America, are visited there by Christ after the Crucifixion, and after much backsliding are eventually destroyed save for one Moroni, who completes the book. Its gold plates were miraculously revealed to (and translated by) Joseph Smith a thousand years later, in 1827.

Apart from the Liahona, there are few other technological marvels in *The Book of Mormon,* but we may note a fleet of barges which the brother of Jared constructs to cross the ocean:

> 17. built after a manner that they were exceeding tight, even that they would hold water like unto a dish; and the bottom thereof was tight like unto a dish; and the sides thereof were tight like unto a dish; and the ends thereof were peaked; and the top thereof was tight like unto a dish.[3]

These sealed vessels are eventually lit by the glow of sacred stones:

> 10. . . and no monster of the sea could break them, neither whale that could mar them; and they did have light continually, whether it was above water or under the water. 11. And thus they were driven forth, three hundred and forty and four days upon the water. 12. And they did land upon the shore of the promised land.[4].

The Book of Mormon is a religious text, largely consisting of exhortations, backslidings, retribution and repentance. There is a faintly "modern" feel about its knowledge (e.g. that the sun goes round the earth and not vice versa),[5] and some of its preoccupations (such as religious freedom); and its practice of preserving sacred writings on metal plates is unexpected in a pastoral society. Nonetheless it would not in itself warrant exposition in a critical journal of science fiction: except for Orson Scott Card.

2.

Card won the 1978 John W. Campbell Jr. Award as best new sf writer. He took both the Nebula and the Hugo in 1985 for *Ender's Game,* and again in 1986 for *Speaker for the Dead;* and his work has several times before and since been nominated for prestigious awards. His stories, whatever one thinks of them, discuss important themes: among them, militarism, genocide, privilege, art, death, transexuality, love, rape and revenge. He has written several highly praised fantasies, and is at present issuing a magical story of an alternative early America, now at its second volume. With some fifteen volumes published in ten years, and others promised, he is by any count one of the most successful new sf authors of the 'eighties. Opinion in *Foundation*[6] has been mixed (he rather emphasises mutilation, and his biology is unconvincing) but has included praise, and *New Scientist*[7] has commended him for what it calls his pacifist message; meanwhile he produces in quantity, and he sells.

What was his background? An early blurb places him in Utah, where he "interrupted his career for a two-year unpaid mission for the LDS Church in Brazil". Even though later blurbs remove him to North Carolina with his wife and three children (people he often praises or apologises to in forewords), for formative influences it is reasonable to focus on (among others) an institution that received two years of his unpaid time; and the LDS Church is of course the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, otherwise known as Mormons.

"Mormonism"[8] conjures up images of a separate people, followers of a new revelation, trudging with their wagons across America to establish the new Zion in Salt Lake City, and wrestling with the strange new doctrines of Joseph Smith. It is a picture one does not immediately associate with the writing of sf,[9] or with those ardent, scrubbed-clean, suited young men smiling in pairs at us if we open our front doors to their missionary zeal. But religions settle down. To be a Mormon in Utah, surrounded by many thousands of fellow-Mormons, is also to be an American, exposed to and sharing the opportunities and temptations of modern American life.

Some young people, raised in the Mormon tradition and going on to higher education, go through severe crises of faith and find it hard to accommodate their new learning to their simpler past.[10] We shall see that Card, too, has had plenty of occasion to re-examine earlier certainties.[11] But for most Mormons their religion presents itself to them in day to day terms as a doctrine of hard work, clean living, family life and community endeavour, combined with assurances of American specialness and of family togetherness hereafter. But no-one of Mormon background can entirely ignore the turbulent short history of the faith, its unique and controversial revelation, its distinct doctrine, and its personal meaning in transforming the lives of thousands of otherwise very ordinary people.

3.

Card's own account of his background, and the relevance of early Mormon involvement to his later creative activity, would be fascinating. He has recently begun to include snippets of personal biography in essays and afterwords. Meanwhile he has, in his historical novel *Saints*[12] (original title: *A Woman of Destiny*) done homage with a colourful picture of Mormonism in the mid-nineteenth century. The characters in *Saints* are intended to be flesh and blood, not cutouts acting out a pious doctrine or a science fiction idea. Card sets them in the context of their times; this includes the heartless industrialism and poverty from which many British converts and emigrants came, as well as Nauvoo in the USA where they once hoped to build their temple. In particular he shows them working through the emotional shock of the ultimately discarded "Principle", polygamy, which gave the LDS Church an early and searing identity. The novel is competent, sympathetic and often quite moving: a story Card found it personally important to tell. We will return to it later on.

In *Saints,* Charlie Kirkham reads *The Book of Mormon* and finds himself compelled to respond:

> Yes, Charlie thought as he read it. Yes, that's the truth. That's the way the world is, or ought to be, by heaven.[13]

Not every reader will agree; and the literalness of Joseph Smith's interpretations (of the Bible, of the Book of Mormon, and of his own visions) can be very startling:

> If the veil were rent today and you were to see the great God who holds this world in its orbit and upholds all things by his power, you would see him in the image and very form of a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion and image of God. He received instruction from and walked, talked and conversed with him as one man talks and communes with another.[14]

God did not create the stuff of the universe, ex nihilo, he only rearranged it. He did not even create man:

> If I am right, I might with boldness proclaim from the housetops that God never did have power to create the spirit of man at all. God himself could not create himself God found himself in the midst of spirits and glory, and because he was greater, he saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have the privilege of advancing like himself [15]

Apostle J.A. Widtsoe declares:

> We may be certain that, through self effort, the inherent and innate powers of God have been developed to a God-like degree. Thus he has *become* God.[16] (my italics)

According to Thomas O'Dea, Mormons have believed that:

> Man came to earth by free choice in order to develop his knowledge further through experience with 'gross matter' Mormonism speaks of a great council in Heaven at which God proposed to man that he take mortality upon himself in order to advance in power and knowledge.[17]

None of this detail is to be found in *Saints,* but would have been known to Card, from his own research and perhaps also from his earlier, formative days.[18]

A century later, ideas superficially rather similar formed the basis for several less scrupulous cults and sects, the "science-fiction" religions with which readers of this journal will be familiar. In contrast to them, Mormonism remains a "religion of the book", venerating and reading the Bible as well as its own sacred text, and generating through its infrastructure of meetings and groups and church activities a cohesive community. A common Mormon claim is that their religion works in practice, and that the social ills of our time are less prevalent (though they exist) in Mormon communities. For this reason, and because the experience of Mormon upbringing is profound, even those who later reject the faith remain emotionally tied to its values and attitudes.[19]

4.

This journal is not a forum for religious comparison and criticism. So what about the sf of Orson Scott Card? He has himself commented on his own recurring motifs and themes:

> pain to the point of cruelty, ugliness to the point of grotesquerie . love of death, an unpayably high price for joy, an unrealistic belief in poetic justice.[20]

At his worst, the cruelty is the other side of a slack sentimentality, but Card has increasingly learnt discipline without loss of intensity. He shares with (for instance) Clifford Simak a clear preference for rural simplicity; the city is generally a symbol of evil, together with "advanced" technological civilisations and the perversions that are shown to go with them. Card's response to galactic empires is to have them break apart. In contrast, small rural communities are good, associated with art, nature, self-reliance, love and children: and of course, religion. Value derives from people in families, in small groups, facing responsibilities and challenges, and from time to time producing exceptional individuals. Card's major sf characters have a special talent, are capable of self-denial and high courage, and either accept or choose to create a special destiny, usually achieved through discipline and suffering.

Themes which in some other writers would have been largely political become in Card examples of spiritual sickness and health. There is a cast of mind in them which ties in neatly with a Mormon beginning, as later examples will hope to show. Taken as a whole, his books read like a series of personal quests and explorations, and perhaps because of this he not only likes to rework, expand and sometimes completely rewrite previous stories but feels a compelling need to do so.

Card's first sf published story was "Ender's Game" (*Analog* August 1977), a startling debut that (according to Ben Bova[21]) aroused considerable reader response. Ender and other promising children are conscripted for intensive military training in inter-species war, because they are more ruthless and insensitive than adults can ever be. He becomes an appallingly efficient child general who (believing he is still being tested in a game simulation) does the unthinkable by destroying, not just the enemy's ships, but the entire enemy species. When he learns it was not a game but reality, and that he is a genocidal world hero, he is angry but too exhausted to do other than roll over and sleep.

To a casual reader, the story is an example of the "War is tough" school, more sensitive than some, and focussing on the exploitation of children. Its emotional punch would have wholly satisfied most young sf authors, but Card, when he came to expand it into a novel, was prompted to re-think it. As a result the full-length version (published 1985)[22] attempts much more than a regret for innocence betrayed. Ender gains noncombatant siblings. His relationships with them, with other juvenile trainees and with the military top brass, are carefully developed and Ender's own personality growth receives fuller attention. The shape and pace of the story diverts our attention from questions Card does not wish us to ask towards those he does: for instance, what about the enemy (now disconcertingly referred to throughout as "Buggers")?

We find that humanity with its multiple individuality has been fighting a hive mind; only the "queen" is an individual, the others are simply her expendable biological extensions. Too late she understands (apparently to her distress) that in killing humans her extensions are killing "living, sentient beings with an independent genetic future".[23]

At the novel's close, Ender publishes anonymously the truth about the defeated enemy, and becomes Speaker for the Dead, ritually telling the human truth of individuals' life stories. We are left to work out the implied comments on war and the military, modern civilisation and political systems, and despite the vivid description of the disciplining of children (which the unthinking reader may feel he is led to relish) they are not simplistic.

One can quibble at some of the detail of *Ender's Game* (it is not at all clear, for instance, how a hive-mind queen could develop the kind of insight and sympathy credited to her),[24] but the novel at least aims at sensitivity and humanity in its treatment of a topical and important sf theme. (Readers will be able to supply their own, infamous contrasts.) It is rare to see a highly praised original being expanded in quite this way. So what else was he writing, in the five years between the publication of the two versions of the Ender story?

5.

It was a busy time; he edited two collections and published seven sf books of his own, and importantly he researched and wrote *Saints (A Woman of Destiny)* discussed above and later. Three books are routine and need not detain us here: the story collection, *Unaccompanied Sonata* (1981) and two novels, the appalling *A Planet Called Treason* (1979) (where curious biology and power fantasies are unrestrained and unexamined) and

Hart's Hope (1983).[25]

Songmaster [26] (short story 1978, novelisation 1980) gives us another kind of child prodigy. Ansset is trained from the age of three within the ferocious discipline of the Songhouse to become the most marvellous of their creations, a Songbird, a uniquely creative and expressive singer. Assigned to the emperor of the galaxy, he emerges unscathed even when that emperor is slain by his successor. Ansset becomes manager of Earth while still in his early teens, and eventually figurehead galactic emperor himself, before returning to the Songhouse to sing his last, cracked song and die.

Whereas Ender was trained for war and genocide, Ansset is trained for creative artistry, and generally brings peace or at least temporary stillness: though he also uses combat skills with typical Card messiness and his singing causes an enemy to rip out his own guts with his bare hands. (Orpheus was never so violent.) This is a power fantasy of the successful artist, but Ansset has a personal price to pay: a drug secretly administered during training by the Songhouse inhibits sexual development, and at eventual first orgasm he suffers agony and permanent impotence. His lover, unexpectedly, is the bisexual Josif, and their coitus is sympathetically portrayed as an expression of love. That it should lead Ansset to immediate torment gives the reader a typical Card jolt, but neither the act nor the emotion is disowned or disapproved. Card distances himself here from what narrow religious dogma would have dictated, though we should notice him covering his defence by implicitly disapproving of casual, unloving sex of either dispensation.

6.

The three Worthing books,[27] however, published between 1979 and 1983, show Card not only worrying away at an original notion, expanding and re-working it, but in the process expressing and re-examining something very important to the Mormon experience. The titles in question are *Capitol, Hot Sleep,* and *The Worthing Chronicle,* and there is much overlapping and reworking of content as the loosely-structured narrative proceeds—and, surely, improves in depth and perception.

Capitol consists of self-contained stories (some of them separately published in 1978 and 1979) arranged in a sequence we are enjoined to read in order. Their common factor is a new drug, somec, which makes possible long periods of suspended animation, but wipes out all memory; memories must therefore be recorded, and played back during re-awakening. The stories explore implications, at various points along a future history, from contemporary USA to the downfall of galactic empire.

Many of the emerging themes are what we might expect from an earlier Mormon background. Technology corrupts: in "Lifeloop" for instance an actress records seven-day sexual orgies for mass viewing. Somec users break the natural rhythms of life, community and self-effort, coming to depend on a lower deprived class who keep going the human history through which the sleepers skim. Moreover, Card insists on an overtly religious point of his own creation: Somec wipes out all memory, but not the basic truth of personality. Somec users reject transplanted memories from other people as they would also reject transplanted organs; a behaviourist psychologist is made to comment:

> "I don't believe in a soul. But I don't know how to explain this without resorting to something like that."[28]

A rather ludicrous Russian takeover[29] comes about because America has cravenly lost faith in itself, but in "A Thousand Deaths" a freedom-lover's "soul" survives continual

cloning and a succession of typically gruesome executions. The soul is a standard religious concept, but Card's insistently material basis for it chimes well with Mormon doctrine that "spirit" is only another form of matter. He makes no claim for the after-death survival of this "soul", very much as if he was trying to express the "basic truth" of religion without the more controversial (and less important?) doctrinal dressings.

The world of *Capitol* is aggressively secular, and no leading character makes any overt religious confession. This indeed becomes the theme of the important story "When No-one Remembers His Name, Does God Retire?" Amblick, Prophet of the Church of the Undying Voice, expires, and there is no-one in the dwindling sect to replace him. Garol Stipock sees his parents' faith slowly crumbling. He becomes a scientist, prospers, and explores forbidden pleasures; then, after some years of disillusion and political activity, realises that the Church was right about so much:

> It was just the matter of God that made the whole Church seem pointless.[30]

Eventually as his hopes collapse the Voice speaks mercilessly to him:

> "I can only point the way for men to be happy. Is it my fault that whenever they gain more light and knowledge, they use it to destroy themselves?"[31]

One can guess which Church, with its prophets and apostles through whom the voice of God was firmly believed to speak, Card had in mind when he devised this memorable story.

The pervading theme of knowledge as temptation is familiar, but an author emerging from the Mormon tradition in contemporary secular society carries with him the Church's quite recent memories of prophecy and pilgrimage. Older members will have heard first-hand testimony of the heady days of establishing community in Utah, of bringing their peculiar testimony to the wider process that was simultaneously transforming the United States and the whole context of belief. What has it led to? Nostalgia for the simplicity and certainty of the earlier days, common enough in America, is almost unavoidable for an educated member of the Church of Latterday Saints: though he will also remember the persecution that accompanied that simplicity.[32]

Such persecution is discussed vividly in "Burning", where a small rebel fleet of persecuted telepaths is denied vital supplies and forced into a confrontation. In a dying spasm of rage, instantly regretted, telepath captain Homer Worthing obliterates eight billion people. Wicked, yes, but what about the persecution that occasioned it? A character asks:

> why . . the murder of one person should be good policy, while the murder of eight billion should be an inhuman crime.[33]

The legal answer is implicit in the story; but Card is repelled and fascinated by the dilemmas of power as well as the dilemmas of freedom. As in *Ender's Game,* although the way the story is written incites the reader to relish the absolutist logic of the contestants, the final conclusion is disquieting.

7.

Themes in the stories are continued in the novel *Hot Sleep* published in the same year. It tells of Jason Worthing, highly talented son of Homer Worthing, and himself a secret telepath.

In danger of exposure, Jason is rescued by his secret patron on Capitol, Abner Doon.

Through Doon's behind-the-scenes manipulations, Jason becomes a glamorous space-pilot who, after the failure of a revolutionary putsch, transports a shipload of exiled rebels, in somec sleep, to the farthest reaches of space. En route, the memory records of all but one of his passengers are destroyed. Jason sets out to establish a new world with innocent and memory-less people who only know what he himself has taught them. The society he creates is very much the sharing community of responsible individuals, learning through harsh experience, that Mormon doctrine prescribes and its sacred text shows intermittently in operation. In the process, Jason finds himself regarded as God, who with his telepathic gift and unique situation he somewhat resembles.

Kapock the Warden, while tending sheep, muses on Jason as their father, an unusually overt biblical reference, and records that he asked Jason "Who made this world if you only found it?"

> Then J shook his head and laughed softly and said, God did, Kapock.
> But this is not an answer, because what is God? I asked him this, but he would say no more, except this: I have told you the truth, but you cannot understand it, neither can any of the others. I will tell you only the truth that you can understand.[34]

The one rebel to retain his previous memory is Garol Stipock, whom we met in the Church of the Undying Voice. Stipock, revived when the community is well established, is angrily shocked at Jason's apotheosis:

> "You could have told them it wasn't true."
> "And accomplished what? I'm their parents and their teachers and their ties with the past. They needed a foundation and I'm that foundation. Why else do you think people believe in God? They can't live without faith."[35]

Abner Doon (rather unbelievably) reappears and is delighted at Jason's achievement:

> " That's the best part of being God, you know—when you create someone who surpasses you."[36]

But Jason, before retiring for a long period under somec, weeps with self-pity:

> "Being God," he said, "is the worst damn job in the universe."[37]

The later pages of *Hot Sleep* are far from being a re-telling of *The Book of Mormon* on another planet, but there are certainly parallels. Both the Nephites and Jason's settlers receive guidance and occasional technological help from a superior being; their communities are from time to time torn by dissension, an analysis of which is central to the author's purpose; and their prosperity depends on how closely they follow the commands of their "God" Each group keeps careful record of its history. If (as seems clear) the patterns of *The Book of Mormon* helped establish the lines of thought that led to the Worthing trio, one wonders how conscious the influence would have been.[38] Can Orson Scott Card really be hinting that the God of faith might "only" have been a Jason Worthing?[39]The text itself suggests that he would give a Jason-like shrug and ask "Does it matter?" Card is not the only person to shift attention away from "Is this religion true?" to "What useful purpose does this religion serve?" It is one way of coping with the pressure to re-evaluate one's past: meanwhile we remember what Joseph Smith and John A. Widstoe said about God.

8.

The Worthing Chronicle, last of the three, gives the story another work-out.[40] Returning from long hibernation, Jason and his enigmatically silent daughter Justice arrive on a

once-protected world, where pain and suffering have been suddenly and mysteriously restored. The boy Lared is persuaded to write the story of Jason's life, memories of which are revealed to him through dreams. We thus rehearse again much of the content of the previous two books, in the context of a gentle, agricultural society which is asking "Why is there suffering?"—a question Lared asks continually throughout his experience. Jason's (and Card's) answer in the penultimate chapter, is passionate and simple: the enduring and overcoming of suffering is precisely where human value most resides.

Jason's children, developing psychic powers in excess of his own, have been routinely protecting entire planets from pain and the results of accident and evil. (Card presents the power to do this as if it were an evolutionary step, but does not feel a need to explain what pressures could drive towards and select out this remarkable mutation.) Lashed by Jason's fury, they recognise that:

> because they had left the rest of man no evils to overcome, they had robbed them of the hope of greatness, of the possibility of joy.[41]

Asimov's *The End of Eternity* (to choose one famous instance) carries a somewhat similar message, but only in terms of the political success of the species. Card's focus is on individual spiritual achievement, and the building of community. It is in essence religious. One of *The Worthing Chronicle's* most chilling images is of Abner Doon (to Lared the enemy of God) coolly abandoning the young Jason to fight for his life against the horrifying Estorian twick, "to see what I was worth" [42] Yet in the final chapter, in an uncharacteristic act of mercy, Justice restores all the protection from suffering that at Jason's instruction she had previously been removed: and Jason approves.

> "You're human after all," Jason said.[43]

An author is entitled to shrink back from the ultimate implications of his theme: a story is neither a creed nor a prescription.

9.

The obvious "dedicated hero" in the story told in *Saints* would have been Joseph Smith the prophet; but this would have involved the kind of overt judgement about his mission which Card clearly wished to avoid stating. Instead he tells of an English family, the Kirkhams, who became embroiled with and largely absorbed by the new Mormon faith at great personal cost, journeying to America and living through its most traumatic years. In particular he tells the story of Dinah Kirkham, a woman of great courage, independence and dedication, who plays a leading and unifying role, supporting (and polygamously marrying) both Joseph Smith and his successor Brigham Young. Where other characters question and upbraid God, Dinah suffers and endures and, in her way, overcomes. The rationalisations of dogma, it is suggested, are less compelling than the individual triumphs of people. Whatever the ultimate "truth" about Mormonism, it was urgently true for them and their responses are typical of the human story. It is this "truth", of ferocious integrity in a time and context of great challenge, that he tells in the novel.

Equally, it is this "truth for them" that Ender must tell in *Speaker for the Dead,*[44] (1986, and the sequel to *Ender's Game*) but the focus widens to encompass three contrasting species, each with its own typical "truth" Humans arriving on the planet Lusitania find an indigenous species, "the piggies", whom they segregate and protect from human contact, except for designated xenologist observers. When one of these

observers is apparently ritually tortured and murdered by piggies, Ender comes to "speak" and understand. He brings with him, in secret, a hibernating Bugger queen ready to implant her in a suitable world, which he hopes will be Lusitania. The "murder" turns out to have been a species error (piggies when so treated grow into their second existence as trees) and in the unfolding, Ender (whose sensitivity to other ways of life has been honed by telepathic discussions with the hibernating Bugger queen) is able to "speak" the truth of one of the "piggies" too.

Speaker for the Dead is a complex novel of high emotional intensity, notable for the colourful variety of its characters and in particular the harsh quasi-tragic dedication of the orphaned Novinha. Through Ender, Card gives us articulate humanity facing and atoning for its sin, and despite the puzzling biology the novel has some eloquence. Organised religion (in this case the Catholic Church) is critically treated, but there is genuine religious feeling in Card's handling of "speaking the truth of the dead" that perhaps represents a stage in his own personal pilgrimage.

10.

In *Wyrms,*[45] for the first time in a Card sf novel, the main character, Patience, is a young woman, living on the planet Imakulata. She is (of course) very highly trained, this time in diplomacy and combat. She finds out that not only is she the daughter of the rightful Heptarch, but that as the seventh seventh seventh daughter of the original colonising Starship Captain (343 generations) it is prophesied she will save the world from the dreaded Unwyrm and bring Kristos. The Unwyrm's overpowering desire (which he communicates across long distances to her) is to mate with Patience and produce a new species to destroy all others. She embarks on a journey to his lair, aided not only by humans but by geblings, dwelfs and gaunts, discussion with whom gives her important insight into Imakulata's inter-species problems. The Unwyrm and the child he fathers are eventually slain, and Patience uses her ultimate triumph to bring reconciliation throughout the planet.

Such a summary does little to convey the flavour and success of this remarkable novel, whose detailed analysis must be left to other occasions. The explicit use of "Kristos" as the symbol of the expected saviour is however noteworthy in the context of the present discussion. Religion and prophecy are seen as themes and recurrences in a larger human history, useful because they enable us to identify deeper truths; Will tells Patience:

> These fools think their Kristos will come to unite humans in perfect peace, without including the millions of geblings, gaunts, and dwelfs—it would not be good, because such a Kristos would be forcing the sacrifice of half the people of the world, to save herself. So if Kristos is to be Kristos, she is willing to sacrifice anything to maintain the order that gives life to all.[46]

The relevance of this to a readership in a racially-divided society is apparent, and we may recall that Mormons until very recently excluded blacks from the Church of the Latter-day Saints. We may also note the word "she" Patience rejects one strand of prophecy, that restricts her to a traditional woman's role of merely giving birth to Kristos; she becomes herself the saviour, takes decisions, and after triumphing over Unwyrm returns with an army she deliberately disbands before battle, claiming her title "by right of blood and prophecy" The opposing soldiers throw down their weapons and acclaim her: "Kristos! Kristos! Kristos!"

11.

Mormon attitudes to Red Indians, as the earlier inhabitants of North America (so perhaps descended from or related to the Nephites), have always been protectively cordial, and it is not surprising to find them sympathetically treated in Card's newest venture, the Alvin Maker series. Alvin, seventh son of a seventh son, lives in alternate frontier America where (for instance) George Washington had been beheaded, the British, the French and the rebel United States each hold separate territory, and ordinary simple people discreetly use small magic in everyday life. Alvin, as befits his birthright, develops extraordinary magical powers, which he gradually realises he must learn to use for proper purposes.

Seventh Son[47] shows his early years in Vigor Township in Wobbish Territory, south of the Great Lakes. He is in daily conflict with the puritanical Reverend Thrower, whose theology he finds absurd; Thrower, guided by a mysterious Visitor, seeks, and fails, to destroy him. Alvin has his own private visions: an early influence is the apparitional Shining Man, who cautions him against misuse of his talent, and he is haunted by glimpses of the Unmaker who destroys all things good. Vigor Township is visited by one Taleswapper, whose shrewdness and fund of news and stories bring context to their lives. Taleswapper helps Alvin to recognise when he can use his powers for his own healing, and then, the job done, goes off to arrange the next stage of the youngster's life.

Red Prophet [48] sees that stage postponed. We meet the white whisky-traders and politicians who are degrading the once-proud Redmen; we meet the Frenchmen La Fayette and Napoleon Bonaparte, who are scheming to use the Indians against the British; and we meet the Red leaders, Ta-Kumsaw the warrior and Tenskwa-Tawa, the Prophet (formerly Lolla-Wossiky, a whisky-drunkard and the original of Alvin's Shining Man). Alvin and his brother Measure, assisted by Taleswapper, become embroiled in the ensuing struggles, and Card gives an eloquently devastating critique of White-man attitudes (to nature, to fellow-humans, to Redskins) from the Red viewpoint. (Basically it is the hunter-gatherer's "working with" the environment contrasted with the agriculturalist's intrusive "re-working".) Within this clash of cultures, ten-year-old Alvin is forced into crisis after crisis, using his healing powers in rather startling ways to prevent disasters. But neither he nor the Red Prophet can save the Redskin army from betrayal and massacre.

The Tale of Alvin Maker (if this is indeed to be the name of the completed sequence) is still in progress and it is too early for a complete assessment. The full significance of its rearrangement of history, for instance, may only become apparent on completion. What is already clear is the ambitious scope of Card's project and the important successes so far achieved. The tale is in parts so savage that only Alvin's magic can redeem it (a brutal attack on his brother Measure fleetingly reminded this ancient reader of, for heaven's sake, the Delgonian's treatment of Kimball Kinnison in E.E. Smith's *Grey Lensman*) and Card will need all his skill in continuations of the story if he is to balance the elements within it. Most of us, after all, have to face life without either magic or manifest destiny.

12.

Meanwhile he has come some distance from the Nephites, the revelations of Joseph Smith and the doctrines of the nineteenth century Latter-day Saints: not, I suggest, by turning his back and walking away from Mormon teachings but by working out through the creative imagination whatever truth he finds latent within them. It may be helpful to distinguish between Card the man and Card the imaginative writer. As a man, he appears

content to stay within the Mormon community, to ally himself with Mormon values and indeed to declare wryly that:

> those of us who grew up in Mormon society and remain intensely involved are only nominally members of the American community.[49]

As an imaginative writer, he refuses to be constrained by any external authority. Michael Collings quotes a letter from Card, where he asserts (rather grandiloquently):

> I bow to no authority but the light I see by, which I will shine into every dark corner until someone shows me a brighter one.[50]

A cassette tape, *The Secular Humanist Revival Meeting: "Brother Orson" Preaching* (1987) [51] contains a ferocious attack on religious bigotry (especially of the Jimmy Swaggart variety) and a vigorous defence of free inquiry within America as a secular, humanist state; at the same time Card declares his Mormon allegiance and cautions fellow-Mormons against intolerance.

It is very evident that in fact Card is passionate about America and its destiny, and that his Mormon heritage is bound up with this intense feeling. A forthcoming collection of grouped stories, *The Folk of the Fringe,*[52] is set in a future America following a limited nuclear exchange and heavy bacteriological warfare. Mormons migrate back to Utah, where the Temple (built to stand until the Second Coming) is half-submerged by floodwater in what is now the Mormon Sea. The final story suggests that European-Americans may have defaulted on their part in the covenant whereby, in *The Book of Mormon,* America was the Promised Land, and that the future henceforward lies with the Indians, from whom a new Saviour is arising.

The Folk of the Fringe does not tell us what white America's sin actually was, nor what part the Mormons may have played in it: though in the central story, "Pageant Wagon", Mormon officialdom is moderately bigoted and corrupt, and the historical pageant includes a curious scene where a Soviet leader beats up an American president during a summit (so who was that then?). Neither happening seems commensurate with the scale of disaster suggested and indeed for this reader, Card is at his least convincing when his stories hint at contemporary American politics, raising question-marks about the balance therein between Card the man and Card the imaginative writer.

Orson Scott Card has developed prodigiously if unevenly and in his created worlds has frequently "become God" with great inventive skill. Equally, he can use that skill for calculated hammer-blow purposes that leave some readers feeling bruised and manipulated. The temptation to preach (to be "Brother Orson") is strong in him, and creatively he is better when he uses this undoubted talent to probe and explore. The Mormon background has been and will remain an important source, but one suspects that it is most effective in setting up creative tension. A sentence in one of his earlier stories expresses it well:

> It was there, in the middle of the cemetery, that the alien building stood—an obvious mimic of old Mormon temple architecture, meaning it was a monstrosity of conflicting periods that somehow, perhaps through intense sincerity, managed to be beautiful anyway.[53]

Notes

I should like to record my gratitude to Ian Watson for his helpful suggestions in the preparation of this article, and to Orson Scott Card for his informative comments on an earlier draft.

In listing Card's own publications, I give the first American publication, followed by a British edition if this is what I worked from myself. Other references are to volumes I actually used in preparing this article.

1. *The Book of Mormon: an account written by the hand of Mormon upon plates taken from the plates of Nephi*. Translated by Joseph Smith jun. Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1950 [Original English edition 1830] 1 Nephi 16.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid, Ether 2: 16ff.
4. Ibid, Ether 6.
5. Ibid, Helaman 12:14.
6. For example, *Foundation* 23, pp.91-93; 30, pp.80-81; 40, pp.20-21.
7. J. Gribbin, "A Phenomenon of Note", *New Scientist* January 7, 1988, pp.66-67
8. There are useful summaries of Mormonism in *Encyclopedia Americana, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Collier's Encyclopedia* and (mainly for an account of its heresies) in the old *Hasting's Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. Two helpful monographs are: L.J. Arrington & D. Britton, *The Mormon experience: a history of the Latterday Saints,* Allen & Unwin, 1979; T. O'Dea, *The Mormons,* University of Chicago Press, 1957.
9. For Card's own comments on this, see his "SF and Religion", *Dialogue: a Journal of Mormon Thought,* Summer 1985.
10. O'Dea, op.cit. p.237.
11. Card's comment: " . [I]t seems not to occur to you that I might be a believing and committed Mormon whose stories are *not* the result of a struggle with doubt. Much more important to me has been the struggle with *community*—and it is there, not in issues of faith, that I spend my time."
12. *A Woman of Destiny*. Berkley Books, 1984. Reissued as *Saints,* Tor 1988. My page references are to the Tor paperback edition.
13. Ibid, p.209.
14. Quoted in Arrington & Bitton, p.74. Card comments: "Not doctrine."
15. Ibid. Card comments on this and the following quotation: "These contain some inferences that belong to the authors alone, and have been rejected as doctrine."
16. Apostle J.A. Widstoe, *Rational Theology,* Salt Lake City: 1915, p.13. Quoted in O'Dea, p.124.
17. O'Dea, p.128. Card comments: "Accurate. But these are *not* official doctrines of the church. Rather, these quotations are selections of personal attitudes that have developed over time into widely accepted views—but the change is within my lifetime."
18. Card comments: "Yes, and much more, which puts these quotations into perspective. Furthermore, these "doctrines" and ideas were *not* widely taught, if taught at all, during the Nauvoo period."
19. O'Dea comments (p.237): " . we begin to get a feel of the intellectual's predicament and his attitudes towards authority and theological orthodoxy. His objections are usually held within the context of strong loyalty to Mormon institutions and values. There is much pride in the accomplishments of Mormon settlement, and, despite the fact that its theological foundations have vanished for them, many of these intellectuals feel strongly identified with the very peculiarity of Mormonism that derived originally from the foundations. The result is conflict. The man who expresses antagonism to some aspect of the Church will express admiration of another and rise in defense of the Mormon value system if necessary."
20. *Unaccompanied Sonata,* New York: The Dial Press, 1981. London: Futura Publications, 1983. (My references are to the latter.) Afterword, p.272.
21. Ibid. Introduction, p.2.
22. *Ender's Game,* New York: Tor 1985. London, Century Hutchinson, 1985. (My references to the latter)
23. Ibid., p.297.
24. Card comments: "She learns it in response to Ender himself."
25. *A Planet Called Treason,* New York: St Martin's Press, 1979. London, Pan, 1981. A revised version was issued as *Treason,* New York: St Martin's Press, 1988. The plot is unchanged.
    Hart's Hope, New York: Berkley Books, 1983. London, Unwin Paperbacks, 1986.
26. *Songmaster,* New York: Dial Press, 1980. Tor, 1987. Earlier portions appeared in *Analog,* 1978 & 1979.
27. *Capitol: the Worthing Chronicle*. New York: Ace Books, 1979. London: Futura Publications, 1980. My page references are to the Futura edition.
    Hot Sleep: the Worthing Chronicle. New York: Baronet Publishing, 1979. London: Futura Publications, 1980. My references are to the Futura edition.
    The Worthing Chronicle. New York: Ace Science Fiction Books, 1983.
28. "A Sleep and a Forgetting", *Capitol,* p.19.
29. Card tells me it has been excised from a forthcoming reprint.
30. "When No-one Remembers His Name, Does God Retire?", *Capitol,* p.262.

31. Ibid, p.266.
32. Card comments: "Actually, I remember a good deal more. I remember that Mormons always urbanised; our first efforts and final goals were all involved in city-building, with agriculture—*complex* agriculture—as a means to that end. Some of us still regard the city as the highest aspiration of human communities—with a belief that a city can be made good."
33. "Burning", *Capitol,* p.179.
34. *Hot Sleep,* p.229.
35. Ibid, p.245.
36. Ibid, p.404.
37. Ibid, p.405.
38. Card comments: "*Not* conscious at the time, unless I remember wrong."
39. Card comments: "No. Don't read my fiction literally. When I mean to be taken literally, I write essays."
40. Card tells me that *The Worthing Chronicle* is meant to replace the two earlier books, which he has now pulled out of print.
41. *The Worthing Chronicle,* p.259.
42. Ibid, p.74.
43. Ibid, p.262.
44. *Speaker for the Dead.* New York: Tor, 1986. London: Arrow Books, 1986.
45. *Wyrms.* New York: Arbor House, 1987. London: Arrow Books (Legend), 1988. My reference from this latter edition.
46. Ibid, p.183.
47 *Seventh Son.* New York: Tor, 1987.
48. *Red Prophet.* New York: Tor, 1988.
49. "On Sycamore Hill", *The Folk of the Fringe,* see 52 below.
50. "Afterword", ibid.
51. *The Secular Humanist Revival Meeting: "Brother Orson" Preaching.* Audiocassette available from: REVIVAL, PO Box 18184, Greensboro, NC 27419-8184, USA.
52. *The Folk of the Fringe,* 1988, forthcoming from Phantasia Press and subsequently Tor.
53. "Mortal Gods", *Unaccompanied Sonata,* p.148.

Judging from the awards alone, Card has been one of the most prodigious talents of the later '80s. His novel Ender's Game *won both the Nebula (1985) and the Hugo (1986); its sequel* Speaker for the Dead *made the hat-trick, with the Nebula (1986), the Hugo (1987) and the Locus (1987). In 1987 too he won the World Fantasy Award for Best Novella, with "Hatrack River"; most recently he won the 1988 Hugo Award for the novella "Eye for Eye" and the 1988 Locus Award for best fantasy novel, with* Seventh Son. *The previous article in this issue looks at one interesting aspect of his phenomenal career: his Mormon background, unique among major sf writers. The following piece demonstrates one reason for his success: his perfectionism. And I can add a footnote to his story about the sending off a rewrite of "Mikal's Songbird" a couple of days after sending off the first version: I (EJ) received a rewrite and expansion of "Mountains Out of Molehills", dated May 5, in the same post as the first version, dated May 4! His writing includes plays, historical novels, audio-tapes on Biblical and American history, a regular review column in* F&SF *and reviews of short sf in* Short Form*: "what's important," he said in a* Locus *interview (June 1987) "is that people be talking about short fiction, because that's where science fiction happens."*

The Profession of Science Fiction, 39: Mountains Out of Molehills

ORSON SCOTT CARD

I never set out on a regular programme of turning my old novelettes and novellas into novels. At the time I wrote most of my shorter works, I thought they were just right at that length. Yet somehow the expansion of old stories has become a regular feature of my career.

My novel *Songmaster* was built from the novelette "Mikal's Songbird". *Hart's Hope* began life as a novella of the same name. *Wyrms* was originally written as the novella "Unwyrm". Eight years before *Ender's Game* was published as a novel, the novelette of that name was my first published science fiction story.

In fact, I've gone even further—I find myself revising my old *books*. My first novel, *Hot Sleep,* and my first book, the collection *Capitol,* were replaced by the 1983 novel *The Worthing Chronicle;* it, in turn, will be included in the megabook *Worthing Complete* sometime in the next few years. Recently St. Martin's Press brought out *Treason,* a reworking of my second novel, *A Planet Called Treason.*

What's going on here? Is all this meddling with dead works a sort of resurrection or is it literary necrophilia? Am I making silk purses out of sows' ears, or am I so short of new ideas that I have to go back to what I did in bygone years? Am I a modest fellow who, in

learning new skills, discovers the inadequacies of early work and tries to repair them, or am I so narcissistic that I find my past works too fascinating to ignore?

Maybe all of those things, or none of them. Each one of these expansions and rewrites came about in its own way, not because of any plan of mine, so I doubt they have any meaning in the aggregate. But perhaps an account of how these stories were transformed over time will have some value in understanding why they are the way they are.

Songmaster

Barbara Bova had just become my agent, and I hadn't sent her anything of novel length to sell. She was not deterred—I got a phone call from her saying that she had just received a decent offer from a publisher for the novel version of my novelette "Mikal's Songbird", which was at the time nominated for the Hugo and Nebula awards.

"What novel version?" I said.

"Well, that's the problem," said she. "I need a few paragraphs from you telling how you'll change it to make it a novel."

"But it's a novelette. It's *finished.*"

"Think about it for a while, dear. Maybe you'll find a novel in there somewhere. If you don't, I'll just turn down this very nice offer."

Now, you must understand—I don't automatically say yes just because I'm offered money. I had already turned down a request for a sequel to *A Planet Called Treason* because I couldn't think of an adequate storyline, and I fully expected to do the same with this proposal.

I thought back over what happened in "Mikal's Songbird" and tried to find a hook where I could hang new story elements. I rejected at once the idea of using the same plot and simply taking more words to tell it—I loathe excess description and empty writing. Besides, the world of "Mikal's Songbird" was very sketchy and not terribly interesting. Nor could I think of a subplot that would add meaningful pages.

Then I realized that there might be something worth exploring in how Ansset became a Songbird. The Songhouse might be developed into a strange and fascinating milieu. I knew at once that it should be a sort of medieval monastery, at once a retreat and a school, a place where souls are saved—and, in the struggle, hurt.

Looking back, I can see now that part of my fascination with the Songhouse was a desire to explore the relationship between the individual and a highly demanding and rewarding community, which in my case meant the Mormon Church. While Mormonism has no monastic tradition, a good case could be made for the idea that the whole church is a kind of monastery, insulating its members from the world behind walls, not of stone, but of culture.

At the time, however, it just seemed like a pretty good science fiction idea—one that I could hang a novel on. At the same time, it involved a structural insight that I have used to good effect many times since: When expanding a short work into a long one, the place to go for a new material isn't *after* the initial short story, but *before* it. By starting much earlier, and explaining how the characters got to where they are at the beginning of the short story, the milieu is much richer, the cast of characters much fuller, the characterization much deeper than it was in the original story.

Much outlining and map-drawing later, I sat down and began writing. The first section, in the Songhouse, grew to be much longer than I had expected. When it was done,

I realized that it could stand alone quite nicely, so I sent it to Barbara, who sold it as a separate novella to Stan Schmidt, then quite new as editor of *Analog*. Word for word, it was identical with the opening chapters of *Songmaster;* as with the recent publication of sections of the Tales of Alvin Maker as separate stories, the novella "Songhouse" was a case of excerpting from a novel, not expanding a short work after the fact.

By the time I got to the events of the original novelette the milieu and characters had grown and changed so much that hardly a word of "Mikal's Songbird" was usable. Events had new meanings; characters had different things to think and say. This first time, it was quite wrenching for me to throw out the entire text of a story that had been, after all, quite successful. But it had to be done if the novel was to have any integrity.

Songmaster ended up with some serious structural flaws—for instance, the "Kyaren" section lags quite badly and the novel seems to end when Ansset becomes emperor, so that readers often find it hard to figure out why there are still so many pages left. But these are the product of my unfamiliarity with the novel form, not the fact that *Songmaster* was an expansion. Despite its flaws, in fact, *Songmaster* is my earliest novel that I am willing to stand by in its original form, so that the editing I did in preparation for TOR's recent reprint was on the level of tinkering with style. The structure has problems, but I'm willing to live with them, because the story still feels true to me as it stands, even if it isn't as artful as I'd like.

Derivations

In a way, "Mikal's Songbird" was an adaptation right from the start. The novelette was only my fourth science fiction sale. "Ender's Game" had been the first, a story that was quite easy to write. My next story died instantly; my third and fourth, "Follower" and "Malpractice", sold—but only with strong editorial suggestions from Ben Bova at *Analog*. The next few stories I wrote, however, went nowhere—they were so bad that not only did no one buy them, but also one editor sent me an incredible two-page letter that can only be classed as hate-mail, and followed up by *reviewing* one of those unpublishable stories in a fanzine! These stories were so bad that someone had to drive a stake through their hearts, just to make sure they didn't rise again.

And I was afraid. Though I had done quite well as a playwright in the Mormon theatre scene in Utah, I had no guarantee that I'd have a career in a genre that actually paid writers enough to live on. To me, at that bleak moment, it looked as though "Ender's Game" might be the only successful story I'd ever write.

But I was determined to try again. This time, though, I went back to "Ender's Game" and tried to determine what it was about that story that worked. In my ignorance, I saw only the most superficial strengths of the story: The hero was a child with extraordinary ability, who goes through a great deal of personal pain inflicted by adults who are trying to exploit him. Maybe this was a pattern I could use again, thought I.

There were other patterns, of course, that I might have followed: The success of "Ender's Game" might have led me to write more military-training stories, for instance, or I might even have attempted a sequel at that time. Instead, true to a view of storytelling that I did not become conscious of until long after, I looked to the character's role in his community in order to find the essence of the tale.

I should point out, too, that I thought of "Ender's Game" as a successful story only in an artistic sense—I knew it worked, but because it had not yet been published, I had no

idea whether it would be popular.

When I set out to follow that same pattern, I knew I had to come up with another way for my new child-hero to be exceptional. I'd used military talent with Ender; why not musical ability for my new hero? From there it was a fairly simple matter to come up with Ansset, Mikal's Songbird; though the plot doesn't follow "Ender's Game", the lifeline of the character certainly does.

I wrote "Mikal's Songbird" quickly, and knew all through it that this story was alive the way "Ender's Game" had been alive. It was still hot from xeroxing when I stuffed it into an envelope and mailed it to Ben Bova.

A couple of days later, though, in rereading the story, I knew that there were serious problems. This didn't bother me—I was excited about the fact that for the first time I actually understood narrative well enough to *see* the flaws. So I did a substantial revision of the story, and then sent the new version to Ben, with a letter asking him to toss the first version and look only at this one.

Within a few days I got a cheque. Ben had bought the *first* version, flaws and all. At that moment I knew I had a career—not because I had found a repeatable formula, for in fact I had not, but rather because I had found a road into that place inside myself from which true stories arise. For a long time my stories have grown out of childhood and adolescence, probably because that was the role in life that I best understood—it was not until *Speaker for the Dead* that I was able to work with truly adult characters, and even then the story was heavily populated with unusual children.

Schooling Myself

What Ben ended up publishing was, of course, the revised version of the story—he had simply bought the first version before the second one arrived. From the start, however, and at every step thereafter, the story of Ansset was continuously derived from previous versions, expanding and growing every time I went back to it. Every version represents another stage in my self-schooling as a writer of narrative.

Even in the writing of the novel *Songmaster,* I was consciously "at school" I knew that *Hot Sleep* was a failure as a novel (though, ironically, it remained my best-selling book until the publication of the novel *Ender's Game*); in order to overcome my dread of a novel's sheer length, I had conceived *Hot Sleep* as a series of novelettes, not a true novel. I was also beginning to realize that *A Planet Called Treason* was rushed, sketchy, abrupt, not a smoothly flowing work. In other words, I still didn't know how to write a novel.

In order to try to understand how a novel worked, I carefully examined Saul Bellow's *Humboldt's Gift.* I ended up, alas, with little intellectual understanding of the novel form, but the sheer reading of the book gave me a feel for a novel's *pace.* It was as if reading *Humboldt's Gift* set my metabolic rate; then, when I sat down to work on *Songmaster,* I was able to keep up that same rhythm of event, language, and scene. No one reading my work will ever accuse me of being Bellowesque; nevertheless, his novel was my touchstone in discovering how to write a true novel.

As a result, *Songmaster* was my one story with explicit connections with other works, a clear pattern of growth and change that paralleled my own. Expanding it to a novel may have come from a commercially-minded editor's suggestion to my agent, and my own source for the story's idea may have been a deliberate mining of my own previous work, but it ended up as a story I believed in passionately—and the process of writing it was a

kind of training ground for my career as a writer, just as my characters Ender and Ansset had to go through training to become a person capable of surviving.

Hart's Hope and *Wyrms*

The next "short" work I adapted into a novel followed quite a different pattern. Roy Torgeson had asked me for a fantasy story for his *Chrysalis* anthology series, and I began developing *Hart's Hope* from a map I had doodled and an idea about somebody whose magical power was the negation of magic. The story grew in the back of my mind while I worked on finishing the first draft of my novel *Saints* and a production revision of my historical Mormon play *Father, Mother, Mother, and Mom;* when *Saints* and *FMM&M* were finished, I turned with relief to a fantasy tale as an antidote to the rigours of historical writing. However, having just finished a sprawling novel of a thousand pages, it's hardly a surprise that *Hart's Hope* began growing out of control. Before I had finished the novella, I knew exactly how to turn it into a novel; I sent a copy to Barbara at the same time as my submission to Roy, and she soon sold it as a prospectus for a novel. While the novel version went through a couple of major rewrites over a period of years before it finally was published in 1983, it remained substantially the same story as the novella—the novel was not so much an expansion of the novella as the novella was a compression of the novel.

The same is true of the novel *Wyrms* and the novella "Unwyrm". I was writing "Unwyrm" for George R.R. Martin's Campbell-nominee anthology series, and as I wrote it I discovered that it simply would not stay under 40,000 words. The novella that George ended up buying was a cut-down version that removed several important plotlines; I finished the novel version only a few weeks after the novella. (The collapse of Blue Jay Books killed the anthology, so that "Unwyrm" never appeared in print.)

So neither *Hart's Hope* nor *Wyrms* represents an expansion on the order of *Songmaster.* The "short" version in both cases was very long, and in both cases I knew it would be a novel before the novella was completed.

Ender's Game

The novel *Ender's Game* is the only work of mine, besides *Songmaster,* that was truly expanded from a short work that I had not intended to expand. Indeed, I had never expected to do anything with Ender Wiggin again. A friend had once urged me to write a sequel to "Ender's Game", but when he suggested possible storylines, they were lame enough to convince me that a sequel was impossible.

In 1980, though, I was beginning to work with a novel idea with the working title *Speaker of Death,* a sketchy idea about an alien people who periodically mauled each other in devastating wars that were, without their realizing it, their means of reproduction. The truth would be discovered by a human character whose job was speaking the truth about people at funerals. I couldn't make the idea work, however, until suddenly it dawned on me that the Speaker should be Ender Wiggin as an adult. Who better to understand the impulse that made a species nearly destroy itself than a man who had once inadvertently destroyed another people?

At once the work began to come to life. In 1982 an outline was ready to offer to a publisher. It was explicitly a sequel to "Ender's Game", which remained my most popular—and most anthologized—story. Barbara offered it to Tom Doherty, the former

publisher at Ace who was starting his own company. For financing reasons I got a request to hurry and write a draft of the book before the end of 1982; I complied, but in the process learned that this was going to be harder to write than I supposed. There was more to my story than one human and a bunch of aliens. I was getting involved in creating a human family in whose lives Ender was deeply involved. And the story simply wasn't working. I didn't know how to write it.

A few months later, I realized why. In order to make Ender viable as a character in *Speaker of Death,* I had to expand on the meaning of the events in "Ender's Game". I had to deal with the transformation of Ender Wiggin in the aftermath of his xenocide. And to do that in *Speaker of Death* meant picking up the story right at the end of "Ender's Game", showing Ender's self-discovery and his transformation into a Speaker. Then I'd have to skip three thousand years and begin an entirely new storyline. It was impossible!

So when I happened to run into Tom Doherty at the ABA in Dallas in the spring of 1983, on impulse I proposed to him that instead of the horribly deformed *Speaker* that was emerging, all the problems would be solved if I went back and rewrote "Ender's Game" as a novel, incorporating into it all the changes that were needed to properly set up *Speaker.* Tom promptly agreed, and on a handshake I was committed to my second expansion of a novelette into a novel.

Just as I had studied "Ender's Game" in order to write "Mikal's Songbird", now I recalled my experience with *Songmaster* in order to figure out how to write *Ender's Game.* I decided at once to begin *Ender's Game* much earlier than the novelette—to start when Ender was still with his family.

In a way, this was analogous to starting *Songmaster* when Ansset was in the Songhouse; but it was also a radical departure, because instead of having a protagonist who was completely cut off from his family—the standard adolescent hero of most Romance—I was now committed to creating a hero whose connections to his family were still very much alive. I hardly knew how to begin; and so I mined my own life, looking back at my relationship with my older brother and sister as I had thought it was when I was about ten years old, then exaggerating it extravagantly in order to make it a justification for much of Ender's behaviour later on. (I couldn't very well use my childhood as it actually was, since my actual childhood produced, not a twisted military genius, but rather a bookish homebody.)

As with *Songmaster,* by the time I got back to the point where the novelette should have been inserted into the novel, the character and milieu had changed so much that only the first sentence of the novelette was usable: "Remember, the enemy's gate is down." However, I felt not a qualm about losing the novelette itself—I had known all along that it would be unusable because of my experience with *Songmaster.* In fact, I was delighted, because this proved that there was far more going on in the novel than I had ever conceived of when writing the novelette. And when I got to the payoff scene, where Ender discovers that he has been fighting the real war, not a simulation, I knew that there was still one more payoff to go—the final chapter, entitled "Speaker for the Dead"

Ironically, though, this duplicated one of the structural flaws in *Songmaster*—once again, few readers could understand why there were still so many pages left when the story was clearly over. Even this flaw didn't bother me. I had a master's degree in English by now, so I knew how to excuse it in literary terms: I was making the reader go through the same kind of revision of the meaning of the story's past that Ender went through. Ah, how the tools of criticism allow us to justify the lapses of our art!

Other Adaptations

Besides expansions of short works to make novels, I have also revised my first two novels. Part of my motive was simple literary self-defense—by revising them, I disarm critics who are apt to scorn them, because I in effect am saying, "I *know* they weren't all that good." But much more important to me was the fact that I still cared about the stories. Jason Worthing and Abner Doon of the Worthing stories and Lanik Mueller of *A Planet Called Treason* were once important enough to me that I wrote books about them; just because I now knew more about writing books didn't mean that I should care less about the stories I had told back when I was a novice.

Hot Sleep and *Capitol*, I felt, were bad enough that the need to fix it was almost an emergency. Even though they were still in print and still selling rather well, I was able to persuade Susan Allison (then editor to Ace) to withdraw both books and allow me to replace them with a single work to be called *The Worthing Chronicle*. Little did either of us know how hopelessly uncommercial the result would be—but I still regard it as one of my best works, and I'm grateful to her for allowing me to publish it.

The flaws in *Hot Sleep* had arisen from my feeble attempts to control the vast sweep of time involved in the story. With *The Worthing Chronicle,* I unified the story by containing it within a frame, the story of a village whose life had been deeply affected by the outcome of the whole Worthing story. In effect, the new novel was the story of how people are transformed by stories—a circularity that still delights me. It's a series of fictions and dreams and memories all bound up so closely together that it's impossible even within the story to say what is real and what is now. The process of adaptation was exhilarating—but, as with *Songmaster* and as would later be true with *Ender's Game,* hardly a sentence from the original books remained in the new version.

Indeed, if there is anything that I think is the key to successfully transforming one version of a story into another, it is to completely discard the first text and develop a *new* text that contains the same story—the same causally-related events—but enriches them with new characters and relationships, new and richer milieux, and many more ideas than the original version contained.

That's why I was so frustrated by the fact that St. Martin's Press, in its eagerness to capitalize on the commercial success of *Ender's Game,* insisted on going back to press with a new printing of *A Planet Called Treason* before I had time to write a completely new version. I had long harboured an ambition to return to the tale of Lanik Mueller, but this time tell it in third person, with many more characters and subplots that would make it one of my deepest novels instead of the shallowest. To my outrage at the time, Thomas Dunne would not relent and allow me to do the ideal version of the book. Instead, all I had time to do was revise the opening and edit heavily throughout the book. The result was a novel that, while no longer embarrassing, was far short of the ideal that I had harboured in my imagination. The book remained in first person and continued to follow the same narrative line, with no new characters or events. It was and remains quite frustrating, but at present I have no plans to go back and revise it ever again—if for no other reason than because there is no reversion clause in my contract with St. Martin's (the result of signing a contract as a naïve youth without an agent), so that the same publisher would own any revision of the book. Besides, a *third* version of the same book is certainly too absurd to contemplate.

The Abyss

My most recent venture into expanding a shorter work was my novelization of James Cameron's film *The Abyss*. The problems of novelizing a screenplay are enormous—they are made virtually hopeless in most cases by the fact that the novelizer is forced to work from the screenplay alone, and the screenplay is not a viable story. A screenplay is only a *plan* for a work of art, like a fresco painter's cartoon; it is not until director and actors interpret the script that it becomes a finished story.

The only reason I agreed to do the novelization was because Jim Cameron was as determined as I was to make the novel a viable work of art in its own right. Unlike most novelizers, I had complete access to the film itself, and to all of the screenwriter's research material. Even more important, however, was the fact that Cameron allowed me to do his screenplay what I had done to "Ender's Game" and "Mikal's Songbird" in order to expand them—I went back before the beginning of the original story and developed the earlier lives of the characters.

This time, however, I could not go as far as I had with my own work, if only because when I got to the point where the film began, the words and events of the film had to be used exactly as they stood. (We take pride in the fact that *this* novelization contains every word of significant action and dialogue that actually made it into the film, besides occasional extra scenes that I wrote.) Nevertheless, my preliminary chapters, including a chapter about the early life of a non-human character that quite properly did not end up in the final book, became the root of the novel.

When I gave the early chapters to Cameron, he immediately called them "backstory", the information about characters that never shows up in a film. I was content to have him regard those chapters that way. After all, he liked them well enough that he showed them to the actors, allowing them to help shape their thinking about their roles. But to me, they were not "backstory", not background at all. Instead, they set up fundamental questions in the readers' minds, questions that are not resolved until the end of the book. The film is structured as an adventure story that is taken over by the strong relationship story contained within it. My novel, however, is structured as a character story from the beginning, so that to me, at least, the novel is truer to the tale both Cameron and I wanted to tell than the film is.

I don't call this a flaw in the film, but rather a limitation of the cinematic form; and Cameron would certainly dispute my conclusion that the book is "truer" Perhaps this idea is merely my way of making the book my own even though the bulk of it is a retelling of someone else's story. One thing is certain, however—if this novel transcends the limitations of most novelizations, it is because I went back to the time before the story and added new material that transforms the meaning of the events in the film when we finally come to them.

Alvin Maker

Even my Tales of Alvin Maker—*Seventh Son, Red Prophet, Prentice Alvin,* and the yet-unpublished *Alvin Journeyman* and *Master Alvin*—began as a shorter work. As I studied the works of Spenser with Norman Council at the University of Utah, I determined to attempt for my people something of what he accomplished for his: create a verse epic in the vernacular. Of course it was a mad enterprise from the start. Who reads long poems anymore, especially *narrative* poems? Especially poems written in a folksy mountain-country voice:

Alvin, he was a blacksmith's prentice boy,
He pumped the bellows and he ground the knives,
He chipped the nails, he het the charcoal fire,
Nothing remarkable about the lad
Except for this: He saw the world askew,
He saw the edge of light, the frozen liar
There in the trees with a black smile shinin cold,
Shiverin the corners of his eyes.
OR, he was wise.

But there's something about great works of art like *The Faerie Queene* that makes the beholder long to go and do likewise. In awe of Spenser and yet ambitious to learn from him, I wrote my way many stanzas deep into the story, until I reached a sort of conclusion when Alvin and his friend Verily Cooper tried out Al's golden plow in the rich soil near the banks of the Mizzippy. At that point I gave the poem an ending—after a fashion:

The rest of the tale—how they looked for the crystal city,
How they crept to the dangerous heart of the holy hill,
How they broke the cage of the girl who sang for rain,
How they built the city of light from water and blood—
Others have told that tale, and told it good.
And besides, the girl you're with is cruel and pretty,
And the boy you're settin by has a mischievous will.
There's better things to do than hear me again,
So go on home.

At that point, exhausted, I set the poem aside, uncertain where the story should go from there.

Though "Prentice Alvin and the No-Good Plow" won a Utah state fine arts contest, I never did get back to the poem, except to revise it slightly for forthcoming publication in a Mormon journal. Still, the story of it hung with me, in part because, in true Spenserian manner, it is an elaborate allegory for some of the most important tales of the epic of my own people; in part because I fell in love with that hill-country voice and the American frontier magic I had devised for the story. Here was a fantasy that was completely American—no elves, no dragons, no European myths and legends, and the setting was a log cabin, not a castle, and the people wore homespun and hunted with muskets instead of donning armour to go a-pricking with lance and sword. I wanted to go back and finish it.

The opportunity came in 1983, when I finally realized that while long narrative poems have no particular audience, long fantasy novels—or trilogies—do. The language would be daring, for fantasy, as would the setting, but at least the ordinary-looking paragraphs between ordinary-looking book covers would reassure the audience that this story would be accessible.

I wrote an extended outline of the trilogy (supposedly starting with *Prentice Alvin*) and sent it to Barbara. Tom Doherty bought this one and a story collection as well. (He then had six of my books under contract though not one had yet been published. His faith in me—an author whose books, up to then, had never earned out their advances—was extraordinary, and will always be appreciated.)

When it came time actually to write the Alvin Maker books, I began as I did with every other expansion and adaptation: I started the longer version before the beginning of the original story. I didn't dream at the time that I wouldn't reach the events of the narrative poem until the middle of the third volume, but the introductory chapter became the novel *Seventh Son,* and the chapter in which Alvin was captured by Indians became the novel

Red Prophet, so that by the time I finished *Prentice Alvin* in 1988, the world had grown so full and the characters so numerous that at times I despaired of containing the whole thing in *any* finite number of books.

Nevertheless, it *was* the story that I had begun back in graduate school, even though the text had changed, the characters had been transformed, and the world had grown wider and stranger than I had ever imagined at first. Yet it's hard for me to imagine that I ever thought the story was complete, as far as it went. There was so much more possibility; in writing the first version of it I had thought I was completing the story, but in fact I was merely essaying the first rough draft, the first bare outline of what the tale could be.

I think perhaps that's the case with all my work. At the time I write it, I think it's complete, I think I have discovered all its possibilities and now am sharing them with an audience. But the stories that are best, that are most alive to me, I can't leave them alone. They keep growing whether I like it or not. I keep imagining them without regard for the fact that they have already been written down, published, reviewed, and remaindered.

I'm not "expanding" shorter works at all, I think. I'm merely returning to unfinished acts of imagination, warming myself at fires that only burn the hotter for having lain dormant during all the intervening years. Each tale finds its own occasion to come to life and grow again, and what I've been learning is not so much how to expand novelettes as how to tell stories more fully than ever before.

Does the process end? I'd like to think so. There are plenty of new stories to tell, and I don't have any older works that cry out to me for further development.

Except that I just finished a short story called "Lost Boys" that I once envisioned as a novel of contemporary horror. Since it's the most autobiographical piece I've ever written, I know I could expand on it considerably simply by mining my own life—and so who knows? Maybe a trend that began quite accidentally will continue deliberately.

Letters

Dear Editor,

I have read K.V Bailey's corrections to my comments on C.S. Lewis, and accept some of his strictures. The unfallen creatures' access to Maleldil *is* mediated, not direct as I suggested, and "propagandist pastiches" is too flip, suggests a too definite *intent.*

There remains "the Lewis problem", and I find it equally present in his Narnia children's stories. What an author intends and what he or she is actually able to achieve are two separate things. Lewis is hugely well-read, cultivated, clever, has lively ideas and good intentions. But to this reader, his characters, the emotional level of their actions and the language he uses to describe them are insufficient to carry the cosmic reverberations he apparently cannot help including. Despite Mr Bailey's example, there isn't enough "difficulty" (or depth, or complexity, or emotional pressure) to warrant the insistent overtones. The difference between good and evil (for instance) comes over as the difference between niceness and nastiness; the latter is rationalised and intellectualised by

its exemplars but there isn't the remotest chance that we shall be persuaded.

Thus he ends up being charged, no doubt wrongly, with propagandist intent. Of course that isn't how creativity works. But it's what the results resemble in Lewis's case when creativity has to work with what I fear is insufficient materials. By contrast, see perhaps Gene Wolfe (who keeps his overtones in place) and Philip K. Dick, who at his most interesting had something desperately, insistently huge and important to give a confused shape to.

Further discussion would require a close textual examination. I am no Lewis expert (perhaps that's obvious) but it would be rewarding to see it done, with these charges in mind. So many people *like* Lewis's work that clearly I may be wholly wrong.

Norman Beswick *Shropshire*

Dear Editor, January 1989

Thank you for publishing the long review by Gregory Feeley of *The Tale That Wags the God* by James Blish. However his review raises a number of questions which I would like to answer. One matter which should be cleared up first is the intentions I had when I began the project. My original goal was to produce a book that would be a sequel to Advent's other critical volumes by James Blish. I had no intention of producing any sort of "Memorial" volume, and wanted a strong, hard volume of science fiction criticism that would be useful and interesting for the science fiction readers and writers of today. I soon discovered that the material available that was strictly about science fiction was rather slim, and the publisher made a decision to include Judith Blish's Bibliography in the volume. I was also offered "A Science Fiction Coming of Age", the unpublished piece of autobiography (contrary to Gregory Feeley's comment that "none of the material is new", most of this long essay (31 pages) is new; in ms. form it began with some of the material published in *Foundation* 2 as "The Development of a Science Fiction Writer: II", but had no ending, so I used the ending of the *Foundation* article to complete it), and could hardly turn this down. I began the project in April 1981; it was not until years later that I discovered that Advent would consider a mixed volume, including essays not about sf even in a vague sense.

I don't understand why Gregory Feeley doesn't mention the one fatal flaw of "Cinders of Necessity", the essay by Blish on William Gaddis: it was incomplete. What's more, I saw no way of giving the essay an ending (as I had with the autobiographical piece). Since I sent him a copy of the essay, I am mystified why he should not understand these obvious objections.

Contrary to Mr Feeley, I did see some of Blish's amateur press association pieces (Robert Lowndes kindly sent me four pieces he had typed out from the original mailings for another project). I did not find them suitable for inclusion. I wish I had seen Blish's pieces in *Kalki,* although how many essays on James Branch Cabell the book should have included (it already has one) is debatable.

My information about the *Dead Issues at Hand* ms. is from David Ketterer, Timothy Rogers (curator of the Western MS Dept. at the Bodleian Library), and Gregory Feeley himself—and I was told that this ms. consisted only of an introduction and an outline, and the bulk of the book was unwritten, outside of the *F&SF* reviews which contained the

germ for the proposed essays. What was there to consider for *Tale*?

I am afraid that I do not share Gregory Feeley's high regard for "The Climate of Insult" I don't think its topic (the literary opinion of Poe during his lifetime) especially important today. And I had no wish to reprint his conclusion: "Such arguments as those between Edmund Wilson and Vladimir Nabokov over the latter's translation of Pushkin, or indeed almost any of the tempests which rage in the letter columns of *The New York Review of Books,* more closely resemble the domestic spats of homosexuals than they do any kind of literary controversy." What more can one say? Gregory Feeley obviously doesn't care for "Probapossible Prolegomena to Ideareal History" (all he says of it is that it "repudiates" Blish's earlier work), but that's just the way things go. Not everyone will agree on what is the best of Blish.

Gregory Feeley mentions unpunctuated titles, but we also had the problem of missing titles. One I thought I had solved turned out near deadline to be the title of a poem. We still don't know what it is. Blish described it as the only sf story written by John Ciardi, it has to do with an apparent alien art form "vaguely related to jade feeling . art totally devoted to the sense of touch The one in the story turned out not to be a work of art at all, but a snare, a hypnotic device for trapping one's prey." Anyone who knows the name of this story, and where it appeared, please write. I don't only wish to add the title to the essay, but would like to read the story.

About the interview (one of my favorite items in the book) Gregory Feeley only comments that Blish "is referring to the 'New York Edition', a dry Jamesianism that went over the head of whoever first transcribed the interview for *Cypher* and was not subsequently caught at Advent" This not only went over the head of James Goddard (who transcribed the interview) but also Brian Aldiss and James Blish, who read and corrected the transcription, prior to publication! How nice that Gregory Feeley seems to know what Blish meant better than Mr Blish himself! Well, perhaps he did: we have no way of asking, now. It is a problem I laboured with constantly. I did write to James Blish in 1974 regarding "The Arts in Science Fiction", which I wished to reprint in an anthology, and made a new typescript (at his request) along with some penciled-in suggestions. He intended to go much further than that, but died before anything else was accomplished. And I know about the paragraphs added to the essay about Poul Anderson: I added them. I thought that it would be what Blish would have done (based on the manner in which *The Issue at Hand* and its sequel were edited); but I could be wrong. I couldn't ask Mr Blish.

I believe I've answered most of the questions Gregory Feeley raised in his review, and I'm sorry he was so disappointed in *Tale*. Now I will have to wait for someone else to publish a review that discusses James Blish's ideas in *The Tale That Wags the God,* rather than the technical problems involved in its editing.

Cy Chauvin *Detroit*

Dear *Foundation,*

I'm not sure how to say this without being offensive, and I am partly in the wrong. However: I read Danny Rirdan's article on Bill Gibson in *Foundation* No. 43.

Danny gave me the courtesy of showing me a version of this piece some time ago, and we discussed it. The article was at least in part a response to some discussions we had while

he was living in Melbourne, and it followed my providing him a copy of my long review of Gibson's *Neuromancer* in Van Ikin's magazine *Science Fiction: A Review of Speculative Literature*. It was plain to me, and I think to both of us, that Danny's article was largely a development of my own analysis of Gibson's poetics—indeed, in many places the article pastiched my account. On the other hand, Danny had many original observations, some of which I disagreed with (and still do—for example, I see nothing at all wrong with garments cut like jeans and worn like jeans being called, by Gibson, "jeans"—even if they are made of brown leather rather than blue denim; I own a pair of black leather pants which are jeans beyond the shadow of controversy).

At the relevant time I had no inkling that this article was likely to turn up in a journal with *Foundation*'s prestige and scholarly ambitions. If I had, I would have asked in a friendly way, as I do now, that the writer acknowledge his sources. To give some feel for the sort of thing I mean, in *SF* No. 19 I wrote the following paragraph:

> *Neuromancer,* then, is a near-future, high-tech, faster-than-a-bullet thriller. The world depicted is not our own, separated from us by time rather than by space. With its emphasis on cyber-realities, punk violence, the tribal jungle of marginal sub-cultures, and on all things Japanese, it looks like a recognisable extrapolation, or at least futuristic distortion, of our own global society; not only is the future another place, but the present is a place which increasingly threatens to become alien if we allow ourselves to be deceived by our own perimeters of lifestyle. The activity of 1985, like that of the unknown year in which *Neuromancer* is set, is partly opaque and alien to us as are the characters of both times. The alienness of the future to which we are moving is conveyed systematically at the levels of plot, action, character, and language, though Gibson gives us enough clues to reconstruct most of what has literally been happening, provided we read closely as well as quickly. In all these respects, *Neuromancer* is a triumphant expression of the sf sensibility.

Danny Rirdan's article, refers to "faster-than-a-bullet movements between passages" to "trying to stay afloat in the high-tech jungle" (I take no blame for the mixed metaphor) in which "subcultures appear in short order and evaporate at a similar speed". He repeats my analysis (summarised in the paragraph quoted above) of action and language outrunning the reader and the narrative (albeit with a different example), and labours the point that Gibson's books are futuristic distortions of the present rather than plausible extrapolations. I invite readers to compare the tone, language and ideas of the two articles.

I said that this was partly my fault—I did not make an issue of these similarities when I read the first draft of the Rirdan article, but then again I did not know it would be sent to *Foundation* (if it had turned up in a less significant and literary magazine, which seemed the probability at the time, I would not have been so concerned). I am also aware of similar sins—though on a far lesser scale of pervasiveness, relentlessness and precision —which I have committed myself in the past, thoughtlessly rather than dishonestly. But I would put in a plea that all 22-year-old libertarian disco dancers make an attempt at scholarly courtesy when writing for a journal such as yours . and that editors of articles by such folk make an attempt to establish what is going on before blithely publishing said articles minus the footnotes.

Otherwise I am yours with warm regards.

Russell Blackford *Melbourne, Australia*

Reviews

Lavondyss by Robert Holdstock *(Gollancz 1988 367 pp £11.95)*

reviewed by Roz Kaveney

There are worse strategies for a writer than learning to do without, than embracing that learning. The early work of Robert Holdstock had its fair share of gaudy sf tropes, and was none the worse for them, but his time-travellers and over-sophisticated denizens of a far future had an aggressive lack of exuberance that indicated by omission where his dour interests lay, and the more glittering with trope their stories were, the more certain it was that there would be tears before bedtime. His occasional pseudonymous hackwork was always at its best when at its starkest; his berserker viking, his fugitive from occultist vendettas, were all men of sorrows, learning from accustomed grief to find strength in pain. When the tropes were the equally but more respectably gaudy ones of the British New Wave, as in the *Vermilion Sands* out-take, *In the Valley of the Statues,* he used them with elegance, but with a certain dourly bad conscience, as if the glamour of the painted stage were something that a grown-up Holdstock might learn to do without.

Both of his early novels *Eye among the Blind* and *Earthwind* deal with protagonists who learn to reduce their expectations, and leave the complex world of space opera behind for something more primitive and straightforward. In the novella which signalled the discovery of his mature voice, "Earth and Stone", a marooned time-traveller accepted his fate amid a primitive tribe's rituals of the shedding of seed and the renewal of life; there are things you give away to get them back. The novels *Mythago Wood* and *Lavondyss* deal at an overt level with travel through the levels of reality contained within a literal wood, journeys that take their respective hero and heroine back through mythic time to participate in the layers of meaning and event that lie behind the oldest versions of British and Celtic myth; some at least of their real power derives from the conscious effort that Holdstock has put into discovering the real story behind his own work, the real force of what he actually always wanted to say.

Behind one layer of myth and one realm of mythagos, there always lies another; we end up with the last layer that the protagonists can deal with. Holdstock has discarded the gaudy genre gestures of his earliest work, but he still works with genre elements when it suits him. *Mythago Wood* needed its M.R. Jamesian games with documentation to give it that appearance of authority tales of lost secrets seem to need; alternatively, making the gesture in James's direction is a way of implying truths about the things that emerge from the past in his stories as well. *Lavondyss* takes much of its strength, but also some of its occasional minor weaknesses, from the sort of children's fiction which was current in Holdstock's childhood and adolescence; the early work of Garner in particular has just this emphasis on plucky youngsters getting in over their heads in ancient magics, but the trope is and was a widespread one. There is a sinister note to some of young Tallis's experiments with the magic implicit in masks that perhaps owes a certain amount to the altogether nastier goings on in Machen's *White People,* a story of the training of a young witch, by another Celtic revivalist; Holdstock has learned from Machen the power that

half-presented mysteries can have for the inquiring reader, and the half-echo strengthens our sense that Tallis is playing a game more serious than she appreciates. Knowing what you can do without is also knowing what you can use.

Tallis is at her best when she is at her most ageless; the influence of children's books is not always a salutary one when she has to deal with the adult modern world, and try to explain to her parents and their fellow-villagers that she has her own fish to fry. Too often here Holdstock falls into genre tropes from books whose memories are so mingled with the average bright person's memories of the restrictions placed on one when young as to have eaten them up like a computer virus corrupts data. In some of the psycho-babble about the problems in Tallis's parent's marriage, and in some of the early appearances of phantasmagoria, we have a few failures of imagination, a few drifts to the ordinary and the less interestingly imagined.

Holdstock not only shows us the faces and tribes whose memories have stayed so powerful that they still walk; he tells through the mouth of his heroine imagined folk-tales of their time. These sections of the book are exemplary, and were all else feeble in ways it is not, this novel would be worth reading alone for the stories of the Valley of Dreams and the Bone Forest, in which Holdstock embeds his speculation and perception of the role of story in the pre-formation of cultures; he is trying to derive an ur-text by stripping away subsequent mis-readings and mis-applications, to extrapolate an ancestor by comparing live forms with fossils and taking the process backwards. At the climax of the novel, Tallis is devoured and changed by a tree, and goes through a process of transmigration which reduces her to a shard or seed, a fragment which nonetheless carries her consciousness through alterations; this is not only a matter of using that strong vein of stories of transmigration that permeates what we have of Celtic mythology, for it is also a way of showing what happens to the component that is myth when the story changes. Tallis is many things in this novel apart from its protagonist; her very name is cognate with "tale" and she is forced to go through the same changes that we see happening to story.

The presence in the earlier stages of the novel of a fairly immediately recognizable Ralph Vaughan Williams is a way of implying an analogy; what happens to stories and to souls is what happens to music, both as it is transmitted across generations and as it is transmuted by the individual artist's willed intervention. There are ambiguities here which Holdstock leaves productively unresolved; the younger Tallis is sure that Williams is wrong to submit material to alteration, but this naïve quasi-"ecological" attitude to the conservation of myth ignores the fact that the historical process of which myth is part is often a cruel one. By travelling further and further into the world of myth in which she has trapped herself, Tallis makes things happen that were, perhaps, not there before; she is, for example, the wife torn between the leader and his loyal companion, the template from which such subsequent myths as Arthur, Guinevere and Lancelot are to be struck. Further, her eventual return from old age to childhood, her re-entering of normal twentieth-century life, or to a dream of it, depends on the moulding of circumstance by her and her lost brother's magic, not on leaving well alone.

Given the extent to which Holdstock has cast aside many of the genre follies of his youth in favour of a stripped-down speculation on what lies behind all stories and all myths, he has kept many of the standard consolations of genre intact. This is not a novel one reads for metaphysical speculation alone, nor just for the sparse beauty of the extended narratives contained within it. This is a book in which people do magic and ride

around on horses and are chased by half-vegetable werewolves through rocky passes; it is a novel in which love is doomed before it begins, and in which the pleasure of the moment has to be grabbed in passion, and in which it is, powerfully. The result of discarding all of the things which he needed to discard, of sorting carefully through the stock of material left him to find what was authentically something he cared still to possess has made Holdstock in the greater part of this book a more vivid and a more urgent writer of adventure fiction as well as of fine effects. This is a book which deals with speculation and adventure with equal skill; it is also a novel in which the author metaphorically discusses the process by which he remade himself in order to write it.

Mission Earth
by L. Ron Hubbard *(New Era Publications UK, ten volumes, 1985–, £10.95 each)*

reviewed by George Hay

This is not an easy review to write. I hope the reader will bear with me through what may appear to be contradictions.

It has been my experience over a long period that the mere mention of the name Hubbard is sufficient to evoke kneejerk reactions of praise or horror. These reactions are to be found in (a) people who have never read this author's major science fiction—or western fiction— since most of it is still out of print; (b) people who think of him as the author of an enormous output of scientology texts, which they have not read; or (c) devout scientologists who have read *Battlefield Earth* and none other of his science fiction, but who are convinced in advance that anything he writes must be classed as a work of genius. It might help members of (a) and (b), and interested parties generally, if I quote here some remarks of Sam Moskowitz, who must surely be accepted as a qualified observer of this scene.

> L. Ron Hubbard was a hard-working science fiction writer and an extremely good one. During the early forties he was ranked with Robert A. Heinlein, A.E. Van Vogt . His novel *Final Blackout* is among the greatest future war novels ever written, and in characterisation and sustained pace is probably the very best. *Fear* is a brilliant piece of stream-of-consciousness literary psychoanalysis, and *To the Stars* (also published as *Return to Tomorrow*) came close to being the classic story on the time-dilation effect.

For those who have come in in the middle of the third act, so to speak, I hope this dictum will have established this author's position in the Golden Age hierarchy. Of course, when he later became established as the creator of dianetics and scientology, it was assumed by many that he had simply found something more profitable than sf authorship; and that his fictional writing career was over; in fact he was frequently referred to as "a former science fiction author", and there was much debate as to whether he really had himself written *Battlefield Earth*. I feel obliged—as one who has read his sf from his first story in *Astounding* onwards, who has met him and studied under him, and is reasonably well-versed in dianetics and scientology—to say that both that novel and *Mission Earth* have his fingermarks all over them.

Well, then, *Mission Earth*

Mission Earth is simply a space-opera satire stretched over ten books . and I use the word "stretched" advisedly. There is a lot of agonising nowadays over the problem of the

so-called "shrinking attention-span" of a tv-habituated public. Hubbard had occasion to address this matter before some of those now concerned were into their teens, and I can tell you (I vos dere!) that in his scientology lectures he made it clear that the general public should be addressed in short words and short sentences, if they were to be reached effectively. As far as his latest fiction was concerned, this started to be apparent in *Battlefield Earth*, and the technique has been perfected—if that is the word—in this dekalogy. I will give examples in a moment, but let me make it clear at once that, if you are concerned with "fine writing" . . . forget it. Except, perhaps, in the Introduction to Volume 1, where Hubbard gives an excellent rundown on "Science Fiction and Satire", going clear back to Horace, Menippus, Cyrano de Bergerac, on up to Poe, Verne and Wells. This certainly is well worth reading, and will doubtless have come as a revelation to the two million readers alleged to have purchased these books.

The plot turns around the galactic conquest Invasion Timetable set by the rulers of the planet Voltar, seat of the 110-planet Confederacy established 125,000 years in the past. Earth is a minor staging-point for this operation, and our whiter-than-white hero, Jettero Heller has been sent to do a preliminary scouting of the planet just to check that it presents no problems. In fact, he finds that earth's environment is rapidly being poisoned by the activities of the sinister Rockecentre, controller of the planet's fuel, finance, governments and drugs. So, Heller is sent back to put things straight. *However,* this operation is under the command of the sinister Lombar Hisst, Head of the Apparatus, a CIA-type undercover police force. Hisst has plans of his own: knowing that earth is skilled in the production of drugs, he plans to take over the place, and the drugs, to the end of corrupting the entire Voltarian setup and taking over the Confederacy. The person charged with supervising all this is the equally sinister but rather more stupid Soltan Gris, who has to see that Heller is kept in ignorance of Hisst's real aims. Up to the middle of Volume 8, the story is told in the first person by Gris, after which by a rather ingenious switch, another viewpoint recounts the end of the saga in retrospect.

And there you go!

There is no way of "simplifying" this story, and I shall not attempt to do so. The basic situation Villain-foils-Hero, Hero-foils-Villain, is repeated *ad nauseam* through ten fat books. A few extracts from the Key to dramat is personae and locations prefacing each volume will perhaps give you a feel of the thing. Thus, we have Babe Corleone, six-foot-six widowed leader of the Corleone mob who "adopted" Heller into her Mafia family; Gracious Palms, the elegant whorehouse where Heller resided, is across from the United Nations and is operated by the Corleone family; Utane, a belly-dancer that Gris bought to be his concubine slave; Afyon, city in Turkey where the Apparatus had a secret mountain base. And so on and so forth. Permutations of such factors—the Key goes on for six pages—gives the author full rein for the kind of plotting which was ever his forte, and he takes full advantage of this. It also allows him ample scope for attacking the kind of sitting ducks that have always played a large part in his fiction—governments, CIA, psychiatrists, the military, medicine, and so forth. There is a strong element of truth in all this, of course, as any keen reader of the press will be aware, and if the treatment of these stock villains is over the top, you have to remember that this is a *satire*, after all.

The last three volumes—much the best of the set—give an excellent and well-deserved portrayal of the manipulations of Earth's Secret Weapon, PR—a new target this for Hubbard, I think—and Jettero Heller, when not insufferably being the White Man, is

occasionally allowed to make some points highly worthy of consideration. It is also of help and value to the sf community to have presented in these books a complete listing of L.R.H.'s earlier work, which I understand New Era Publications will be bringing back into print. As I have indicated, several of these well deserve the term "classic", and even those not in that class will be found to make very rewarding reading. I hope that, when available, they will be read.

And there the goods news ends. I list the bad with some sadness.

Large parts of *Mission Earth* read like a drug-induced wet dream. I say "drug-induced" advisedly: half-way through the book I began to feel I was choking in a miasma of hash, amphetamines, opium, uppers, downers—you name it. Of course, pains are taken at the novel's end to show that this is simply to depict the wickedness of the Baddies, and to hint that contemporary Earth is well into this scene. Well, maybe it is. But the excuse won't wash. Hubbard, of all people, should know that a large selection of his readership is in a permanent state of light trance, and to expose people like that to stuff like this is unforgiveable, whatever the rationalisation.

Again, large parts of this saga are simply pornography. All in the mind's eye, perhaps? Well, the reader will have to judge for himself or herself, but I think not. To write ten volumes of interstellar satire without ever a hint of either tenderness or genuine eroticism is quite a feat—and that is not a compliment. On top of that, the style is in the main simply brutalising. Since these are disputatious points, let me give a quotation which will, I think, illustrate all I have said in this paragraph.

The situation concerns one of Soltan Gris's endless comic (ha!) predicaments. Here, he is trying to extract the combination of a safe from two lesbians, whom he has bound hand and foot. A song is being played in the background:

> *When I gaze into your eyes*
> *I see love, love, love.*
> *When I try you on for size,*
> *I feel love, love, love.*
> *When I press your gushing breasts*
> *And I feel your thighs' caress,*
> *I feel love, love, love.*
> *Go into me!*
> Candy began to thresh about. Her eyes got wilder and wilder. She screamed. Then she turned her head sideways. She shouted, "For God's sake, give him the combination. He's going to rape me!"
> Miss Pinch compressed her lips tightly. I looked at her. I said, "She is absolutely correct."
> I opened up the front of the Ninja robe and stood facing Candy. Candy stared at me. Then she screamed. "Jesus Christ!"
> I walked over to her. I looked at Miss Pinch. "You're the one that's making her suffer. All you have to do is to give me the combination."
> Miss Pinch's lips shut tighter. Her eyes fixed on me. It was a battle of wills.
> I put a knee on Candy's couch. I looked again at Miss Pinch.
> Nothing but tight lips.
> Candy was thrashing her head from side to side, frantic!
> I put my other knee on the couch.
> Candy screamed!
> I looked at Miss Pinch.

There follow *two more pages* of one-liners and one three-sentence paragraph, after which Gris rapes both women, who then realise that heterosexual sex is wonderful

There is worse than this, but I won't go into it. All I can say is that reading this material has increased my respect for the feminist case considerably, and that if two million people

really have been exposed to it, then Planet Earth is just that much the worse off.

My final comment—a long-range one—requires another quotation, this time from Gertrude Stein. *Gertrude Stein?* Yes. She had this to say about the differences between English and American literature:

> "In the meantime, Henry James went on. He too needed the whole paragraph because he too was just there, but, and that is the thing to notice, his whole paragraph detached what it said from what it did, what it was from what it held, and over it all something floated, not floated away but just floated, floated up there. You can see how that was not true of Swinburne and Browning and Meredith but that it was true of Henry James.
>
> And so this makes it that Henry James just went on doing what American literature had always done, the form was always the form of the contemporary English one, but the disembodied way of disconnecting something from anything and anything from something was the American one. The way it had of often all never having any daily living was an American one.
>
> Some say that it is repression but no it is not repression. It is a lack of connection, of there being no connection with living and daily living because there is none, that makes American writing what it always has been and what it will continue to become.
>
> And so there we are."

There we are, indeed. Putting aside entirely the content of *Mission Earth,* and just looking at the writing, can you see where this verbal inflation is getting us to?

Can't people look at the *words* any more?

The New Encyclopedia of Science Fiction
edited by James Gunn *(Viking, 1988, 524pp, $24.95)*

reviewed by Gregory Feeley

James E. Gunn's *The New Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* is, as its title implies, a latecomer to the field of sf encyclopedias, which it hopes to supplement by dint of being up to date. It bears no relation to Peter Nicholls et al.'s *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (1979), and probably would not exist if that exemplary volume had enjoyed a second edition. Gunn acknowledges that both that work and Curtis C. Smith's *Twentieth-Century Science-Fiction Writers* (1981, 1986) provide the "foundations" on which his work is built. The metaphor implies that the successive volumes, building on each other, are getting better; in fact they are getting worse. Smith's volume was badly flawed, while the Gunn—less comprehensive than the Nicholls (which included every sf writer ever to publish a book), and less rigorous than the Smith (which strove to offer complete bibliographies)—sets a low standard, and fails to meet it. The result—and it's a word I do not use lightly—is a scandal.

First and most apparent, the text is riddled with errors. On first opening the book I turned to the entries on writers about whom I can claim some familiarity—James Blish, Jack Dann, Avram Davidson, Joanna Russ, Gene Wolfe—and found errors in dates and titles in all of them. Two title errors (Dann's *Timetipping* and Davidson's *The Enquiries of Doctor Eszterhazy*) prompted suspicion: they were neither simple typos nor misprints, but looked (Timetripping; Dr. Esterhazy) like memory errors of contributors who did not check their work. I then drew up a list of sf titles whose punctuational features lent themselves to frequent misspelling *(We Who Are About To ., Circumsolar!, Counter-polar!, Titans' Daughter,* "All You Zombies—", *"The Number of the Beast—",* "The Hero as Werwolf", "Journey's End"), and checked the book against it. The last two titles

are not cited, but for the rest, Gunn's volume scored an astonishing zero.

Nearly every author's entry has more than one date wrong; the total over the work's 523 pages must exceed a thousand. The publication date for *Under Heaven's Bridge* by Michael Bishop and Ian Watson is given as 1982 in the Bishop entry, 1980 in the Watson, and 1981 under "Collaboration". One of these dates is in fact correct, but what good does that do the reader who doesn't already know? The text even includes projected titles, an inexcusable lapse after the debacle of the first Smith edition: Delany's *The Straits of Messina* and McDevitt's *A Talent for War* are both described as 1988 titles but never appeared that year.

Second is inconsistent methodology. Authors are listed by that form of their names under which they were published, with middle names sometimes given and sometimes not. We are told that Michael Swanwick's middle name is Jurgen, a datum of no bibliographic moment, but nothing to indicate authors who occasionally use middle initials in their by-lines, such as Jack Dann, Joe Haldeman, and Howard Waldrop. Pseudonyms are not cross-referenced; the work of James Tiptree, Jr. and Anthony Burgess are listed under these long-established pseudonyms, but less famous ones such as Lewis Padgett, Anson MacDonald, or Raccoona Sheldon (under which Tiptree published some of her best stories and won an award) can be found only under their authors' major entries. Various contributors offer wildly disparate time scales. We are told that David R. Palmer, after a promising beginning, "fell silent" (last novel published in 1985), but on the following page no mention is made of the more significant silence of Alexei Panshin (last novel in 1978 according to the contributor, in reality five years earlier). Some contributors note whenever a cited work won an award, some don't, and the year given can be either that of publication or that in which the award was made. For novels that saw magazine publication prior to their appearance as books—an important and frequent occurence in the history of American science fiction—some contributors give both dates, others not.

Third, and most distressing, is bad judgement. Numerous entries have been written by interested parties, an astonishing lapse which the contributors' notes show Gunn to have been aware of. The entry for Harlan Ellison is written by one of Ellison's associates, who offers a gushing encomium full of statements like "All of Ellison's writing is deeply persuasive and highly personal", which even Ellison would hesitate to claim for himself. The entry omits Ellison's many abortive projects of the last fifteen years, failing even to mention *The Last Dangerous Visions*. This would be the equivalent of a Random House publicist writing a puff about Truman Capote's career and neglecting to mention *Answered Prayers*.

Less egregious conflicts of interest abound. Gunn should not have written the entry for the movie based on his novel *The Immortal,* whether he liked the movie or not. A.E. van Vogt credits himself with inventing the term "fix-up", which may be true but should come from another source. Greg Bear, writing on "Biology", has to decide how much discussion to accord the importance of his own novel *Blood Music*. He finally gives it the several lines it warrants, but seems embarrassed in doing so.

Both the Nicholls and Smith volumes were generous in giving entries to all but the most irredeemably minor writers; the Gunn, being the shortest (520 double-columned pages versus 658 tripled-spaced, smaller-type pages in Nicholls and 867 double-spaced, sans photographs, in Smith) includes by far the smallest number, despite coming later in the day. Minor American writers not active for many years (Edwin Balmer, Miriam Allen

DeFord, F.L. Wallace) almost always retain a place, if with short entries; it is the equivalent stratum of British writers (Naomi Mitchison, Josephine Saxton, and Peter Tate) who are denied entries. Indeed, British writers must meet a distinctly tougher standard for admission; I would rank all three listed above as more important than Balmer, DeFord, and Wallace. (A closer match might be David S. Garnett, not listed, vs. Mark Geston, listed.) How major can a British writer be and still not be included? Well, Hector Munro (Saki), Michael Frayn, Alan Garner, and M. John Harrison, to name authors from discrete periods, all lack entries.

The influence of fantasy in modern sf is similarly handled with an eye for space limitations: fantasy is entirely ignored, writers active in genre publications but technically creators of fantasy only (James P Blaylock, Colin Greenland, Stephen Donaldson, Thomas Burnett Swann) go unmentioned, and the twining nature of the genres' tandem careers discussed nowhere-at-all. Does Gunn believe that sf and fantasy have so little to do with one another that one can go *unmentioned* in a history of the other? Evidently so: in his Foreword Gunn spends a paragraph contrasting the two, then says, "Fantasy, for reasons of definition and space, has been excluded." To omit Tolkien, Eddison, Cabell et al. from an account of "the way in which [sf] was born, grew and changed one of the dramatic stories described in this Encyclopedia" is a perhaps defensible if narrow tactic; to ignore the interpenetration of sf and fantasy as a historical phenomenon is not. Entries are given for all major American sf magazines of the past fifty years except *Weird Tales* and *Unknown*, which makes no sense for even the most rigorously narrow history of sf. There is not even an entry for "Fantasy" among the essays (as there are for ninety-six other subjects, including "Theater", "Invisibility", and "Music and Music Video").

Too much emphasis is given to awards and award nominations, so much that it comes to resemble filler. Michael Swanwick's entry comprises little more than a list of his many prize nominations—the last of them incorrect. Contributors seem to have been given their own head as to how much space to accord each entry, which leads to peculiar distortions. Avram Davidson is given less space than John Jakes; James Blish less than Jerry Pournelle.

Some of the errors can be traced to Smith's *Twentieth-Century Science-Fiction Writers,* which evidently was often consulted in place of the original sources. A number of the same contributors were used—Sandra L. Miesel on Poul Anderson and Gordon R. Dickson; Jeffrey M. Elliot on Pamela Sargent and George Zebrowski—which only heightens the volume's sense of offering little new. The entry on George Turner, written by Professor Gunn himself, is so plainly cribbed from Smith as to warrant a failing grade in any college course, while another (on Nabokov) similarly derives from the Nicholls, but with wrong dates added.

Nothing in the encyclopedia can be accepted except by someone who already knows the subject, which is to say that the book cannot be trusted. As a reference work sitting on library shelves to be consulted by students, journalists, and other non-specialists, *The New Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* will prove actively harmful. The book should not simply be overhauled for its next edition: it should be withdrawn from sale.

A shorter version of this review first appeared in the Washington Post, *and is reprinted by permission.*

Mona Lisa Overdrive
by William Gibson *(Gollancz, 1988, 251pp, £10.95)*

reviewed by Rachel Pollack

Mona Lisa Overdrive concludes William Gibson's "cyberspace" trilogy. *Neuromancer,* the first book in the series, impressed readers with its join of high technology and tough street characters. A closer reading (by Those Who Should Know) suggested that in fact Gibson's knowledge of computer technology was shaky and his future society only felt genuine. This does not imply that *Neuromancer* was a fake, not at all, but rather that Gibson's real concern was with language.

Readers have pointed out that Gibson made no concessions to the reader's ignorance. I would go further, and contend that Gibson used that very ignorance as a tool to convince us of the book's reality, and give a sense of depth to the surface details. The reader became a tourist without a guidebook in an alien land, where countless details suggested a history and a daily life waiting to be deciphered. If the plot in *Neuromancer* didn't seem to get off the ground it didn't matter; so much else was going on. And if the characters sometimes seemed empty behind their flashy outfits and tough attitudes, that very emptiness formed a convincing aspect of their world. In a society that moves so fast, and so powerfully, the inner life of humans can reduce to a low background hum of desperation.

Count Zero gave us more plot than *Neuromancer,* and more explanation. It was an easier book to read, a better story, less confusing. It also lacked some of the daring of the earlier book. *Mona Lisa Overdrive* continues in this direction. As the last book in the trilogy it answers some of the questions from the earlier ones, while posing very few of its own. In *Neuromancer* the essential mystery concerned the world itself, and all its references. Here we find only a mystery of plot. Somebody receives a package and reacts in fear or excitement. This piques our curiosity, and then the book shifts to another character without telling us what the package contains. This is not the same as a mystery of language, where the book challenges us to understand what appears right in front of us.

Mona Lisa Overdrive does contain social references, but more in the manner of conventional sf, where we catch them immediately, and find them witty, or revealing, or else unlikely, or simply banal. We learn that a half Western woman had her eyes operated on to look more Japanese. This plays on the recent fashion in Japan for women to have their eyes made Western. It reminds us how much economic power determines beauty. There is a nice joke on the great bane of word processing, the failure to save a piece of text. In a cyberspace sequence, one of the characters breaks an arm. The next time he appears in cyberspace his arm is whole, for 3Jane, the villainous controller of the cyberspace reality, has forgotten to "save the configuration". Such points are amusing, even suggestive, but they lack mystery. And when Gibson suddenly refers to a past nuclear war in Europe the references seem entirely throwaway, for the world shows no evidence that the devastation from such a war has ever occurred (I have not checked the earlier books to see if they contained similar war references).

The expression "cyberpunk" became associated with Gibson's writing. The "punk" in the term referred partly to his radical energy, but also to the characters' style, the sharp leather, the mirrorshade lenses. Various readers have suggested that the term is inappropriate for the characters and their actions derive not from the modern punk scene,

but from Raymond Chandler, with his "mean streets", and his hero struggling to keep his integrity in a corrupt world. Gibson is at his best when he shows us the victims, the people of little money and less influence. Mona herself is the novel's most convincing character, a naïve prostitute who tries to make sense of life by remembering the pronouncements of her worldly friend, Lanette. Mona reveres the media star Angie. Like many people today, she follows the glossy descriptions of her heroine's life and assumes they are all true. When she learns that Angie has spent time in a drug rehabilitation clinic she becomes confused, for why would anyone so perfect need drugs? And yet, when her pimp hooks her up with gangsters who make Mona into Angie's double, she knows they are not doing this so she can join the life of the stars.

Mona assumes the men have changed her to star as Angie in a snuff film. And she remembers how Lanette told her that rich men would pay to have prostitutes made into copies of their wives, and then murdered. The detail is horrifying and convincing. It leads us to realize one of Gibson's primary themes, the corruption that comes with power. Chandler and his followers, such as Ross McDonald, described the corruption born of money and influence. The cyberspace books examine the corruption born of technology.

At the same time, bound inseparably to that corruption, we find the theme of technology opening to spirituality. The two are one, for we can argue that all power ultimately can move in either direction, and in fact must move in one of them. The possession of great power is not a stable condition.

There is a long tradition in sf of science and technology leading to religious revelations. Most writers have assumed that the sense of wonder will lead to a mystic oneness, a kind of grand vision of God within the living universe. In *Mona Lisa Overdrive* the informing tradition is not that of contemplative mysticism, but of communication with spirits—powerful beings, each with a distinct personality, who live in some Otherworld of the gods.

Cyberspace creates an Otherworld, and so it makes a kind of sense that spirits should inhabit it. Gibson has chosen the loas of Vodou (his spelling), one of the New World offshoots of West African religion. We learn that cyberspace acted as an open territory for these "paradigms" to enter and colonize. Gibson's use of the loas, especially in *Mona Lisa Overdrive,* remains primarily referential. In *Count Zero* we saw something of their personalities and their effect on their "horses" (the possessed), but here the characters talk about them; the loas themselves remain offstage. Angie gets possessed by Maman Brigitte who tells her that she, Brigitte, is different from the others. We never learn much more about this figure, or what makes her different. This is one of many disappointments in the ending.

Mona Lisa Overdrive concerns itself partly with answering how cyberspace became alive and inhabited with spirits. The characters describe the event as "When It Changed", suggesting a creation myth. Two artificial intelligences were created/came into being. "Only the one has known the other", Maman Brigitte tells Angie, and the confrontation resulted in the AI's breaking into fragments which rushed away from each other and took on the character of the loas. "In the wake of that knowing, the center failed; every fragment rushed away."

This improbable notion parallels the Big Bang myth of creation. It parallels as well the creation in Kabbalah, the Jewish mystical tradition and source of the main line of Western esotericism. According to Kabbalah God was all, and being all, could not know himself.

Therefore, he withdrew into himself to create a void, and then sent his light into that void. Vessels appeared to contain God's power, but the lower vessels proved too weak and broke into fragments, which scattered through creation. The upper vessels, however, express the theme of God looking at God, the one knowing the other.

A textual link to Kabbalah comes in the term "aleph" for the black box which contains Bobby Newmark's link to the cyberspace reality. The term may derive from Jorge Luis Borges's story "The Aleph", in which a single point contains all places in the universe, or, like Borges, Gibson may have taken the term from Kabbalah. Aleph is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and suggests oneness. It is also silent, indicating infinite possibilities.

A suggestion of alchemy enters the novel with the emphasis on Bobby and Angie coming together to marry within cyberspace, and the hint that the marriage has some mystic significance, like the alchemical hieros gamos. Maman Brigitte says portentously, "We walk with you to your wedding" As with the loas, this theme does not go anywhere, for the marriage happens offstage, with no particular repercussions.

In fact, the ending does not really finish the book so much as wrap it up in a sloppy package. The loas never emerge; Maman Brigitte tells Angie, "I am the message your father was told to write. I am the *vevés* he drew in your head," but not really what that means; various minor mysteries get dropped rather than resolved; and most of all, nothing much happens to most of the characters. Their various subplots all more or less come together, with more or less violence. Some go in one direction, some in another (including an in-crowd reference to Camden Town, the home of this journal's reviews editor). And that's about it—except that at the very end Gibson tosses in a coy skiffy idea of first contact with an alien cyberspace in "Centauri" (he leaves out the "Alpha", a word cognate with aleph). This new element opens the way to a sequel, but it also avoids giving the work a genuine conclusion. Reading the last pages of *Mona Lisa Overdrive,* one gets the impression that by the time he reached the end of his trilogy, William Gibson simply had lost interest.

Life During Wartime
by Lucius Shepard *(Grafton, 1988, 383pp, £10.95)*

reviewed by Brian Stableford

Lucius Shepard has been widely-praised, and rightly so, as one of the brightest new stars in the science fiction firmament. He writes with elegance and with passion; his stories are both vivid and gripping, and that is a combination greatly to be valued. His work reproduces in prose all the virtues of the best American movies, exploiting to the full the "production values" which slickness, verve and know-how make possible. Unfortunately, his work also reproduces the vices which even the best American movies retain, in that what lies beneath the surface is rather less substantial and much less convincing than we are asked to believe. This may not matter to those readers in search of spicy literary confections, but there has been a tendency to represent his works as more nourishing fare than in fact they are.

Life During Wartime asks to be taken very seriously. It is packaged as a literary novel, with no mention anywhere of the words "science fiction" or of the Nebula award which

was won by the first part of the novel (the novella "R&R"). The press release accompanying the book begins by boldly informing would-be reviewers that *"Life During Wartime* is an important contemporary American novel which has a disturbing relevance to many aspects of life today" and goes on to quote a *Washington Post* review which claims that Shepard is "a true artist, whose concern is to render truth, not trifle with realism".

Shepard can hardly be expected to take the blame for his publishers' press releases and his reviewers' enthusiasms, but the text does seem to be aiming in these general directions, presenting an image of a near-future Central America which has become a second Vietnam, where American troops are fighting a bizarre campaign which—despite their ultra-sophisticated weaponry—they cannot possibly win. It contains calculated echoes of *Catch 22* in its presentation of a surrealized war whose combat soldiers nurse hopeless dreams of deserting to Panama, and though it is not satire it certainly aspires to comment on the presumed absurdity of American military affairs. Its phantasmagoric transformation of the recent past into a horrific possible future is an attempt to capture the caricaturist's truth of abstraction by exaggeration. Unfortunately, the story which is here extrapolated from the striking but rather plotless "R&R" does not live up to these ambitions.

Shepard's surrealization of the Central American war depends heavily on the way in which he deploys fanciful drugs within his plot. There is, of course, nothing new about the use of drugs by combat soldiers for both medical and recreational purposes—the development of amphetamine pep pills was greatly encouraged by attempts to find a way of combating battle fatigue in World War II—and the psychedelic warfare of the book thus has a solid hypothetical base. Nevertheless, the extrapolation from that base quickly takes us into the standardised fantasy-land of drug-enhanced telepathy and the activities of the Psicorps into which the central character is drafted. The mission on which he is eventually sent—to eliminate an enemy agent he met before being drafted (who, thanks to the coincidental wonders of literary cliché, is a beautiful girl for whom he has conceived a certain infatuation)—enables him to discover the true role which drugs of this kind have played in the war and in human history. The war itself is thus translated into an episode in a long-running feud between two drug-using families, the Madradonas and the Sotomayors, and its climax comes when the hero gets involved in an attempt to settle the feud by treaty, and thus put an end to many of the troubles inflicting the world community.

The long-time sf reader will quickly observe that underneath the author's unusually-stylish surface there lurks one of the hoariest and creakiest of all sf plots, whose variants have been legion since the early days of *Astounding,* when it was frequently deployed by A.E. van Vogt. All the familiar elements are there: the hero is a much-harassed latent superman, whose gradual enlightenment reveals to him that the world is actually being run by secret conspiracies of slightly-less-latent supermen who are standing in the way of man's progress towards some kind of collective apotheosis. There is nothing wrong with this plot as an uplifting distraction—who among us has not rejoiced in at least a few of its performances?—but what it is definitely *not* is something which has "a disturbing relevance to many aspects of life today"; it is a fantasy, a *jeu d'esprit.* Its potential contribution to our understanding of real-life heroism or of warfare as a social phenomenon is non-existent.

The fact that *Life During Wartime* is not a straightforwardly vanVogtian novel is revealed, in part, by its ending. VanVogtian novels usually end with a joyous expansion of perspective which assures us that the central character with whom we have been identifying no longer needs to be troubled by the persistent meanness with which the other characters have treated him, because he has just become the next best thing to God. Lucius Shepard does not expect us to swallow *that* one, but it is difficult to believe that what he substitutes for it is "rendering truth" rather than "trifling with realism", especially when the text itself declares to us that what is happening is "leaving behind logic, leaving behind all ordinary truths"—which is, in fact, precisely what it is doing. What happens is that the hero and his inamorata leave the chaos of the world behind them and retreat into a metaphorical sunset of minds in communion. Having thus cast themselves off, as the author freely admits, from all considerations of logic and "ordinary" truth, they are said to be taking with them into this rosy exile "everything that mattered" One could argue much more persuasively that they are leaving behind everything that *really* matters—logic, truth, the real reasons why wars are fought and the experiences involved in fighting them—and that what they are taking with them (the magical telepathic meltdown of twin souls) is something which matters only in the context of our more self-indulgent dreams.

Life During Wartime is a book with considerable virtues. As a science fiction novel, it has a great deal going for it, and it is certainly set solidly in that great tradition of slyly self-misrepresenting *deus-ex-machina*-ridden fantasy which John W. Campbell jr. promoted enthusiastically in the pages of *Astounding*. Like Shepard's first novel, *Green Eyes,* it opens as marvellous and compelling melodrama—but like that first novel, it has nowhere to go thereafter but voodooland, and while the expectations of the science fiction reader will grant an imaginative licence to that kind of journey, the removal is fatal to any pretensions which the book might have to be authentically realistic, or even sensibly surrealistic. At the end of the day, one can only say: *C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre.*

Other Voices
by Colin Greenland *(Unwin Hyman, 1989, 192pp, $11.95)*

reviewed by Sarah Lefanu

Bruce Sterling, in his preface to the cyberpunk anthology *Mirrorshades,* has laid claim on behalf of himself and the other writers of the self-styled "Movement", to a particular allegiance to the culture of the Eighties.

The cyberpunks, he says, are fascinated by the tools of global integration such as multinational corporations and the satellite media net. They are fascinated too by integration on a human level and the tools for that: surgical ones. The swapping—or, as we're in a firmly Eighties ideology here, the buying and selling—of limbs and organs, and the invasion or colonisation of one mind by another, reflects in terms of the physical and mental integrity of an individual the breakdown of national and cultural boundaries. It is claimed that this invasion of mind and body can radically redefine the nature of humanity, and of the self.

But for all the stylistic energy of many of the cyberpunk writers, the classy exploitation

of the iconography of 1980s style consumerism, the up-to-the-minute foregrounding of lifestyle as political and moral statement; for all this, there lurks, as has been pointed out elsewhere, a familiar tale beneath the glitz and sleaze, that of the individual struggling alone to survive in a hostile world.

There is nothing wrong with tried and tested tales, particularly if reworked and modernised with the narrative skill of Bruce Sterling or William Gibson. But cyberpunk does not hold a monopoly on contemporaneity. I would argue that an allegiance to, or rather an understanding of, recent social and political developments can be found just as much in other areas of science fiction and fantasy.

A case in point is Colin Greenland's *Other Voices*. This novel comes with traditional fantasy trappings: a princess struggling to regain the authority that has been stripped from her by a colonising power; a fierce but loyal tribe of mountain folk; a vampiric zombie; a girl child who talks to the dead. There is not a prosthetic limb in sight. Indeed the cutting edge of technology is represented by piped hot water.

The topography is far from global. *Other Voices,* like Greenland's previous novel *The Hour of the Thin Ox,* is set in a world of small nation states, between which the level of communication is governed by the slow pace of available transport—horses, boats and, in *The Hour of the Thin Ox,* briefly and unsuccessfully, a balloon.

But of course a world-spanning setting is not a prerequisite for breadth or depth of either theme or execution (what about Robert Holdstock's Ryhope Wood, for example?), and Colin Greenland's concerns are modern ones. He links the struggle for public power with that for domestic power within the family. He explores the uneasy balance on which power rests, and the tendency of the oppressed to fight back against their oppression.

The weakness of *The Hour of the Thin Ox* lay in the considerable time it took to get going. The history, geography and current state of play between the lands of Luscany, Eschalan and Bryland all had to be filled in before the story took us south to the jungles of Belanesi and the matters of real interest began. Then it was the Hour of the Thin Ox (and a very fine Hour it was too) and it was all over.

There is no such problem with *Other Voices.* In a deft opening chapter Greenland presents a society on the very edge of change. A solitary orange Eschalan enters the city of Calcionne, calling on the people of Luscany to lay down their arms and welcome their new lords. To the group of children who first see him he is a figure of fun. They mock him and stone him and drive him into the courtyard of an inn where a crazed kitchen maid, Mad Polly, attacks him and manages to slice off an ear before order is restored. The farcical elements of the scene are played up, but within weeks the Eschalan have invaded and taken control, and Mad Polly's head decorates a pike throughout the ensuing winter.

The central character of this novel is the adolescent Serin Guille, a figure well placed as observer of the flux and flow around her. She is partly montano—her mother is from the mountain people—and partly urban bourgeoisie. Her father is a taxidermist, and his as it were out-of-hours interests—he hopes to reanimate the dead matter he works on—attract the attention of the Eschalan powers.

There is nothing casual about death in this novel. The murder of an Eschalan by montanos gives the excuse to those Eschalans who want it for an end to benign rulership; and Princess Nette's throwaway demand for the death of her treacherous courtier, in the most wittily macabre scene in the book, marks the beginning of her active role in the uprising.

It is in this scene, too, that Nette recognises the uses to which her sexuality can be put. There is a sense throughout of the political nature of sexuality. This is a novel that deals with at least some of the implications of feminism, and in this it is both different from the work of cyberpunk writers and could perhaps lay claim to a greater contemporaneity. Greenland shows us the problematics of sexual difference, rather than subsuming them within a form of streetwise sexual egalitarianism in which difference is denied.

As for radically redefining, or, rather more modestly, questioning the nature of the self and what constitutes its boundaries, the figure of Old Tomalin, the vampiric zombie who takes a shine to Serin, works as well, it seems to me, with his legendary, folkloric associations, as the gleaming new knives and probes of mind and body implants. He is the wild card, the maverick element that further unsettles the shifting sands of power play.

The only weakness in *Other Voices* seems to spring from Greenland's choice of an adolescent girl as the central character (a similar problem can be seen in the first half of Holdstock's *Lavondyss,* but it is astonishingly and wonderfully overcome in the second half), as it restricts the scope of the narrative. But otherwise I would say that American claims for being at the cutting edge of contemporary life are challenged, surprisingly perhaps, by recent British work of which Greenland's *Other Voices* is a fine example.

Fire on the Mountain
by Terry Bisson *(Arbor House/William Morrow, 1988, 167pp, $16.95)*

reviewed by Colin Greenland

Fire on the Mountain is a documentary novel, a methodical yet moving recovery of the history that got away. Terry Bisson presents three texts: a series of letters written in 1859 by Thomas Hunter, a young Virginian doctor, to his sister and his inamorata; the memoir of A. Abraham, written fifty years later, recording his experiences of 1859, when he was twelve, and a slave in Virginia; and the story of a trip to Virginia made in 1959 by Dr Abraham's great-granddaughter, Yasmin Odinga, an archaeologist, to collect her twelve-year-old daughter Harriet from her mother-in-law and deposit Dr Abraham's manuscript in the museum at Harper's Ferry, on the hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of war.

Bisson triangulates his three texts throughout, by interleaving them. Yasmin and Harriet read Dr Thomas's letters, on loan to the museum, because Dr Thomas was the man who apprenticed their ancestor in the practice of medicine. The significance of the plot, what it was that happened in 1859 and who celebrates its centennial, is thus clear from the outset. The drama is a national drama; the characters are individuals, but they function as illustrations. The story Abraham tells (How will he get here from there?) describes a person, and a people, coming into their own. The story of Thomas Hunter and Emily Pern (Will she entertain his courtship? What is delaying her replies to his letters?) embodies themes and problems of communication, renunciation and alliance. The story of Yasmin and Harriet (Has time apart and away from home upset their relationship or Harriet's eduation? How will Harriet take the news that her mother, five years a widow, is pregnant again?) exemplifies the politics of the personal in a brave new world.

Yasmin has another duty in Virginia: to watch with Pearl, her mother-in-law, public vid broadcasts of the first human setting foot on Mars, due any day. Pearl's son, Yasmin's late husband Leon, was killed in an equipment failure on the first Mars fly-by.

That cosmonauts of the Pan African Space Administration reach Mars in 1959; that there are orbital factories and frictionless motors and self-repairing concrete and organic shoes and ceramic dentures in 1959, and that most of these are African products; that on the continent of the Americas there lies a country where racial and social and sexual equality are not only recognised but presumed and cherished; and that Earth is, apparently, at peace—all these facts are incidental to the lives of Yasmin and Harriet. They are the point and the vision of *Fire on the Mountain.*

It starts with John Brown. John Brown whose body lies a-mouldering in the grave, but not, this time, until 1862, because Harriet Tubman didn't fall ill in July 1859, so she was with him at the raid on the arsenal in Harper's Ferry on the fourth, so the raid succeeded and Brown, hanged only in effigy, lived to pursue the campaign, so the militant became martial, and the Civil War was a war of independence for the nation of Africa in America.

Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle* features an imaginary novel, *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy,* which tells the story of what might have happened if the Allied Powers had won World War II. In *Fire on the Mountain, John Brown's Body* is the title not of an anthem of consolation and martyrdom, but of a science fiction novel, a bestseller in the 1920s, which supposes Tubman's indisposition, Brown's failure and the success of Robert E. Lee's punitive expedition. The curator of the Harper's Ferry museum, who has read it, tells Yasmin and Harriet: "It's a white nationalist fantasy, and somewhat overdone . . . Socialism exists, but only as a threat. The world is basically ruled by the same people who built the railroads and the textile mills—British and then Merican capital. For a hundred years. And on into the future, until the end."

"Ridiculous!" Yasmin exclaims. "The author would have all of history hanging on one strand of rope with poor old Captain Brown."

The way Bisson pre-empts the summary objection to parahistory by incorporating it shows how conscientiously he has prepared his world and its documents. If we are correspondingly careful, we may notice that the phrasing of Yasmin's reply is as awkward as it is because Bisson has decided never to specify whether the author of *John Brown's Body* was a man or a woman. We may also discern that, should anyone oppose it to *Fire on the Mountain* itself, that objection would fall down, because Bisson also provides hints and asides that revolutions in his Europe have been more durable than in our own. The phrase "German socialism", for example, may not mean to his characters what it normally means to us.

Bisson's programming is scrupulous, inclusive and effective, as far as I, foreign, ignorant and weak in history, can tell. What it is not is obtrusive; though at the last, perhaps the long-restrained trumpets of ideology blast through a touch too triumphantly. Harriet, endorsing her mother's rejection of *John Brown's Body,* dismisses the whole of science fiction along with it; but "I'll take the real world, thanks," is a bit too adult, too *staunch* a spontaneous pronouncement, wouldn't you say, for a twelve-year-old, even a beneficiary of a perfectly correct socialist upbringing? No? Well, what about the poor white trash fifty-year-old mechanic (called Elvis Presley Cardwell, for some reason), who has had the benefit of a perfectly correct socialist government for only ten years because he lives in Virginia, not Nova Africa, appraising thus the cock-up he has made of Yasmin's car: "Half of success is failing. Now I know what won't work." Well, locutions like that won't work either, not in fiction as sophisticated and naturalised as this. Still, a minor defect, really, this overgenerous sacrifice of surface to structure; though if Ursula

Le Guin had written it, Gregory Benford might think it worth comment.

I wonder why, among the chorus of authors—Madison Smartt Bell, Edward Bryant, George Alec Effinger, M.J. Engh—recruited by Arbor House to acclaim advance copies of *Fire on the Mountain,* Le Guin's name doesn't appear. Unpredictable from either of his previous novels (though *Talking Man* is a gem in its own right, a sustained piece of wry laid-back bluegrass lyricism, high fantasy done with *no access to the upper levels*), Bisson's latest achievement is historicist rather than mystical, but otherwise very much in the mode of Le Guin: utopian, humanist, philanthropic, informed by feminism and ecological politics. The programme may be socialistic, but the focus is resolutely personal, and these people are all very nice.

Simply, the message says, no one is ever alone, not even a twelve-year-old orphan slave running from the paddy rollers through the woods at midnight. The aspects of the human condition that Bisson fictifies are community, patience, the capacity to learn and improve, the possibility that emotional, political and moral problems may be solved by goodness and mercy, if at the price of violence. All his characters learn lessons that enable them to break with a past that is secure but oppressive, "a peace fatal to Love itself". Yasmin realises that she has been mourning too long; Thomas that firm convictions are not enough; and Abraham that he must give up the protection of a considerate master and the promise of manumission, to fight for something immeasurably more important. The result is war, protracted and repeated. For ten years after its founding Nova Africa remains embattled; and in 1948 the U.S.A. faces its second Revolutionary War. But the wars are won. Harriet and her generation inherit the Earth, and Mars as well (though that too Bisson carefully and quietly complexifies).

Fire on the Mountain is an extraordinary, exemplary and exhilarating novel, remarkable for its display of luminous period detail, all historical, yet two-thirds perfectly inauthentic; for its able personations of a young slave, a pregnant woman and an idealistic but conventional Southern gentleman of the mid-nineteenth century; and also for its wheeling action, that always approaches, yet never arrives in, the central, sunny, generating-and-resolving utopia. If *Fire on the Mountain* doesn't stir and delight a lot of readers, and isn't also received at once into the literary critical canon of science fiction, then things are every bit as bad as the anonymous author of *John Brown's Body* imagined.

The Motion of Light in Water: Sex and Science Fiction Writing in the East Village, 1957 – 1965
by Samuel R. Delany *(Arbor House/William Morrow, New York, 1988, 302 pp, $18.95; Plume (New American Library), 1989, $8.95, pb)*

reviewed by Lisa Tuttle

The thought of reviewing, let alone *criticising,* a work of autobiography ought to give anyone pause. Most writers take reactions to their work extremely personally, as our language reveals ("They rejected me," for example, or "Did you see how Clute attacked him in *Foundation*?") Yet most will agree intellectually, if not emotionally, that to hate a book is not necessarily to hate its author—many loveable people have written bad or boring novels. (And the other way around. Who'd want to live with Tolstoy?) To point

out errors in fact, or lapses in taste, or failures of artistic skill or whatever else might be judged wrong with a particular book is not *exactly* the same as telling the author she has a rotten soul. The conflation of writer with written may be jettisoned for the cooler theory that texts are artefacts which can (or must) be examined in isolation from whatever we may know about the author. But if works of fiction can be criticised as artefacts, and factual works on the basis of fact, where does that leave autobiography? Apparently factual yet shaped like fiction, the autobiography's value is not to be found simply in its story, but is partly historical, partly artistic. It can't be judged by the standards applied to most non-fiction, but it's not enough to read it like a novel. Although no less an artefact than any other text, what the autobiography is *about* is its author. Love me, love my autobiography.

All of which is *not* a round-about way of saying that I didn't like *The Motion of Light in Water* (I liked it very much), although it might be a round-about way of trying to get out of reviewing it. Justifiable or not, being called on to review an autobiography feels like being asked to review a person, and how do I do that? This book seems to be *very* like its author (whom I have met, and knew as a teacher eighteen years ago, but know mostly through his writing), and I found it fascinating, insightful, alive, both intellectually and emotionally stirring.

It does, as we hope for from literary autobiography, provide glosses on the fiction. The same themes, character types, incidents and objects heavily charged with symbolism recurring throughout his novels have always suggested a strong autobiographical content to Delany's science fiction, and here he reveals the foundation for many of them, from the obsession with fingernail-biting to the original three-way marriage, which echo through most of his fictions. And, because he is so frank about his homosexuality in this book, it becomes clear that an earlier essay, *Heavenly Breakfast* (1979) was, through misdirection and omission, far less autobiographical, far more fictional, than it seemed at the time.

Although I enjoy his imaginary worlds and his characters, for me the major attraction of Delany's work has always been its intellectual content, his continuing, philosophical argument about life and language, civilization and desire—and my dissatisfaction with almost all the books arises from the clumsy integration of arguments into fiction. Connection between story and ideas somehow misses, characters become mouthpieces. Instead of merging as they should if shaken, the fiction and the philosophy keep separating out like oil and vinegar, and I find myself thrown out of the imaginary city back into the author's notebook, again and again. Maybe he intends it to jar—Post-Modernism and Its Discontents?—but I think it is a misjudgement.

Not being fiction, *The Motion of Light in Water* does not suffer from this split between author and story. The author *is* the story. Digressions and interpolations are a part of the whole; the "story" is whatever he tells us, and when. Thus: "Let's pause a moment, on an image of two young writers at the second stanchion of the bridge, ambling into Brooklyn, for another marginal tale that takes its significance from a contrast with all these moments of positivity" (p.109) is followed by the memory of the young writer a few years earlier in 1960 attending a work by Allan Kaprow titled "Eighteen Happenings in Six Parts". Marginal? That experience, as it is related, encompasses a basic theme of the book—the changing definition of art as the Fifties became the Sixties and the way language itself changed, and changed perception—and later (p.174) Delany draws upon his experience of the Kaprow "happening" as a metaphor in his moving and insightful

discussion of how knowledge (and language) significantly altered the model of homosexuality that existed before the Sixties. Marginal? Central, I think. And when the author temporarily parts company with the young man on the bridge, because they are both Delany, there is no sense (as sometimes in his fiction) of the author tearing off a paper mask which he will later ask us to accept, again, as a real face. It's all real, here. Intellect, emotions, characters, narrative, philosophy, all are a part of the same whole, the same life, the shape of which is discovered by the older Delany.

Of all Delany's published books, this one, to me, was the most satisfying and the most sheerly pleasurable to read. Much as I enjoyed *Dhalgren* and *Stars in my Pocket like Grains of Sand,* both were abandoned, mid-reading, for weeks at a time when the tortured prose became too much torture. Although *The Motion of Light in Water* also suffers from Delany's obsession with precise detail—the sort of precision which paradoxically obscures what it attempts to describe—here it comes into its own; here, in this personal tale of memory and desire, it is absolutely right. The process of growing up, of being formed and changed by language of exploration and development is what most of his fiction is about. Here Delany presents the same themes without disguise, without the disfiguring burden of translation into science- or any other kind of fiction, and they are far more powerful and affecting than they were when set in imaginary Neverÿon or the city at the end of time.

Obviously, this book will appeal most to people already familiar with Delany's work, but it could—and should—be read with interest by a much wider audience. The Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data on the copyright page targets only a few of the main topics: Authors, American—20th Century; Science Fiction—Authorship; East Village (New York, N.Y.)—Popular Culture; Bohemianism—New York (N.Y.). Oddly, it omits Sex—Homosexuality despite Delany's own helpful subtitle, and neither is there any mention of the biographical interest the book holds for admirers of the poet Marilyn Hacker, Delany's wife during the years covered.

The Motion of Light in Water is not a full-scale autobiography, but only the first installment in a continuing life. I await the next chapter eagerly.

Eternity
by Greg Bear *(Gollancz, 1989, 399 pp, £12.95)*

reviewed by Dave Langford

It is a legitimate goal of sf to boggle the reader with huge ideas, colossal magnitudes, stupefyingly immense distances. Inconveniently, human powers of apprehension tend to blow a fuse long before assimilating mere Ringworlds, Orbitsvilles, the long haul to Proxima Centauri—the petty doldrums of the merely finite.

Infinity is a different country, and they even do addition differently there. Rudy Rucker took the full range of infinities beyond infinities as a fantasy geography in *White Light,* complete with plans for mathematical vehicles to take you there (cries of delighted recognition from those who'd already glimpsed the foothills of Cantor's set-theoretic immensities, and of frustrated bafflement from everyone else). Christopher Priest presented his infinite *Inverted World* with more canny circumspection as perhaps a function of one's point of view . a wise stratagem, since the unstable Ringworld's

embarrassing tendency to fall into the sun is as nothing to the Priest hyperboloid's perpetual feat of intersecting its own hyperboloid primary in more than one place.

In *Eon* (1985), Greg Bear offered an ingenious example of spatial infinity fitting neatly into the pocket; actually, into a smallish chamber of a 250km asteroid. This is the "Way", which extends forever along one dimension only and seems sort of comfortably feasible, a never-ending tunnel not unlike the Circle Line. One's feelings that rather a lot of energy would be required are countered with reassurances about the hugeness and incomprehensibility of the space/time generators which maintain the Way, while philosophical worries about how an infinity "fits" into our relativistic universe are not so much met as subverted into a justification for the temporal slippage whereby the asteroid end of the Way heaves into sight of Earth some centuries before its construction.

The Way, in fact, is an ambitious and involving creation which is the real hero of *Eon*. Bear leads up to it tantalizingly and unveils its secrets with effective timing (for example, the original architects are still in residence, a billion or so kilometres along the tunnel—one has grown tired of super-engineers who construct wonders of the universe and then bugger enigmatically off to spare the author the trouble of fitting them into the plot). On the debit side, the human characters are less successfully drawn, and the politics of 2005 seem designed not so much for plausibility as to provide an excuse for exciting free-fall battles while Earth burns.

Finally, the infinite curate's egg of *Eon* breaks open and fragments of plot fly in various directions, including one exhilarating trajectory along the Way itself: ever-opening horizons, the shades of Arthur C. Clarke falling fast, "Excelsior!" and "Sail on! sail on!"

All this background is needed to tackle *Eternity,* a sequel which tells us at considerable length what happened next. Greg Bear is a destructive chap. We have had the transformation of Earth's biosphere in *Blood Music,* nuclear holocaust by way of mere colourful background to Eon, and the smashing of Earth itself in *The Forge of God.* There remain the universe and the Way; the end of the former provides a minor flash-forward early in *Eternity,* whose climax is the annihilation of the latter.

Oh dear, it's like this. A character last seen heading off beyond infinity returns to describe (in italics) the end of the universe; the way he and his mates were left without amusements and became gods; how they weren't very good at this; how they were bailed out by some altogether more experienced gods who'd been practising longer; and how he comes to have returned with a portentous message. The message is that the Way is a bad thing. By, as it were, being an infinite open-cast mine stretching through the lush green fields of futurity, it's mucking up the orderly closure of the universe. The god-intellects request the prompt removal of this obstacle to a tidy decommissioning. As you might imagine, there is much debate about this request, along the traditional lines of "What has posterity ever done for *us*?"

A philosophical question not answered nor as far as I can see even considered in the book is as follows. If the infinite Way's disfiguring extension through space/time means that it "is" once blocking the plumbing at the end of time, what good can its "subsequent" destruction do?

Further delaying excitement is provided by the Jarts, a culture of authentically creepy aliens last seen being wiped out by the superspatial shockwave produced by that final, epic and just a trifle genocidal journey up the Way in *Eon*. There still seem to be a lot of Jarts

around, however, including a computer-stored specimen which has fallen into human hands and which with unbelievable idiocy a character decides to upload into his own mind. Naturally the Jart is soon in control, after a mental tussle about which Bear is inartistically reticent. "How did you break through my barriers?" "Your understanding of certain algorithms is incomplete." Happily it turns out that the Jarts—who like the Pnume of Jack Vance's book are great believers in gathering and stasis-preserving any and all information, artifacts and people—have identified that final god-mind as the appropriate authority to which their data-harvests should be delivered. Hence the Jart Problem is solved in the great and groan-making tradition of sf, by discovering that all along they and we were secretly on the same side, tra la.

All digressions past, the Way is cataclysmically closed down and the nicer characters nicely if not always plausibly pensioned off. And what a sour taste it leaves in the mouth. For all *Eon's* flaws, that book ended on a high note of outward seeking: to follow knowledge like a sinking star beyond the utmost bounds of human thought (and then, given infinity, further still). In *Eternity* the ultimate reaches of space/time are glimpsed and shown as dead boring, the domain of a tiresome gestalt whose chief interest—as though this were the tail end of a science fiction convention—is the organization of a nice, smooth-running closing ceremony.

Meanwhile, back on Earth, it is made clear that there are things with which twenty-first century humanity is not to meddle. The Way was the hero; Bear has finished with the Way; bye-bye to it and all its symbolic weight. The gates to infinity have been slammed forever shut. Ambition should be made of sterner stuff.

Counterings: Utopian Dialectics in Contemporary Contexts
by Kingsley Widmer *(Studies in Speculative Fiction, no. 17: U.M.I. Research Press (Ann Arbor/London), 1988, 196pp, n.p.)*

reviewed by Edward James

In the acknowledgements Widmer thanks his editors for tolerating his contentiousness, his rhetorical idiosyncrasies, his stylistic barbarisms and the manuscript muddles of a dyslexic, who, as a true utopian (despising the dehumanizing division of labour) prepared all his manuscripts himself. It clearly behoves a reviewer to be no less tolerant than an editor (even though one might wish that the editors had caught rather more of the spelling mistakes).

It is not altogether easy to maintain tolerance. Any reader of *Foundation* is going to be somewhat put off by the frequent slighting references to science fiction ("hereafter usually labelled sci-fi to give appropriate emphasis to its formulaic predominance", p.4). Anyone who believes Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* to be one of the greatest of modern utopian texts is going to be rather perturbed by its brief dismissal as a "collection of not very acute (indeed rather dishonest if one examines many of the announced issues) diatribes" (p.61). *The Female Man* is not the only, er, sci-fi text which Widmer almost wilfully misinterprets—Charnas's *Motherlines* and Sturgeon's *Godbody* are others.

His chapters are concerned with diatopianism (the dialectics of utopianising); revtopianism (the reversals of normal utopian thought, as in Zamiatin's dystopia, or Le Guin's ambiguous utopia); femtopianism (gendered utopias, not the properly egalitarian

feminist utopias of which Widmer approves); primatopianism (the Golden Age utopian myths of William Morris, Ford Madox Ford, and modern pastoralists from Thoreau to the Bhagwan Rajneesh and Theodore Roszak—"Roszak should be granted some competence at conceiting together any old social radicalism and new-old mysticism, the latest in ecology and the laxest in metaphysics, admirable feminism and contemptible psycho-babble, and all with utopian purpose", p.109); entopianism, metautopianism, hyperutopianism, pornotopianism, thanatopianism and, finally, the aim of his book, detopianism—that is, emphasising the continuity of the utopian with other experiences, countering utopia, just as utopia counters social realities.

Most of the critics who write about the utopian ideals of others hanker after it in some shape or form themselves. Frank and Fritzie Manuel, in their monumental *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (ascribed unaccountably by Widmer to Frank alone at one point) apocalyptically announce that "Western civilisation may not be able to survive long without utopian fantasies any more than the individual can without dreaming" But for Widmer utopias are rather more than fantasies. After declaring that utopianising is not "mere speculative engagement in variety, but the passionate desire for a quite different and considerably better society" (p.152), he admits that part of his passionate desire for the different and better is bound up with "my version of anarchism (as well as atheism and even a bit of neonihilism)". His version of anarchism is libertarian, though not, he is at pains to point out, current party-political Libertarianism, the minimal statism of Robert Nozick, or his spiritual forbear, Ayn Rand, whom Widmer accuses of merely purveying an extreme form of entrepreneurial capitalism. The utopianising of others is subjected to examination by his criteria, although he does not indulge in utopianising himself, that is, in defining his own position, only counterutopianising But this committed vision—rather removed from the cool objectivity (or pseudo-objectivity) of most utopian scholars, such as the Manuels—makes this book entertaining and insightful far more frequently that it is irritating.

Widmer begins by diatopianising: analysing the utopian dialectics of some other critics. He effectively demolishes Michael Holquist's influential ideas about utopia as play, pointing out that Holquist is himself in the game of denying utopia any relationship to the real political world: "throwing away kings, altering counters, doing away with opponents, are all rather discouraged in board games, though often crucial to utopianizing" (p.3). His next target is Darko Suvin, whom he accuses of wishing to restrict the category of utopia too radically: making it literary, this-worldly, inevitably hierarchic, and, sin of sins, merely the sociological subgenre of sci-fi. "While Suvin's exclusions and categorizing aim at conceptual neatness (and academic aggrandizement for science fiction), the costs seem high" (p. 5), above all the cost of the exclusion of non-literary utopianising. Finally, Saul Morson's theories of the utopian genre—utopia as a literary tradition, to which newcomers to the field can merely add—are attacked, from much the same angle.

This then, is the great merit of Widmer: that his approach is deliberately broad and loose. He recognises that utopianising is not just to be found in the great tradition of utopian fiction, stretching from More to what Tom Moylan called the "critical utopias" of the 1970s—novels by Le Guin, Russ, Delany and Piercy—or in even more recent dystopias, like *The Handmaid's Tale* (for Widmer rightly recognises that dystopias are fully part of of the utopian tradition, serving as mirror utopias). Utopianising is equally to

be found in the works of politicians, architects, philosophers, idealists, L5ers, millenarians, cranks, and many others. Thus we have analyses of New Age texts, or of O'Neill's *The High Frontier* as well as the more predictable texts which scholars of utopia have continued to regurgitate. One spin-off for us are some very illuminating analyses of the utopian elements of novels which I don't think have ever figured in utopian discussions before, including D.H. Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent,* Paul Theroux's *Mosquito Coast* and John Fowles's *A Maggot* (which appears as *The Maggot* throughout).

The general merits, and short-comings, of Widmer might be clearer if I make a comparison with another recent book on utopia—a book which was not sent to the SFF for review, although it is useful here to be able to bring it to the attention of *Foundation*'s readers: Krishan Kumar's *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times* (Blackwell, 1987, 506pp, £24). This is an extremely solid, very well-researched and scholarly book, in my view the most important book on the subject since the Manuels themselves. Yet, compared to Widmer, Kumar is traditional and narrow. He begins in the ultimately traditional way, by going back to the ancient Greeks. Like the Manuels, but unlike Widmer, he never defines "utopia" and its internal contradictions. He proceeds through "Utopia in Nineteenth-Century Europe" (Owen, Fourier, Saint-Simon) and "Utopia in Nineteenth-Century America" (Owen again, the Oneida community) to a study of the origins of anti-Utopia—all this with many useful insights and an abundance of sound judgement, but all too predictable in its direction—towards the meat of the book: a detailed study of five texts and their importance to the utopian tradition. If anyone wants to learn about Bellamy's *Looking Backward,* Wells's *A Modern Utopia,* Huxley's *Brave New World,* Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Skinner's *Walden Two,* then there is now no better place to turn than Kumar. He ends with a summary of utopia in the twentieth century (where he reveals much less familiarity with sf than Widmer). There is no doubt about the immense value of Kumar's book, if for nothing else than in the detailed study of those five crucial texts, and their correct placing within the "tradition" It is thorough, and authoritative. But it does not open doors, as Widmer does. And doors should be opened, even if, when we see what's on the other side, we don't want to go through them.

Zenith
edited by David S. Garnett *(Sphere Books, 1989, 298pp, £3.50)*

reviewed by K.V. Bailey

The editor's introduction states his criterion to be "stories for the next millennium". Lisa Tuttle's opening story's opening sentences read: "Jake Bourne was twenty-two, happily married, and worked as a clerk for the Texas Department of Public Safety when the aliens came. Overnight, everything changed." Substituting a Surrey town council for anything Texan, that could credibly introduce an eighteen-nineties Wells scenario. Robert Holdstock's extended anatomical metaphors (e.g. Pelvic Village, Solar Plexus Plain, Scar of the Appendix), tumbling (almost) into piquant bathos, are ultimately of Tompkinsian, if not of Gulliverian, provenance. Elizabeth Sourbut's "Feminopolis" gives us close encounters in the vein of *Erewhon*. These and other stories, such as Garry Kilworth's

"White Noise", Brian Aldiss's "Days in the Life of a Galactic Empire" and Barrington Bayley's "Death Ship", engage quite conventional science fiction or fantasy ploys—in those three cases, respectively, that of metaphysical breakthrough, of star wars intrigue, and of time-loop paradox. I note all this, not pejoratively—they are all stories of merit, some outstandingly so—but rather to suggest that there are genre themes that do not grow old as fashions grow old, and that the perennial nature of these stories' structures by no means nullifies the editorial "for the next millennium" claim. Contrary to the adage, old bottles, or at least traditionally designed ones, are not incompatible with new wines.

These wines we are already acquainted with in the nineteen-eighties. Many are very dry, others a little pétillant, and, somewhat to strain the trope, they are products of a variety of grafts in diligently cultivated vineyards—post-Jungian, feminist, neo-Marxist, neurophysical, semiological. Thus in that opening story, "In Translation", Lisa Tuttle uses alien contact to reveal the nature of negative communication on several planes of human experience; Brian Aldiss uses the props and scenery of space opera to probe what is implied by the narrative's most significant single sentence: "Enemies are as much an ancient human invention as God."

Time, subjectively or extra-dimensionally conceived, paradoxical or implacable, is a frequent ingredient. Holdstock, Bayley, Andrew Stephenson, Garry Kilworth, Colin Greenland have variant treatments. Colin Greenland actually uses the mechanism of a good old-fashioned Time Machine in his episode of austerely Gothic incestuous encounter. Holdstock's treatment links his "Time of the Tree" to the ambience of *Lavondyss*. Through time's manipulation Andrew Stephenson's "Cinema Altéré" contrives the ultimate in bread and circuses for the twenty-first or any other century.

Few of the stories are written in the mode of what William King's drugs and spare-organs queen in "Skyrider" calls "the age of decentralization"—that current fin-de-siècle idiom of which the mannerisms of cyberpunk are a manifestation. Stylistically innovative and brilliant, certainly, is Ian McDonald's "Gardenias": at once harsh and decorative, lending itself to both macabre beauty and bleak appraisal. Such appraisal runs from story to story. The only one that made me laugh out loud, laugh at all in fact, was Storm Constantine's "The Pleasure Giver Taken" It brims with baroque decadence, jewelled magic—and a wickedly joyous wit.

Although all the writers are British (though two are trans-atlantic by birth), the Introduction, while stressing that here is a mix of new and established names, makes little of nationality, minimising commonly supposed differences between the characteristics of British and American sf. Nevertheless, there is a distinctively British "feel" to it all. Christopher Evans's "The Bridge", its anonymously pre-technological setting granted and his invisible, ethereal "chimeras" aside, is a descendant of the realistically presented Bulwer Lytton type of historical romance. "Gardenias" sounds the same chord, a century transposed, as that sounded by Dorian Gray. Barrington Bayley's story, for all its sophisticated play with the idea of "idempotency", is grounded in the mad scientist syndrome as essentially as are the stories of Frankenstein, Dr Jekyll, or Professor Challenger. I don't know how well some of these stories will export to America, where the pervading grounding is different, is more likely to lie in, say, Hawthorne, Melville and Poe. I surmise that of all of them Lisa Tuttle's might travel best, because the sense of alienation it conveys is also very much that of a stranger in a strange land. But it, like the collection as a whole, does token effectively what David Garnett affirms to be "the sf renaissance on this side of the Atlantic"

An Alien Light
by Nancy Kress *(Arbor House, 1988, 370pp, $18.95; Century Legend, 1988, 370pp, £12.95 hc, £6.95 pb)*

reviewed by Ian Watson

Opinion appears divided as to whether this is "yet another" sf novel, a routine variation upon familiar themes, or whether the book is in fact rather good. Personally I incline to this second view, but certainly Nancy Kress does play the variation game—perhaps almost unwittingly, as if picking up vibrations from the science-fictional ether. Leaving aside any echoic mimesis of earlier sf texts about alien worlds, it seems as though a clutch of authors are currently—each upon their own stage—conducting similar thought experiments concerning the human paradox of violence plus co-operation.

Consider: Rebecca Ore's *Becoming Alien* addresses the theme of xenophobic violence and co-existence. Judith Moffett's *Pennterra* is about co-operation and non-violence on a world where the peaceful telepathic aliens meld with the whole ecology. D. Alexander Smith's *Rendezvous* concerns itself with aliens whose individual identities submerge into a higher consciousness mediated by scent. Having eliminated savage, ape-like predators from their own world (no easy conceptual task) they now confront the human monkeys from Earth. *Adulthood Rites* by Octavia Butler explores the "compelling, seductive, deadly contradiction" represented by human beings in whom intelligence coexists with hierarchical behaviour, a blend which the visiting aliens believe must lead to violent extinction.

These three books all appeared within a whisper of *An Alien Light,* where Kress addresses a similar contradiction. The alien Ged communicate by scent as well as by speech (as in Smith). Their joy is to "sing in harmony" (as in Moffett), mediated by pheromones. However, they find themselves at war with an expansionist human race, whom they cannot understand. The Ged discover an isolated human colony, where two backward societies—of warriors, and of merchant-artisans—are forever at odds. Sparta versus Athena, in a nutshell.

So the Ged build an enclosed city, and by promising wealth and weapons they lure a mongrel population of outcasts and adventurers into it. The Ged are aiming to study human learning processes, so as to solve the "central paradox" of how a species that acts aggressively towards its own kind can possibly have avoided blowing up its own planet long ago. In all other known instances, evolution has only permitted harmonious species to reach the stars. Such harmonious civilizations only advanced very slowly, taking one little technological step at a time.

Kress explores fascinatingly the shifting web of alliances within the city, and the way in which human sexual relations often mirror intraspecies violence —a concept that the Ged, with their inbuilt sense of harmony, find quite appalling. In fact it freaks them out to think about it. The solution to this enigma is that human violence actually *assists* change and adaptation. Those Ged who can comprehend this feel as though they are contaminated, alienated from their own culture.

Some questions still beg answers. The ill-assorted colonists have no notion that they stem respectively from the military crew, and the dissident passengers, of a crashed starship. How long can the war with the Ged have been going on? And how did it start?

For that matter how did the slow, harmonious Ged ever take the giant step of eliminating predators from their home world? Smith boldly confronts this problem in flashbacks, but Kress doesn't.

Meanwhile, *An Alien Light* is brightly illuminating with a cast of notable, often obsessive characters; and maybe the answer to the science-fictional paradox of such different yet similar books is that sf authors are putting out ideational pheromones into the creative environment. (Okay: Richard Dawkins's *memes*.)

I once attended an sf "mind-meld" organized by British Mensa, the society of high intellects, during which the audience sat in silence and *thunk* furiously. Nothing happened. In Kress (and Moffett, and Ore, and Smith) things do happen; and perhaps these are among the most essential things we should be thinking about—no, not merely thinking about, but also feeling intensely, in the laboratory of fiction where these skilled experimenters work.

Cover Feature

Seventh Son
by Orson Scott Card *(Legend, 1989, pb, 316pp, £3.50)*
Red Prophet
by Orson Scott Card *(Legend, 1989, 311pp, £11.95)*

reviewed by Paul Kincaid

America has no mythology. No, let me correct that, white America, European America, has no mythology. Its peoples are too diverse in origin, its birth too recent, to allow myths to develop. And it is a lack that America seems to feel acutely, for there are countless attempts to shape the stuff of history into the matter of legend. Roanoke, Johnny Appleseed, John Smith and Pocahontas, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, the OK Corral, the list is as endless as the invention of the dime novelists and the movie makers, but none of them quite achieve the frisson of magic necessary to lift them out of history and into the subconscious. The Tales of Alvin Maker is another attempt at myth making for the modern American, and more successful than most, perhaps because it so carefully blends an old fashioned (but still intense and current) patriotism—America is a *good* place—with more modish concerns about the environment, and a collective guilt about the fate of the Indian—but it would have been so much better if we'd treated the Indians as equals, and been more in tune with the land.

These are the first two volumes in an on-going series. The third volume has already been published in the USA, and numerous stories from the sequence have appeared regularly in the magazines—the award winning "Hatrack River" forms the opening section of *Seventh Son,* "Carthage City" is the first part of *Red Prophet*. It is, at this stage, difficult to judge how the completed project might turn out, but there is evidence to suggest that Card is creating, and moreover investigating, a world of such moral and political complexity that it does for once warrant this length.

The books are set around the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the

nineteenth, a time when, in our history, the fledgling American states had just broken free from a Europe too torn by internal revolution to worry too much about a distant colony. And the new country was celebrating its hard-won independence with vigorous westward expansion. It was a time that comes as close as anything to the mythic in American history, a time of heroes like Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett, and almost archetypal villains like Burr. It is a good time in which to invent a new myth. But Card begins by altering the time itself. Details are sketchy, but in this world the English revolution was more successful, for a Puritan Protector still rules the land and the Royalist cause survives only in colonies like Virginia and Carolina; the French revolution never happened, and Bonaparte appears as a French general dispatched to lead the armies of Canada. The American revolution has not happened, though Ben Franklin has invented the concept of "American" to unite the disparate colonists—royalist, puritan, Dutch, Swedish, German—and a United States is beginning to form. Indeed one of the early states is the "Irrakwa"Indian nation, which is presented as more technologically advanced than many of the White colonies surrounding it.

This alternate history, however, forms no more than an ill-defined background to the first volume, *Seventh Son,* which concentrates far more on the other great change Card has wrought. For in this world magic, of a sort, operates. It is a low-key, folkloric magic of hexes and odd talents for calming or attracting or keeping away or far-seeing, and it is intimately connected with the four elements, earth, air, fire and water. Alvin Miller, whose first ten years are recounted here, is the seventh son of a seventh son, and so naturally born to possess a great talent, though what that talent is, and his importance in the great scheme of things, is only coming to be understood by the end of the book. For Alvin is a Maker, able to shape objects around him to his will, so that mill stones emerge from the quarry already perfectly worked, cockroaches depart at his bidding to torment his sisters, and when, towards the end of the book, the powerful natural defences that surround him are pierced and his leg is horrendously broken he is able to enter his own body and reconnect veins, heal torn flesh and knit the bone.

Such a talent inevitably brings him into conflict with the greatest enemy of all, the great entropic evil of the Unmaker: "Alvin knew all kinds of opposites in the world: good and evil, light and dark, free and slave, love and hate. But deeper than all those opposites was making and unmaking. So deep that hardly anybody noticed that it was the most important opposite of all." The Unmaker is not equated with the devil; indeed Satan is specifically reckoned to be on the side of God in this ultimate conflict. But what we have here is nonetheless that most basic, most mythic, of all struggles: good versus evil. Unfortunately the divorcing of the Unmaker from the devil is a side-stepping of the issue that is part of the problem with what is otherwise a very fine book indeed.

For there is an unavoidable clash between the natural magic practised in this world, and organised Christianity, and it is this opposition which is central to the first book. Set against Alvin is the Presbyterian preacher, Reverend Thrower, who is convinced by what we must assume is a visitation from the Unmaker that Alvin is an agent of the devil. Thrower is the least convincing character in either of these books, a catch-all for everything that goes against Alvin and his kin. He's the sort of inflexible Christian who uses the Bible as an excuse for all his prejudices and petty-mindedness, yet he is also the man of science and stout defender of rationality, yet he is also a devout believer in phrenology (a science we are led to believe is no less discredited in that world than it is in

ours), yet he is also the most superstitious of men; he is a mass of contradictions which put him so out of step with the manners and mores of the world in which he is placed that he never achieves focus as a genuine person. He is no more than a vehicle there to impel the plot along and to represent the conflict between Christianity and magic which is in every other respect ducked.

In Armor-of-God Weaver (and Card is particularly good at using such Puritan names to illustrate his characters) we have an upright Christian who has forbidden his wife natural magic but who is blind to her practise of these arts. The conflict is there, Card is aware of it, but he avoids confronting it. Many who use magic profess Christianity, and there is a wishy-washy attempt to suggest that there is no conflict at all—after all, the Unmaker isn't the devil, is he? But as the magic goes on to acquire blatantly Christian overtones in the second book—most notably in Lolla-Wossiky, the Red Prophet of the title, who pierces his hands and feet and with these stigmata is able to walk on water—that's a cop-out that fails to wash.

Seventh Son, therefore, is a vividly written story of a boy coming to terms with his magic powers in frontier days. It is populated with memorable characters, and the play with historical personages that an alternate history allows, so that William Blake has a major role to play as Taleswapper who wanders the frontier gathering and disseminating stories. And in Alvin, Card has managed the difficult task of presenting a vividly realised, utterly believable ten-year-old boy who is not, as such characters so often are, an adult writ small. Yet at the heart of the book is a promise that is not quite fulfilled.

Red Prophet is considerably better. A far more robust book, more tightly plotted, it shifts the focus of the sequence to the political and moral implications of this alternate history. And it is a delight to record with what attention to detail Card has worked this out. Indeed, Alvin does not appear until a quarter of the way into the book, and that is one of its strengths. What we get instead is a tale of the shifting loyalties as various would-be leaders jockey for position in the emergent United States, complicated by the politicing of the French Canadians, and the two Indian factions led by the peaceful prophet Lolla-Wossiky and his warlike brother Ta-Kumsaw. It is a complicated situation, inevitably so, but it is clearly presented in an easily understandable form by means of a handful of sharply delineated characters and a succession of crisply described scenes that rise to a bloody and inevitable climax.

In many ways Card has created an Arcadia, a never-never land that could have been if only some better decisions had been made when they were setting out on the whole enterprise of America. There are slaves still, but they are always off-screen, away in some as-yet-unvisited corner of the land. But the Indians are not objects of genocide and scorn; in some of the states they have equal political rights, the Irrakwa have their own state. Yet Card does not go too far with this wishful thinking: out on the frontier there are still Indians collecting White scalps for their Canadian paymasters, there are still whisky Indians being cynically exploited and destroyed by the Whites. And as the story develops it gives Card the opportunity to make some dramatic points about the way the White man exploited, destroyed and misunderstood the Red. The final massacre of unarmed Indians by White men driven mad by fear, lust for revenge, and the cynical manipulation of man seeking political gain is all to familiar to anyone who has read anything of American history; yet it still becomes, in Card's hands, a powerful morality tale, made the more so by the fate wished upon the "victors" by Lolla-Wossiky as he leads the survivors away.

The character of Alvin could, all too easily, become an invulnerable superman, incapable of development, the dull stock fantasy hero. So far he has avoided this fate, and as long as Card uses him as the focus for his searching examination of the nature of America, and Americans, then the Tales of Alvin Maker could well become what the blurb already claims, a major work of American fantasy. It could even be the beginnings of a myth.

My only major complaint about both these books is with the tone of voice Card has adopted. Cracker-barrel folksiness is as false as the arch high English employed in so many medieval fantasies. It's fair enough when put into the mouths of characters, but when the authorial voice uses it also then it is a distraction, and an extra layer, another obstacle, placed between the reader and the story. I do wish Card had not given in to the temptation.

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featuring Nicholas Ruddick on *The Chalk Giants* by Keith Roberts

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