

The Old New Wave: a study of the 'New Wave' in British science fiction during the 1960s and early 1970s, with special reference to the works of Brian W Aldiss, J G Ballard, Harry Harrison and Michael Moorcock.

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The Old New Wave

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Abstract.

This thesis examines the 'New Wave' in British science fiction in the 1960s and early 1970s.

The use of the terms 'science fiction' and 'New Wave' in the thesis are defined through a use of elements of the ideological theories of Louis Althusser. The New Wave is seen as a change in the ideological framework of the science fiction establishment. For convenience, the progress of the New Wave is divided into three stages, each covered by a chapter. Works by the four most prominent writers in the movement are discussed.

The first chapter discusses links between New Wave writers and their predecessors by comparing The Drowned World by J G Ballard with the works of John Wyndham. The way in which Ballard's expression was limited by the restraints of the genre's establishment-structure is suggested. Drowned is thus considered to be early New Wave.

The second chapter discusses the development of the New Wave into a movement with a coherent body of ideology which broke with traditional systems. Four books are considered, in related pairs: Brian W Aldiss' The Dark Light Years with Harry Harrison's Bill, the Galactic Hero, and Aldiss' Earthworks with Harrison's Make Room! Make Room! The development in each author's expression is also noted in terms of the development of the movement.

The third chapter deals with late New Wave works. Michael Moorcock's The Final Programme, A Cure for Cancer and The

English Assassin are examined. The growth of social criticism in these works is noted, as is a movement away from the limitations imposed by working within a single genre. Assassin is seen as one of the climactic New Wave works, with Ballard's The Atrocity Exhibition and Aldiss' Barefoot in the Head.

The conclusion notes how the New Wave was absorbed by the American science fiction establishment, and how in the UK the New Wave's success led to its atrophy. It is suggested that the New Wave's weakening of the science fiction establishment made the growth of feminist science fiction easier, and made science fiction more accessible to workers in other cultural realms. Thus the New Wave is seen as a force which refreshed science fiction, and possibly saved the genre from degeneration.

To Felicity Wood.

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INTRODUCTION.

This thesis will discuss the New Wave in British science fiction in the 1960s, and before this can be done, science fiction itself must be defined. The term varies in meaning from critic to critic. A sample of this variation, and of some failings in these uses of the term, will help to clarify the way in which the term is used in this thesis.

Darko Suvin defines science fiction as 'cognitive' (encouraging thought) and 'estranged'¹, as opposed to attempts at mimesis. In Suvin's terms, a science fiction story's world is estranged from the world of its reader. Hence the reader is not absorbed by the world, and thus can readily appreciate the significance of the story. A text which has little cognitive significance, or where the estrangement is minimal, is thus defined as a work of inferior science fiction. Suvin's aesthetic is thus Brechtian². One of Suvin's models is Sir Thomas More's Utopia, which concerns an imagined perfect society in an unfamiliar landscape.

There are defects in this system. Suvin dismisses most fantasy because it is unrealistic. Thus, he suggests, it cannot have the meaning in the 'real' world which science fiction has. This belittles the true potential of fantasy and science fiction's debt to fantasy. Moreover, some science fiction works are instructive rather than cognitive, like Hal Clement's Mission of Gravity³ (a study of alien environment), which is nevertheless entertaining and deemed successful by many. Suvin's definition ignores such texts. Suvin's criteria do not so much comprise a definition of science fiction as a

definition of the kind of science fiction which Suvin admires.

Almost at the opposite pole is Albert Wendland,⁴ who declares that science fiction is fantasy posing as realism because of an apparently scientific frame. Certainly fantasy and science fiction have much in common, but it is hard to see how they can be identical. The 1944 short story Deadline brought the FBI to the offices of John W Campbell's Astounding Science Fiction⁵ because it revealed some atomic secrets. There is a sub-genre of 'hard' science fiction which exists wholly within the framework of known technology. This cannot be seen as fantasy, and thus Wendland's definition, although useful, must be seen as unsatisfactory as a general rule.

Tzvetan Todorov's more sophisticated concepts establish four categories of the fantastic shading into each other to form a continuum.⁶ Beginning with the pure uncanny, where inexplicable events are shown to have natural explanations, one passes to the fantastic uncanny, where natural explanations are less adequate, to the fantastic marvellous, where inexplicable events have supernatural origins, and then the pure marvellous, where all relation to natural explanations vanishes-- the world of the fairy tale.

Rosemary Jackson⁷ objects that Todorov's definition of the uncanny is not a genuine literary category, but nevertheless his system has proved useful in analysing the fantastic. However, Todorov places most science fiction in the marvellous⁸ because it concerns things which do not exist. Yet Poe's works are placed at the opposite pole of the pure uncanny.⁹ This is odd because Poe's work often has science fictional elements. If Poe is uncanny, Jules Verne, his imitator, must also be uncanny. The presence of science fiction at both ends of Todorov's continuum

suggests that the continuum may not be helpful in defining the genre.

A common definition from the period 1926-1960 is mentioned by Brian Aldiss quoting Miriam Allen de Ford in Billion Year Spree: "Science fiction deals with improbable possibilities, fantasy with plausible impossibilities".¹⁰ Superficially this seems clear, but the terminology is itself undefined. What are improbable possibilities? If elements in a science fiction story are proved impossible, does the story become fantasy in retrospect? What of science fiction stories about things deemed impossible now, such as time travel? Evidently this definition has more importance for science fiction writers wishing to feel superior to fantasy writers, than for students of the genre.

Zavarzadeh¹¹ distinguishes between different types of 'transfiction', which he terms a form of literature which unmask literary conventions. He identifies three kinds: 'metafiction', fiction about systems of fiction; 'surfiction', fiction outside the bounds of reality; and science fiction, which he calls 'a pararealistic countertheme of extrapolation'.

Science fiction does not necessarily unmask literary conventions. Asimov's Foundation, for instance, exploits conventions of science fiction (the idea of galactic empire) and of broader literature (the concentration on individuals as centres of narrative).¹² Hence this aspect of the definition is obscure.

Zavarzadeh's definition of science fiction is largely a restatement of Kingsley Amis' definition: "Science fiction is that class of prose narrative treating of a situation that could not arise in the world we know, but which is hypothesised on the basis of some innovation in science or technology, or pseudo-

science or pseudo-technology, whether human or extra-terrestrial in origin".¹³ This is an effective general description of a science fiction text. However, it ignores both the effect of science fiction and the purpose which is important in most science fiction. This omission is vital.

This survey, although incomplete, shows the range of possible definitions. Most of those cited try to fit science fiction into existing systems so as to make analysis easier. This limits the broad application of the definitions. For a wider concept of science fiction it is useful to turn to the theories of Louis Althusser.

Althusser's "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"¹⁴ analyses the nature of the state and identifies state apparatuses which work to preserve the existing relations of production. These apparatuses are divided into two categories-- repressive state apparatuses working mostly through force and only partly through ideologies which appear in such form as military discipline, and ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) where the main aim is the inculcation of an ideology in the public mind, using force as a subsidiary of this aim. Among the ISAs which Althusser identifies are educational, family, legal, political, trade-union, communications and cultural ISAs.

Althusser defines ideology as "a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence".¹⁵ This is not to say that ideology is omnipresent and that the true relationship cannot be discovered. Althusser says that Marxist critical techniques offer a system through which ideology may be avoided. Ideology appears to serve the capitalist state, to which Marxism offers a remedy, standing outside

ideology. This claim is justified by two interlinked passages:

...the Marxist 'theory' of the State... is still partly 'descriptive'.... the descriptive theory of the State represents a phase... which itself demands the 'supersession' of this phase.... it does not really advance the definition of the State, i.e. the scientific theory of the State.¹⁶

...the author... is completely absent as a 'subject' from 'his' scientific discourse (for all scientific discourse is by definition a subject-less discourse, there is no 'Subject of science' except in an ideology of science)...¹⁷

Commentators have criticised this position. ISAs undoubtedly exist-- it is easy to see the Dutch Reformed Church and the South African Broadcasting Corporation as devices using an ideology to preserve the relations of production in South Africa. However, Althusser's claim that Marxism provides an absolute frame of reference through its 'scientific' system is dubious, because it rests on the assumption that science is not ideological in nature.

Compare the hereditary theories of Lysenko (based on dialectical materialism) and of Mendel (based on genetics). These two scientists came to opposing positions because of differing ideologies. Until Mendel was proved right by experiment, the debate was entirely ideological-- and by forbidding such experiment in the USSR, Lysenko kept the debate at this level for some time. Clearly science is guided by such ideologies-- which Kühn terms 'paradigms'.¹⁸ There are even

scientific ISAs, such as laboratories, educational bodies and scientific publishers. Thus Althusser's absolute frame of reference vanishes. However, if his theory is not applied rigorously, but instead is used as a guide, it offers a very useful scheme by which scientific ideologies and their links to science fiction may be studied.

Science fiction texts must contain something more than science alone if they are to differ from scientific texts. The fiction helps to relate science to the human world-- giving an attitude towards, and a judgement on, science. This need not necessarily serve the interests of existing relations of production. However, science fiction, which may be related to both the scientific and cultural ISAs, is likely to be influenced by a tendency to preserve the status quo if it comes under the control of any monolithic system which was generated by that status quo.

Science fiction is thus fiction which exists chiefly to express a scientific ideology, and which portrays a world in harmony with that ideology, whether fantastic or realistic. One must be cautious in this regard. Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories contain 'the science of deduction', and this science gives plausibility to Holmes' successes, but the Holmes stories are not science fiction. Actual science in the text is not important; the text is given validity by an already-existing positivistic scientific ideology which Conan Doyle simply makes use of. Successful fictional detectives do not have to claim scientific virtues.

Conan Doyle's Professor Challenger stories, however, are science fiction because their effect depends on Challenger's optimistic view of science. Even The Land Of Mist¹⁹, which

treats spiritualism as science, is science fiction, because it is located in a scientific framework. Thus, as Amis suggested, the idea of science rather than its actuality is the essence of science fiction.

The nature of the scientific ideology being expressed depends both on the author and the context in which the author writes. Modern science fiction was placed on a firm footing by H G Wells and Jules Verne, writers with considerable prestige and hence the freedom to write what they wished. Many of their successors, however, worked within more limited imaginative frameworks, as in the future-war tales of William Le Queux.²⁰

Meanwhile mass-audience magazines had arisen featuring adventure stories such as thrillers and cowboy tales. Given the dramatic nature and escapist potential of the genre it is unsurprising that science fiction magazines followed. The first was Amazing Stories, founded in 1926 by Hugo Gernsback, a radio engineer who published his first science fiction story, Ralph 124C41+, in 1911.²¹ Gernsback edited his magazine with scientific verisimilitude in mind, encouraging delight in technical triumphs. This was successful enough to encourage the appearance of imitators in pre-Depression America-- the last of the period, Astounding Science Fiction Stories, appearing in 1930.²²

These magazines succeeded because they offered stories which had an audience but for which no other outlets existed. General magazines refused to lower themselves to the standard of such science fiction stories, while other low-quality magazines were committed to other genres. Hence science fiction writers had limited access to publishing. Publishers relied on their editors to choose stories which would sell. Thus an editor who

could select successful stories had vast power over writers, who were at the bottom of the ladder, earning minute salaries. Some, like the fantasist H P Lovecraft, actually starved.²³ This situation prevented writers from experimenting, since no story which challenged the beliefs of the editor or his perceived public was likely to sell. (At this time almost the whole science fiction subculture was male.)

Stories thus tended to be ideologically and thematically conservative. Ralph set the pattern, offering a scientist-hero of supremely high status in his society (hence the '+' in his name). A society with a caste system based on scientific competence was flattering to the audience of the magazines, who were generally at least interested in science. Authors were well aware of this market. Murray Leinster's "The Mole Pirate"²⁴, which appeared in Astounding in 1934, featured a scientific, disciplined hero and a scientific, lawless villain. George O Smith's "Venus Equilateral" stories, published by Astounding in the 1940s,²⁵ similarly featured cardboard scientific heroes and villains. These texts show great pressure for conformism-- a rebel is evil by definition. By condemning such rebels, these texts disregarded the fact that science itself had a potential for evil-- something which the prevailing ideology could not accept. John W Campbell's "The Double Minds"²⁶, also from Astounding in 1937, describes a victory of resourceful humans over weak Ganymedans-- showing the self-image of colonialists. The universe is made for humans, who do not stifle on Mars or freeze on Ganymede, and who are also two-dimensional, action-oriented people. This text-- by one of the most popular and sophisticated writers of the day-- panders to the fantasies of Western technocrats.

Despite the poorness of the period's writing, some in the field recognised its potential. The scientific ideology of the subculture provided an impetus separate from the demands of the publishers which headed towards clearer and better expression. The seeds of improvement were present in the inferior writing of the early 1930s-- and John W Campbell, former nuclear physicist, exploited this when he took over the editorship of Astounding Science Fiction in 1937. For the first time a prominent writer was in charge of production. Campbell demanded higher standards than his predecessors, and many writers testify to the way in which he improved their work by demanding revisions.²⁷ He also insisted on consistency and inventiveness-- making the presentation of the story more plausible-- and earned loyalty from his contributors, who respected him as a writer.

Campbell's Astounding soon dominated the field. The late 1930s and early 1940s came to be called 'The Golden Age' by later writers and critics.²⁸ Ideas like spacecraft, robots and time machines were exploited with such zest and by so many good writers that by the 1950s the field seemed almost exhausted, so that much of the writing became little more than repetition.

Campbell's was not, however, a fundamental change in direction. He accepted the prevailing idea that science could solve all problems and would lead humanity to rule the universe. He merely improved the expression of this belief, clarifying the genre's terms of reference while eliminating excessive sensationalism.

The practical political concerns of Campbell's most successful writers bear this out. Asimov's Foundation series,²⁹ begun in Astounding in the 1940s, dealt with a decadent feudal

Galactic Empire's collapse (like the collapse of the British Empire in American popular myth) which is replaced by a Foundation of Traders which rules by atomic power (linking technology to free enterprise). From his beginnings, with such stories as "Waldo" (1940)³⁰, Robert A Heinlein supported free enterprise, and "The Man Who Sold The Moon" (1950)³¹ shows how big business makes space flight possible-- linking capitalism with science fiction's most dynamic symbol. By the 1950s Heinlein fully supported American Cold War ideology in Starship Troopers³² and The Puppet Masters³³; in the former his hero is a soldier, in the latter, a secret policeman!

By the 1950s, though, other trends were also emerging. One was exemplified by the work of Frederik Pohl and C M Kornbluth, who wrote The Space Merchants³⁴, about a capitalist-ruled Earth from which a handful of conservationists flee to start a new world on Venus. American ideals are satirised and dismissed, although technology remains the key to progress. Technology itself provided a new threat in the form of nuclear-war stories like Wilson Tucker's The Long Loud Silence.³⁵ 1950s science fiction was less naively optimistic than that of the 1940s.

Campbell gradually increased his magazine's commitment to the scientific ethos and to American patriotism. In 1960 he changed the magazine's name to Analog Science Fiction/Science Fact, saying that "Science fiction is, very strictly and literally, analogous to science facts"³⁶. This confidence ignored the growing scepticism elsewhere, and brought a quality of intolerance to the magazine. "Join Our Gang?"³⁷, in Analog One (a 1963 anthology) concerned a human-dominated empire faced with aliens who refused to join it. The empire seeded the alien planet with deadly plants and animals, forcing the aliens to

submit. This clearly reflects the American imperial outlook.

By the late 1960s this had become even more overt. In September and October 1966 Analog ran a series on counter-insurgency, concluding that "since 1959, the tide has turned steadily against the insurgent"³⁸. When this proved wrong, the authors began fighting their own imaginary wars. In June 1968 "The Nitrocellulose Doormat"³⁹ showed a human empire keeping alien guerrillas from winning independence for their race, and in "Null Zone"⁴⁰ in July 1968 the U.S. Air Force destroys the Ho Chi Minh Trail by building a dam across it. Every issue carried advertisements for USO, the organisation which entertained the troops in Vietnam. Campbell's editorials strongly denounced unions⁴¹, gun control⁴² and big government⁴³. Analog had virtually become an organ of Richard Nixon's Republican Party. Obviously this had not happened to every magazine in the US, but the dominant position of Analog made this political stance important.

In the UK such a trend never developed. Science fiction was deemed respectable by many conventional magazines, perhaps because of Wells' prestige, and they published it. There was no science fiction 'ghetto' where a narrow technocratic viewpoint could develop and where editors could screen out dissension. Admittedly, American influence existed. Arthur C Clarke and John Wyndham, the dominant British science fiction writers of the 1950s, both began writing for American magazines or their British imitators⁴⁴. By the post-war period, though, both had become more flexible. Wyndham showed some of the proto-fascist dangers of technocracy in The Day Of The Triffids⁴⁵, while Clarke showed how technological specialisation might prove irresponsible in Against The Fall Of

Night⁴⁶.

There was one science fiction magazine which might have developed in parallel with its American counterparts-- New Worlds, founded in 1946 by John Carnell, who edited it until 1964. Carnell encouraged imitation of American themes, but the different conditions in Britain kept him from gaining the power of American editors, even had he wanted it. The stories in his collection from New Worlds, Lambda 1⁴⁷ follow standard patterns of technological resolutions for seemingly inexplicable events. Hyperspace⁴⁸, interstellar flight⁴⁹, alien contact⁵⁰, robots⁵¹ and time travel⁵² all appear-- ideas created in the 1930s, exhausted by the 1950s, yet presented without any originality, with middle-class main characters and a strong commitment to the status quo.

One story stands out-- Michael Moorcock's "Flux". A man travels to the future to find that Europe has collapsed as a result of open war between the sexes. He then finds that he cannot return, for space-time proves to be a product of the human imagination-- without people it is simply flux. Although set in a conventional framework, "Flux" shows a different set of assumptions about the stability of society and the nature of science fiction to that expressed in the other stories.

New Writings in SF 1⁵³, the first of a sequence of anthologies which Carnell was to edit until his death in 1972, is as lifeless as Lambda 1. Again one story stands out in style and imaginative capacity-- Brian W Aldiss' "Man On Bridge", about a world where intellectuals are kept in concentration camps and where a man can have his subconscious removed. The vast symbolic importance of this was ignored by Carnell, who compared the story to Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four.

It is significant that Carnell should have missed the point. Under him, New Worlds and its sister magazine Science Fantasy had published several stories by Moorcock, Aldiss and J G Ballard which challenged the ideas on which Carnell had built his magazine. Carnell seemed not to notice this: "Almost all its science fiction's leading authors-- Aldiss, Asimov, Ballard, Bradbury, Clarke, Harrison, Pohl, Russell, Simak, Sturgeon, Tenn, Wyndham"⁵⁴-- the alphabetical listing allows Carnell to submerge English authors in a sea of Americans. It is implied that English fiction is as good as American (an important claim for Carnell, whose work was overshadowed by the huge American publishing firms). Yet implicit in this is the suggestion that there is no real difference between, say, Asimov and Ballard.

Thus the new English writers were not seen as dissidents, as they probably would have been in the US. Carnell encouraged them to exploit the freedom which he gave them, making the UK a potentially fruitful place for experimental science fiction writers. This almost accidental freedom became deliberate policy after Carnell left New Worlds to concentrate on anthologising, and Moorcock took over as editor.

Aldiss, Ballard, Moorcock and Harry Harrison (an American friend of Aldiss' who moved to Europe in the early 1960s) formed the core of a movement which was dubbed the New Wave, perhaps by analogy with French Nouvelle Vague cinema. The origins of the term are obscure, although the visiting American editor Judith Merrill is sometimes claimed to have coined it⁵⁵.

Moorcock clearly supported the idea of a change in science fiction: "The SF reader is happy to go to the anthologies to read stories which conform to earlier-established conventions, but he buys a magazine to find out what's going on now, and expects to find new treatments, new ideas, new writers establishing new conventions"⁵⁶. He implicitly decries the old-fashioned, and New Wave critics in New Worlds would soon stridently denounce earlier writers. The sense of a break with the past is evident, although its meaning is obscure.

J G Ballard remarked that "Modern American science fiction grew out of magazines such as Popular Mechanics of the thirties; it's an extrovert, optimistic literature of technology, whereas I think the new science fiction, that other people apart from myself are now beginning to write, is introverted, possibly pessimistic rather than optimistic, much less certain of its territory"⁵⁷. Ballard's remarks may be more personal than general, but this is a more mature declaration than Moorcock's, defining the aesthetics of the field rather than offering the neutral criterion of newness. (As a writer Ballard could set limits which would seem unduly restrictive for an editor.) Ballard's egotism suggests a sense of personal challenge to the established structures of science fiction.

Aldiss, writing in 1973, puts the movement into context: "the speculative body of work contained in the sf of the past had been directed towards just such a future as the mid-sixties... this actually was the Brave New World, nor were we out of it!"⁵⁸. He was cautious about the actual achievements of the New Wave (as was Harrison, whose few critical writings stress continuity rather than change), in contrast to Moorcock

and Ballard: "As the whole course of this volume demonstrates, the new movement was only revolutionary in magazine sf terms. In the main, by rejecting genre pulps, it was more in the grand tradition than the magazines-- which may, in course of time, be seen as no more than a vitalising tributary to the great stream of sf"⁵⁹. This is an important point, but these Leavisite ideas ignore the fact that at the time science fiction magazines were the easiest means of expression available to science fiction writers. Hence his comment does not diminish the achievements of the New Wave.

Obviously, such a shift could not arise simply through the characters of the writers involved. It may be most useful to say that the New Wave formed part of a cultural shift occurring throughout the 1960s. Censorship was loosening. Values which had dominated the 1950s (partly because of the need for social unity in the face of possible war) became less important. This did not happen everywhere, and not all science fiction magazines accepted the New Wave at once. Nevertheless the New Wave won much success, often because of the care with which authors infiltrated new ideas into old frameworks, or took advantage of changes in the patterns of power in the science fiction establishment.

It is surely unprofitable to wonder why the movement took the form that it did. Albert Wendland argues that the optimism of the 1940s, the scepticism of the 1950s and the pessimism of the 1960s arose from the way in which middle-class professional people (the core of science fiction fandom) lost control of their society. This seems plausible, but is it meaningful?⁶⁰

One might ask why the 1940s, the era of huge wars, should have been a time of technocratic optimism. Further, Wendland

probably exaggerates both scepticism and pessimism. The 1950s was not a time of serious challenging of the beliefs of science fiction, but rather of using science fiction to criticise the failings of American culture-- science still offered hope⁶¹. This is also true, to a degree, of the New Wave period, when some texts still offered hopes for escape from the horrors of the world about them⁶². Lastly, it is hard to see why science fiction did not disappear in the 1970s, since by that time the weakness of the middle-class professionals must have become catastrophically disillusioning.

It is surely more useful to see science fiction as only indirectly determined by the beliefs of the class from which it arises-- especially since science fiction writers and editors form part of a self-contained science fiction culture. 1960s science fiction was pessimistic because contemporary socio-political conditions did not give much grounds for optimism. Science fiction provided a platform to express such beliefs.

The New Wave developed without any complete unity of expression or belief. Considering the differences between writers, it is surprising that it possessed so much unity. Aldiss and Harrison were fourteen years older than Moorcock, and both served in the military during World War II, whereas Ballard, five years younger than they, spent his teens in a Japanese internment camp. Harrison grew up in New York during the Depression, while Moorcock grew up in London amid post-war austerity. Nevertheless the writers cooperated with each other, uniting against conventional science fiction in a way which cannot be ascribed simply to socio-political conditions.

Instead, New Wave policy seems to have been affected by the structure of the magazine science fiction establishment which

it attacked. As the nature of that establishment changed, and as the New Wave's own establishment grew, New Wave beliefs grew more pure and less ready to compromise with conditions. This made it easier for New Wave authors to express their opinions about the nature of society and humanity's place in the cosmos. However, it was the effect which these developments had on the broad field of science fiction which makes the New Wave significant. Hence it is important to study the way in which those writers exploited conditions to express themselves, so that this effect may be gauged.

CHAPTER I: EARLY NEW WAVE: J G BALLARD VERSUS JOHN WYNDHAM.

Brian Aldiss said of J G Ballard's early novels that "all... are novels of catastrophe, and in form-- if form only-- owe a good deal to John Wyndham"¹. Aldiss believed that one strand in twentieth-century British science fiction dealt with disasters to society written from the position of a relatively secure observer. Classifying Wyndham among them, Aldiss termed this the 'cosy catastrophe'². This situates Ballard in a literary continuum-- an idea at variance with the opinion expressed by many New Wave writers (including Ballard) that their work was wholly new in the field.

To decide which is the case, it is useful to compare Wyndham's 'catastrophe' novels, especially The Day Of The Triffids (1951)³, The Kraken Wakes (1953)⁴, The Chrysalids (1955)⁵ and The Midwich Cuckoos (1957)⁶ with the second of J G Ballard's novels, the one which made him famous, The Drowned World (1962)⁷. It seems best to begin with Wyndham, since whether or not such a literary continuum existed, Wyndham's experiences give some idea of the problems and potential of pre-1960 British science fiction, the milieu from which Ballard emerged.

Wyndham began writing in the 1930s, initially for an American market because his work found no audience in the UK. Walter Gillings, founder of the first British science fiction magazine Tales of Wonder, says that there were only a few hundred readers of science fiction magazines in the UK in the 1930s⁸. During this period Wyndham had two science fiction novels published in England, Stowaway to Mars⁹ and The Secret People¹⁰ (the latter serialised in The Passing Show¹¹).

Probably Wyndham was taking advantage of the market for adventure fiction regardless of genre.

Wyndham's 1930s texts are crude, often stressing technology over character or plot. The Secret People features no vast machines, but concerns a lost race drowned beneath an artificial lake intended to irrigate the Sahara. Wyndham here provides dull adventures in buried cities, reminiscent more of Rider Haggard than of Wells, monotonously written.

However, the British science fiction market was immensely changed by the Second World War. Vast amounts of American magazines, including science fiction, crossed the Atlantic as ships' ballast¹² to be sold at very low prices. By the end of the war there was thus an increased audience for such fiction. Meanwhile other changes occurred favouring writers: "[T]he number of annual titles produced... reached... by 1937 over 17 000, and between 1955 and 1959... more than 20 000.... This majority public for books was probably first achieved in the 1950s"¹³. The increased market for both books and science fiction suggests why Wyndham should have resumed writing science fiction novels after the war-- with a different style which came to be seen as distinctively English, as opposed to the American format.

Wyndham's catastrophic theme was not new to science fiction, where catastrophe had long been a conventional device for introducing unfamiliar elements into a familiar setting, as may be seen in the work of Verne and Wells. Wyndham's novels are also characterised by openness-- all the facts are given to the reader early in the book, and events follow from these. (Even in Kraken, where events are more mysterious, the reader always has as much investigation as the scientists-- it follows

the pattern of a detective story.)

These disasters are wrought by an inhuman enemy, seen from the viewpoint of Western society as something to be destroyed. (In The Chrysalids the narrator and his companions appear inhuman. Here, though, the society oppressing them is an aberrant Puritan culture, alien to Wyndham's ideals, and the 'inhumans' ultimately triumph. Thus in Chrysalids Wyndham shows that humanity alone is not enough.) Triffids, which set the pattern for the future, may be summarised thus: intelligent carnivorous mobile plants are developed in the USSR for commercial reasons, but spread. When the accidental triggering of space-based weapons blinds most people, triffids rule the earth. The main characters flee from triffids and from the authoritarianism which arises to fight them, to a distant, secure island populated by sighted people.

An important difference between Triffids and most tales of alien invasion is that the theme is not simply one of good and evil. A major theme is the danger of society losing control of technology-- the triffids and the blinding weapons. This may have been inspired by the mixed blessing of nuclear energy.

This theme, though, is almost lost in the presentation of a blind world, where the focus is not so much on the suffering of the blind as on the sighted characters' power. The final flight of the central characters is a flight from responsibility, which may not even be necessary-- although Wyndham does not say so, the authoritarianism which he decries might have proved a better answer than flight. Thus the book displays moral uncertainty, even though the narrator has no doubt that the choice was right. In the end Triffids' world is deeply disturbing, for humanity has lost control.

Kraken shares style, atmosphere and (partially) plot with Triffids. In some ways it is a rehash. The scope is international, with the USA and USSR troubled by aliens invading the oceans. Unification of the world in the face of the threat is prevented by human distrust. Nations blame the aliens on each other, and the world seems doomed, but the Japanese invent an alien-destroying device to restore stability. Possibly the easing of tensions in 1953, with Stalin's death and the end of the Korean War, explains this optimistic finale. As a result, Kraken comforts where Triffids disturbs-- it lacked the drama of Triffids, and did not sell as well.

Wyndham's next book, Chrysalids, was an impressive treatment of the much-used postnuclear theme. It is his only catastrophe novel set outside the UK-- in America. Wyndham inverts the traditions of this story to make the postnuclear mutants the heroes who eventually establish a new world secure from attack. Thus the non-mutant population becomes a mutant-killing threat, although mutant-populated New Zealand is safe from them.

Midwich returns to Wyndham's Anglocentric roots in a story well-suited to them. Every woman in an English village falls pregnant after a visit by an alien spacecraft. They give birth to children who collectively control the villagers by telepathy, but who are eventually killed by a local philosopher whom they are unwise enough to trust, and who knows that they will supplant humanity if they are allowed to survive-- the alternative view to the children of Chrysalids. The book seems to reflect the Second World War, and perhaps the fact that Britain never fell under Nazi occupation. The human victory

over aliens (elsewhere in the world such children are ruthlessly eliminated) shows that Britain can face danger, and that Britons can survive invincible invaders and crushing oppression. British patriotism thus appears alongside desire for a united world where logic rather than prejudice prevails--the USSR, after killing its own aliens, begs Britain to do the same.

The common theme of the books is the difficulty of reaching world unity. All sides in the Cold War are responsible for the disaster in Triffids. Kraken's governments fail to act responsibly, and the scientist with the answers lacks public relations skills and so is not heard. In Chrysalids the USA is a mass of tiny hamlets united only in their hatred for mutants. In Midwich the children survive because of the greed and weakness of Western politicians, so that the philosopher has to kill them with a suicidal bomb attack. Science contends with political incompetence, as is made clear in Chrysalids, where witch-hunting (obviously linked to McCarthyism) is compared with sophisticated, telepathic New Zealand, united in a sharing of thoughts. It is evident that unity depends on reason, and that science could lead the way.

Reason is not enough to deal with aliens, and war always comes. War against the aliens is always presented as winnable-- some Cold War values seem to have shaped Wyndham's Darwinian universe, and war tends to purge the world of weak and undesirable elements human and alien. However, when the good are weak, only flight is possible. This is far from 'cosy'. Here the traditional horror theme, with the world in danger and orthodoxy powerless, is addressed in a serious mode. (This stresses Kraken's failure in following the clichéd mode

down to the invention of a world-saving gadget.) During the crisis the main characters live in comfort which offers a contrast to the collapsing fabric of society, and provides a power-luxury fantasy for the reader, softening the message of the story and thus making it more easily acceptable.

'Cosiness' also makes itself felt in Wyndham's effective failure to narrate unpleasant events such as violence. There are corpses in Wyndham's stories, but only at some distance from the narration, as in this passage from Midwich: "From behind the hedge opposite, came the sound of a second explosion"¹⁴. A man under alien control shoots himself behind a screening hedge. When the main character investigates, he finds "a very nasty sight indeed"¹⁵. The same is true throughout-- unpleasant events happen in the past, or outside the central character's frame of view, and Wyndham's narrative thus skirts around them.

Wyndham's scientific ideology is one of progress through social discipline, via science. His texts take the form of warnings about the fragility of society, and are therefore set in the contemporary world, into which he introduces changes-- triffids, aliens or telepathy-- which do not exist in the familiar world, then explores the implications of the changes. The effect of Wyndham's stories arises from the difference between Wyndham's fictional worlds and the real world of Wyndham's audience. Therefore, the more fully that Wyndham can make the reader accept his representation of the world experienced by that reader, the better his novels express his scientific ideology and thus succeed as science fiction.

However, Wyndham does not attempt perfect mimesis of the external world-- he is no naturalist. Instead, it is simulated

by taking advantage of the conventions of bourgeois entertainment-literature. Wyndham's central characters are bourgeois and appear in a bourgeois-created world from which death, pain, suffering, sexuality and the perspectives of other classes are excluded. Todorov terms this verisimilitude the "mask which is assumed by the laws of the text and which we are meant to take for a relation with reality"¹⁶. Raymond Chandler is blunter when speaking of how the bourgeois entertainment-fiction of the 1930s-- specifically the detective stories of Dorothy L Sayers-- ignored reality: "If it started to be about real people... they must very soon do unreal things in order to form the artificial pattern required by the plot.... they cease to be real themselves"¹⁷.

Exploiting such conventions appealed to the desires of Wyndham's audience, and doubtless helped to make his books succeed. Yet this inevitably weakens the effect of his stories, because this conventional world is not meant to be identical to the real world-- it is rather the world of romance. It is not necessary to display the repugnant if one is to simulate reality. However, Wyndham's texts hint at repugnant events, but fail to display them so as to save the reader's feelings, and thus lose touch with reality. Wyndham's texts are thus near-masterpieces of entertainment, but fail to realise their potential as warnings.

Much of this escapist aspect of Wyndham's work seems to relate to the political conditions of Britain after the war. In his books, huge powers make huge blunders, but individuals work for the common good. Totalitarianism is often the enemy, in humans and aliens, but is defeated by bourgeois individuals. Thus Wyndham shows ways in which the weak can find an important

role-- providing a reason for British patriotism despite the weakness of Britain as a nation. The Suez crisis of 1956 brought the actual weakness of Britain home to the nation, and it may not be coincidental that in Wyndham's post-Suez texts, such as Midwich, victory comes not through effort but through luck or trickery.

Wyndham's ideal world is suggested in a telepath's vision of New Zealand in Chrysalids:

I would sometimes dream of a city-- which was strange because it began before I even knew what a city was.... I could see the streets, and the buildings... sometimes there were things in the sky, shiny fish-shaped things that certainly were not birds.... It was a beautiful, fascinating place...¹⁸

This is a paradise for a mutant elite of telepaths, on an island safe from attack. It is a fantasy of security for the privileged, whose qualities separate them from the majority. Much the same theme appears in Midwich. Here the children-elite are the enemy, and they are defeated by Professor Zellaby, himself part of the British elite and thus qualified to deal with them. Generally Wyndham's views are consistent with a hierarchical world-view, with most people near the bottom, narrators occupying a middle position, but certain people (those possessing qualities of which Wyndham approves) at the top. Often calamity comes because Wyndham's hierarchy differs from the hierarchy of society; the elite do not rule.

The qualities of this elite are suggested in the interestingly ambiguous attitude towards technology expressed

in "Wild Flower" in The Seeds Of Time¹⁹. A technician kills some flowers (which are admired by an aging schoolmistress, the central character) with a new herbicide. The flowers were the product of a nuclear accident, but beautiful, while the technician, although he represents technology and social responsibility, appears as a Philistine. The schoolmistress comes to see the flowers as representing a beauty which progress could never truly destroy.

The technician's sin is to ignore the aesthetics of the world— suggesting that such insensitive people have no right to the powers which science bestows. Yet the sensitive, bourgeois character is helpless against the technician— the world is at fault because the hierarchy is out of joint. To rule the world, people need both intellectual abilities and compassion. This is not an original concept, and it is wholly in accord with the bourgeois self-image, but it works against the self-image of the technocrat. Wyndham's world-view may be seen as an effort to straddle C P Snow's "Two Cultures"²⁰ rather than simply declaring the scientific culture superior.

Wyndham makes his texts acceptable to his likely audience— the people at the middle of the social pyramid-- by making his narrators such people. This suits his popular genre; in Conan Doyle's books, Sherlock Holmes might be the focus of the action, but the bourgeois reader requires a sympathetic Dr Watson as the narrator. Wyndham's dominant characters are almost superhuman, and sometimes lack emotional depth. Middle-brow people are at the core of the texts, and even the mutants of Chrysalids are basically down-to-earth. Wyndham accepts bourgeois assumptions about the world (common sense) and thus it is the 'sensible' people who eventually save the world. He

is providing middle-class morality plays in which people of quality (but not so dominant as to threaten the bourgeoisie) defeat the enemies of bourgeois decorum.

In this context, aliens are always plausible in terms of middle-class motives. In Kraken and Chrysalids they might even have coexisted with humanity had conditions been different. The aliens are reasonable creatures-- it is for this reason that they must be destroyed, because such reason implies efficiency, and in Wyndham's Darwinian world they must not be allowed to triumph over humanity.

This may be contrasted with the American tendency to make the universe bipolar, as in the Cold War view of the world. Alien invaders were dehumanised and terrifying. This is a facet of Wyndham's desire for sensible attitudes. In a world of total polar opposites there would be no room for small powers or moderate attitudes, whereas in Wyndham's world the neutrals can swing the balance. In The Outward Urge (1959)²¹ a nuclear war is survived by a British moon base because the base is too small to merit attack-- and the base thus becomes the focus of human endeavour in space.

Wyndham appeals to a patriotism and a class solidarity for the acceptance of his texts, one depending on the world of the 1950s for survival. Harmony must be maintained. There is common ground for all, including scientists, Beatniks and Military Intelligence. This was only possible in a society where differences of opinion were unimportant-- the middle-class society of Britain in the 1950s, where threats from without bred solidarity across the bounds of creed and class.

These conditions did not last, and when conditions changed, Wyndham all but stopped writing. After 1960 Wyndham chiefly

concerned himself with reworking earlier, unpublished texts. Britain was becoming a very different nation to that of his heyday, emerging from the economic and spiritual slump of the post-war period with the ending of rationing and conscription. The days of empire were gone, and the dreams of a vital role for small nations began to seem mere nostalgia.

While the past was being discarded, the future was arriving in such unpleasant forms as ICBMs. In response to the new world movements arose like the anti-pollution movement (of which Carson's Silent Spring (1957)²² was the harbinger) and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. The 'angry young men' and the rock'n rollers rejected middle-class quietism, and the Notting Hill race riots of 1957 showed that formerly-hidden social turmoil was rising to the surface. The optimistic, rationalist hopes of writers like Wyndham were displaced by an anarchic and anti-bourgeois reality.

New writers arose to serve this reality, and one of the first to gain prominence was J G Ballard, who began submitting stories to New Worlds in 1956 (whereas Wyndham's stories of the period usually appeared in magazines aimed at a wider audience). Ballard thus found a publishing niche from the start of his career, and almost from the first he was recognised as an important writer. Thus he had great prospects-- yet his stories collected in The Voices Of Time (1962)²³ reflect a lack of opportunity in the worlds which they represent, and instead, a sense of insecurity and menace.

Ballard was twenty-seven years younger than Wyndham. He had begun his life in the bourgeois surroundings of the British colonial enclave in Shanghai, but where Wyndham had experienced Britain's triumphs in the European war, Ballard had spent the

period, his adolescence, separated from his family in a Japanese internment camp. (His fictionalised reminiscences, Empire Of The Sun²⁴, won him the Booker Prize.) He experienced the defeat of a seemingly invulnerable British colonial system, and its replacement by an apparently more vital Japanese system. Rather than travelling in relative safety across a liberated continent, he had to stay in a small, dangerous, enemy-occupied region.

This may help to explain the gloom of some of his short stories, and the insecurity implicit in The Wind From Nowhere (1962)²⁵, his first book. Here the world is destroyed by violent winds. Humanity is helpless in the face of nature. Yet there is no sense of any meaning in this disaster-- as if Ballard were unsure of what to do with this impressive image. The book is almost never acknowledged in publishers' blurbs (which suggests that Ballard dislikes it) and instead Ballard's first novel is usually claimed to be the far more complex-- and more menacing-- The Drowned World.

From the start, the landscape of Drowned challenges the assumptions of readers rather than serving their expectations. A worldwide jungle is replacing the creations of humanity, for the Earth has lost much of its atmosphere, allowing the sun's heat to melt the icecaps. At the core of the book is an exploration party which studies conditions in a small lagoon amid what had been London, watching the unknown replace the familiar.

Thus the main characters are not threatened by an enemy who might be identified and conquered, but by an invincible natural force. Perhaps this is a stylization of Ballard's wartime experiences. Struggle against the environment seems

useless, even though the function of the team is to seek exploitable land-- the first sign of the contradiction between the aims of human society and the reality of the world about it, a contradiction dominating the book. The humans clash over whether to remain within this social realm or not-- and some choose not to.

This choice is not so much between good and evil, initially, as between tastes. Yet the nature of the text reflects Conrad's Heart of Darkness²⁶, which suggests that issues of good and evil are in fact present. In this case it seems unlikely that good is on the side of civilised society, which seems an anachronism amid the expanding jungles.

The poles of civilisation and environment appropriately meet in a city where human creations are still identifiable, but decaying. Physically the conflict is too slow to be seen, but it goes on in the minds of the party. They dream of the reptiles of prehistory, and soon the surrounding lagoons gain a sense of menace. They lose confidence in their technology, a fact symbolised by the appearance of the main character, Kerans, meditating on a broken compass, its needle pointing south towards the greater heats of even earlier times. A psychologist, Bodkin, suggests that the dreams are innate in human DNA, and being released by the altered conditions. While people may civilise their appearance, primitive and uncontrollable elements remain within them. Choices are to be made on the psychic level as well as the physical.

The reader is not given easy clues as to the right choice. Ballard begins the text with a deliberately alien image: "Soon it would be too hot. Looking out from the hotel balcony shortly after eight o'clock, Kerans watched the sun rise behind

the dense groves of giant gymnosperms crowding over the roofs of the abandoned department stores four hundred yards away on the east side of the lagoon"²⁷. The juxtaposition of jungle and human artifacts is disturbing. The social experience of the reader has no meaning here, in sharp contrast to Wyndham's world.

The theme of the recognition and acceptance of the obsolescence of established structures may reflect the world of the early 1960s. Certainly it challenges the Western reader. Shown thus in isolation from familiar circumstances, a sense develops that progress is not inevitable, ^{something} intensely challenging to the science fiction reader.

In most earlier science fiction stories, social, historical or moral themes had been separated from expressions of the text's unifying scientific ideology. For instance, Wyndham's bourgeois ideologies do not simply incorporate his scientific ideology (which is not specifically bourgeois-- his faith in progress is characteristic of Soviet science fiction²⁸), but they are reinforced by it. Ballard's scientific ideology seems to include all the ideologies expressed in Drowned. Science is not a driving-force which will send humanity to the stars, but a device for measuring humanity's situation. Through this it is revealed that humanity is unimportant. The degree to which Ballard presents this ideology is the degree to which he challenges his readers to question their own surroundings.

Kerans remarks that "'Perhaps these sunken lagoons simply remind me of the drowned world of my uterine childhood-- if so, the best thing is to leave straight away'"²⁹. This is the voice of humanity, of Camp Byrd, last capital of the planet, in Greenland. Yet he cannot deny that the world about him offers a

different perspective: "the genealogical tree of mankind was... apparently moving backwards in time, and a point might ultimately be reached where a second Adam and Eve found themselves alone in a new Eden"³⁰. Humanity suggests that Kerans should ignore the significance of his surroundings-- but it is clear that humanity is foolishly clinging to progressive myths while the world is retrogressing.

Time is important in the book in terms of the abandoning of the idea of progress and ~~a~~ return to the past. Cycles and their reversal are important: Kerans' heartbeat in a dream of reptiles, oscillating air-conditioning, the cycle of birth and death reversed through recurrent womb-images, even a Diesel engine running backwards-- all seem to symbolise the reversal of the cycle of progress. Eventually Kerans realises the truth of this and heads towards the warm wet south, "a second Adam searching for the forgotten paradises of the reborn sun"³¹.

Albert Wendland observes that Ballard celebrates a 'drop-out' mentality³². The conclusion of Drowned seems to take this almost to the point of a death-wish: "So he left the lagoon and entered the jungle again, within a few days was completely lost, following the lagoons southward through the increasing rain and heat, attacked by alligators and giant bats..."³³. Yet Ballard's tone is triumphant, and the meaning of 'drop-out' needs to be seen in the light of Ballard's rejection of the progressive world. Wendland is right if it is accepted that Ballard takes the ideals of the 'drop-out' movement of the late 1960s to an extreme which that movement never reached. Kerans' problems are the tribulations of a pilgrim bent on enlightenment rather than those of someone fleeing responsibility. The end of Drowned suggests victory, even in

the face of death.

This paradox is easily resolved. Death rapidly ceases to matter to Kerans, Bodkin and Kerans' lover Beatrice. If the cycle of progress is really reversing, then life no longer takes the form of progress towards a goal. Hence life and death both cease to have meaning. The situation resembles that of the medieval Wheel of Fortune, where success is followed by failure, and true progress never happens.

This does not mean that there is no meaning in this world. Kerans, Bodkin and a minor character, Hardman (who suddenly vanishes into the jungle) seek it in the world around them, in accepting the new rules of the cycle-dominated system. These characters reject an old order which has failed, and adapt to new conditions. This adaptation is not for survival, but for understanding, and perhaps also to pursue a harmony with nature which is almost aesthetic. The 'second Adam' is not a new beginning, but an ending with dignity and self-realisation.

The process towards this acceptance by the main characters is not easy, for the new landscape is not beautiful (just as the ethos of the book is painful for the reader): "the lagoon was nothing more than a garbage-filled swamp"³⁴; "Like an immense putrescent sore, the jungle lay exposed..."³⁵; "a thick cloacal stench"³⁶. Kerans easily surmounts such problems, for such criteria hardly matter when life itself is meaningless. However, the difficulty of deciding to leave the security of the testing station for the jungle is plain. Ballard here uses sense-related imagery to strengthen and broaden the scope of his theme.

Ballard's secondary world is not conventional in the sense of simply applying the verisimilitude of a single genre. The

world of the research party is shown by using the conventions of science fiction, but the images of the jungle follow no such conventions. Ballard does not seek mimetic realism, but his landscapes reflect mental life as much as physical. The drowned but growing jungle challenges the sterile mental norms of Camp Byrd. Strengthening this, iconic forms dominate-- alligators, horsetail ferns, huge mosquitoes, the immense sun and images of giant reptiles. All symbolise the changes wrought by the reversing cycle of this world.

Camp Byrd may be seen as an analogue of the reader's world. Ballard clearly shows that he is concerned with mental lives rather than with any 'objectively real' alternative world. This is shown by the importance of dreams and of the changes in individual consciousnesses in the text. The drowning of the world is not a new reality in the sense used by earlier science fiction writers, where a society is threatened and then rescued. It is an emblem of the replacement of the familiar by the strange.

The progressive and technological aspects of science are sidelined. Science is a tool for studying change, but it no longer offers a way of altering the world-- especially of returning the world to a progressive system. This view of science may be the New Wave in embryo. The catch-phrase "What was the exact nature of the catastrophe?" from Michael Moorcock's "The Peking Junction" (1969)³⁷ was widely used by other writers in the movement. Ballard's scientists seek to answer this question, and are almost indifferent to the catastrophe itself.

The ideals of science are initially part of the world of many of the main characters. Kerans has internalised his

observational techniques: "he had always believed them [his faults] to be redressed by... a complete and objective awareness of the motives behind his actions"³⁸. This scientific self-criticism breaks down under the stress of the environment: "he... without realizing it sank into a momentary reverie in which his entire consciousness became focussed... on the confused, uncertain but curiously potent image summed up by the concept 'South'"³⁹. Kerans eventually surrenders his will to this reverie, and his individualism is lost in the cyclic world-- his scientific personal world is drowned.

This scientific objectivity, so dear to the workers of the testing station of the research party, is subverted. Kerans comes to see no objective reality except that of the cyclic universe. All the objectivity in the book helps elaborate the cyclic image, and works up to the point of acceptance.

Science is not wholly dismissed in this world. The decline of Camp Byrd's society and its replacement in the minds of the main characters by the natural, cyclic world, is shown chiefly through scientific images. Kerans and Bodkin continue to practice their scientific trades. Ballard's narration is based on scientific reality-- all events have plausible scientific explanations.

Nevertheless, the findings of the team are eventually rejected by Camp Byrd as unreliable. Society can no longer trust science to interpret the world correctly. However, the expedition keeps up the façade of work, which demonstrates the wisdom of Kerans and Bodkin's decision to merge with the cyclic universe. Even this action may have scientific motivations-- as in quantum theory, observation of a system from without changes the system. As part of the system, within the cyclic world,

they might come to understand it.

Science is also important in Ballard's narration, which follows similar techniques to those of the "Golden Age" of science fiction in using scientific jargon to make the expression of ideology plausible. Ballard seems confident in the adequacy of science to describe the surfaces of things:

The city of The Yards was built on metal. But all the shock-absorbing material with which the streets and roads were carpeted couldn't muffle the ultimately violent forces and energies that had been concentrated in one small area. Here were atomic piles so hot that they were exploding continuously with a maximum detonation short of cataclysm. Here were machines that could stamp out hundred-ton electro-steel plates.⁴⁰

A series of violent and prolonged solar storms lasting several years caused by a sudden instability in the Sun had enlarged the Van Allen belts and diminished the Earth's gravitational hold upon the outer layers of the ionosphere. As these vanished into space, depleting the Earth's barrier against the full impact of solar radiation, temperatures began to climb steadily...⁴¹

This is exciting mystification. In other fields, Ballard draws a kind of mysticism from science which helps to explain the impulses which he gives to his main characters:

'The further down the CNS you move, from the hind-brain through the medulla into the spinal cord, you descend back into the neuronics past. For example, the junction between the thoracic and lumbar vertebrae, between T-12 and L-1, is the great zone of transit between the gill-breathing fish and the air-breathing amphibians with their respiratory rib-cages, the very junction where we stand now on the shores of this lagoon, between the Palaeozoic and Triassic eras.'⁴²

This confident passage is fully incorporated into the scheme of the text-- rather than accelerating action or building a sense of wonder. It relates scientifically to Ballard's concept of the cycle, showing that science still has power. Ballard uses science allegorically, to show the rigidity of modern society and its refusal to accept unpleasant facts. Later New Wave writers went so far as to use the scientific concept of entropy to symbolise the decline of the West.⁴³

The exploring party seeks to reverse the cycle of the universe and restore progress, but must fail. Some critics see Ballard as being simply negative⁴⁴, but clearly science has a positive role in Ballard's world. More ambitious hopes for science, though, form part of an empty and decaying order: "the semicircle of... programme schedules.... on the left, dating from their first year of work, were packed with detailed entries... but those on the right thinned out progressively.... Many of the cardboard screens had sprung off their drawing-pins... like the peeling hull-plates of a derelict ship"⁴⁵.

A scientific understanding of the environment must include psychology, and while seeking to merge with the lagoons Kerans is also exploring himself. Strangman, the looter, says this jokingly to Kerans when the latter uses a diving-suit to explore the lagoon-- going beneath the surface for the first time and receiving a complex and beautiful revelation: "'But don't try to reach the Unconscious, Kerans; remember it isn't equipped to go down that far!'"⁴⁶. Strangman's banter shows his ignorance-- the surrounding world is the Unconscious.

This mental world is vitally important for Kerans. Here he cuts away from the mores of Camp Byrd which bind him to a discipline which he dislikes. When he leaves, he can create his own discipline and follow it by choice-- he goes south because he wishes to do so, not because he is told to.

The role of Camp Byrd is clear from early on: "They trudged up the staircase, Riggs slapping with his baton at the vines..."⁴⁷. Colonel Riggs, military officer and head of the expedition, represents the limited nature of the world of 1962, the established world. The baton of power ineffectually beats at the world which is replacing it. The destruction of a world which needs such imposed discipline for its survival seems no bad thing when compared with Kerans' later freedom. Kerans' seeming death-wish becomes comprehensible in this light. It is surely not by accident that Nevil Shute's novel about the extermination of humanity by nuclear war, On The Beach (1959)⁴⁸ is parodied in the first chapter-heading, "On The Beach At The Ritz".

Ballard does not often explicitly denounce Camp Byrd except where it interferes with the drowned world. Perhaps it need not be taken seriously, for the end seems nigh. The departure-

time of the research group, the dates when food will run out and air-conditioning break down, the time of the coming rains, Strangman's impatient wait for Kerans' death-- all suggest a coming end for everything. Death is the end which Kerans chooses, at the hands of the cyclic world, a more productive act than choosing the psychic death of Camp Byrd.

Eventually even Camp Byrd realises the futility of its struggle against the invincible, and the exploration parties are recalled. By this time the split between Kerans and the Camp Byrd scientists is irrevocable: "What completely separated them now was the single fact that Riggs had not seen the dream..."⁴⁹. Eventually, as if symbolising the victory of the drowned world, Kerans and Bodkin scuttle the testing-station with its programme charts: "a perfect... comment on the biophysical mechanisms they sought to describe"⁵⁰, sunken and evasive. The cyclic lagoon-world will survive the coming death of Camp Byrd.

Once this conflict has been resolved by the departure of the exploration party, those remaining sink deeper into the vision. The arrival of Strangman's freebooters changes nothing, for they are not part of the Camp Byrd world. Indeed, their diving-suit allows Kerans to expand the scale of the cyclic concept: "the dark vault... like a huge velvet-upholstered womb in a surrealist nightmare"⁵¹, which reminds Kerans of a zodiac. The universe and the cycle of the seasons are enclosed by the womb-- astronomy united with the psychology and biology which dominate the book.

Near-death by asphyxiation gives point to this image: "Giant waves, infinitely slow and enveloping, broke and fell across the sunless beaches of the time-sea..."⁵². After Kerans'

rescue, it is suggested that he had "'wanted to become part of the drowned world'"⁵³. Strangman, who owes allegiance to a world of discarded ornaments, cannot understand this. Even Kerans is troubled: "Was the drowned world... an impulse to suicide, an unconscious neuronc synthesis of the archaeopsychic zero?"⁵⁴. This fear soon loses its significance, along with all the progressive ideals which had required that he preserve his life.

One thing which hastens his final rejection is the draining of the lagoon, which briefly reveals the effect of the reversal of the cycle: "The once translucent threshold of the womb had vanished, its place taken by the gateway to a sewer"⁵⁵. Genitals give place to anus, a perfect metaphor for the triumph of Camp Byrd over the jungle. Kerans defeats Strangman, but this is not enough-- he must leave the world of Strangman and Riggs if his personal world is to be consistent: "Only fifty miles to the south, the rainclouds were packed together... blotting out the swamps and archipelagoes... the archaic sun in his mind beat again continuously.... it called him southward..."⁵⁶.

Perhaps Kerans still has some doubts as he heads into the jungle. The sky is "the interior ceiling of some deep irrevocable psychosis"⁵⁷. In the jungle, though, he finds a temple-- a seemingly unlikely event, but in this jungle anything is possible. It is appropriate that once Kerans has found something to worship, he should find somewhere to do it.

There is even a high priest-- Hardman, who earlier fled south from the expedition. Hardman is almost blind, only seeing the sun rise and set, immersed in the cycle. Kerans' dreams are made reality. He makes a last note for a nonexistent posterity,

as if saying farewell to the social world, then heads off, and "within a few days was completely lost"⁵⁸ in the drowned world.

Such surrender is a complete break with earlier progressive ideas in science fiction, giving reason to see Drowned as early New Wave. Moreover, Drowned's characters are not the individualist romance-heroes of the 1940s and 1950s⁵⁹. Drowned's characters may not be perfectly realised, but they act in a plausible philosophical context centred on men rather than machines.

Bodkin, for instance, personifies the doubtful triumph of science. Against a background of degenerating research, this survivor of the pre-deluge era flicks his handkerchief at a marmoset as if driving off the reversing cycle of evolution. Yet this man invents a new psychology which links Ballard's ideas of biological regression to a psychic metamorphosis. A true scientist, he accepts the unpalatable facts. "A more important task than mapping the harbours and lagoons of the external landscape was to chart the ghostly deltas and luminous beaches of the submerged neuronic continents..."⁶⁰.

Ballard's characterisation is often stereotypical. Bodkin never emerges from the category 'scientist', for this is his role in the text. A worse stereotype is Beatrice, a languid femme fatale recalling the traditional weak women of 1940s science fiction (an odd retrogression of Ballard's). When Kerans and Riggs visit her, she is sharp: "'All right, you two, get on with it. I'm not a strip show'"⁶¹. Yet Ballard had just described her 'long oiled body' and 'slightly sullen pout' which relate more to the women of strip shows than to reality. Such sexism is slightly troubling.

Kerans' enemy, Strangman, is better portrayed, for his role

does not need much realisation as a person. He is kept at a narrative distance from the reader, who has access only to his illusions and fantasies. Strangman is a symbol. His arrival is linked to the replacement of watchful iguanas by predatory alligators in the lagoon-- the disciplined scientists replaced by rapacious freebooters.

Yet at first Strangman seems positive. An energetic archetype of lust, he covets everything around him. Yet he is quixotic, not killing Kerans when he has reason to. He seems to hark back to some image from Ballard's life:

His handsome saturnine face regarding them with a mixture of suspicion and amused contempt, Strangman lounged back under the cool awning that shaded the poop deck of the depot ship. He had changed into a crisp white suit.... He snapped his fingers at the steward standing in the shadows behind him and selected an olive from the tray of small chow.⁶²

This image does not suit the idea of life on a floating junkyard. Strangman has some elements of Mr Maxted, the Ballard-figure's companion in Empire of the Sun: "A solitary but amiable figure in a sharkskin suit, who faced reality across the buffer of a large whisky and soda..."⁶³. The scene certainly recalls the colonial life-style, and Strangman's violence may suggest the violence on which Shanghai colonialism depended. Like those in Shanghai, Strangman seeks power over a fragment of a vast power, a façade of control comparable to Colonel Riggs' disciplined absurdities. Strangman's rummaged remnants from drowned cities drive this home-- Riggs and

Strangman are both struggling to save what is already lost. By 'reclaiming' the lagoon Strangman wins Riggs' favour and is offered a 'governor-generalship', stressing the colonial links and making Camp Byrd's ethos seem evil by associating it with the destruction of the lagoon.

Riggs had at first seemed a sympathetic figure, amid refugees whom he "good-humouredly but firmly helped back to safety"⁶⁴. However, Riggs grows increasingly authoritarian, and his eventual union with Strangman comes as no surprise. Yet by this time he is weak—Kerans refloods the lagoon with one bomb. Riggs cannot tolerate rebellion, and tries to take revenge: "A mile away, flying fifty feet above the water, the helicopter raced along, machine-gun fire flickering from its cabin at the islands below.... From his hiding-place in one of the islands Kerans clearly saw Riggs looking out from the hatchway, his small jaw jutting fiercely"⁶⁵. Riggs' technological power, which had seemed formidable, now appears merely pathetic.

Ballard's characterisation, though more complex than that of earlier science fiction, remains a foil for his scientific ideology. Everything in the book serves this aim. The union of outside world and mind is an important part of this ideology, although by showing this union Ballard also finds an effective way of expressing himself. This aspect of the text, important in Drowned and in Ballard's later work (and in much of the New Wave) draws much inspiration from the Surrealist movement.

Ballard clearly admired Surrealism. In an article on it, "The Coming of the Unconscious", he remarks that "the rectilinear structures of our own conscious reality are warped elements from some placid and harmonious future"⁶⁶. Drowned may

be an effort to make this dichotomy concrete-- rectilinear London confronts the curve of the lagoon. Surrealism appears overtly in Drowned in the paintings in Beatrice's home: "Over the mantelpiece was a huge painting by the early 20th-century Surrealist, Delvaux, in which ashen-faced women danced naked to the waist with dandified skeletons in tuxedos against a spectral bone-like landscape. On another wall one of Max Ernst's self-devouring phantasmagoric jungles screamed silently to itself, like the sump of some insane unconscious"⁶⁷.

The Ernst painting is an image of Ballard's world, while the Delvaux may be seen in terms of Strangman's band, for Kerans feels that Strangman's collection of remnants resembles a boneyard. Physical reflection of the paintings incorporates these Surrealist creations into Ballard's work more fully than would happen through their mere appearance. Drowned thus expresses ideas going beyond scientific speculation about the future, just as do the paintings. Thus Ballard's use of Surrealist works enhances the scope of his own text.

There are other Surrealist images. Kerans dreams of "Riggs dressed as William Tell, striding about in a huge Dalinian landscape, planting immense dripping sundials like daggers in the fused sand"⁶⁸, which surely shows the changed nature of time in the drowned world. There is a cemetery, "its ornate Florentine tombs cracked and sprung, corpses floating out... in a grim rehearsal of the Day of Judgement"⁶⁹, an equally Dalinian image, and the pursuit of Hardman through a sham-Parthenon recalls the incomplete architecture found in so many of Dali's works.

Ballard observes that "this fusion of the outer world of reality and the inner world of the psyche... [is characterised

by] redemptive and therapeutic power.... a journey of return to one's innermost being"⁷⁰. Bigsby says that in Surrealism "The confrontation of disparate ideas serves to break the analogical mode of the mind and liberate the imagination"⁷¹. Surrealist texts stimulate speculation about the nature of the world. This is comparable to Suvin's concept of science fiction as a cognitive medium-- and both ideas may be found in Drowned with its challenges to established dogmas.

Dali, in La Conquête de l'irrationnel (1935), said of Surrealists that "we are carnivorous fish who... swim between two levels of water, the cold water of art, the hot water of science, and it is precisely in this temperature, and swimming against the current, that the experiment of our life and of our fertilisation achieves that troubled depth"⁷². This fits Ballard's linking of science and the senses. Ballard sees in Surrealism a "preoccupation with the analytic function of the sciences"⁷³. Even if this is an exaggeration it clarifies Ballard's view of what he was doing, as does his remark that "our commonplace notions of reality... may have very different meanings by the time they reach the central nervous system"⁷⁴. The relationship between Ballard and Surrealism is not surprising-- Surrealism was a revolt against complacency, and Ballard was revolting against the complacency of his predecessors in the field.

It may seem odd that such trends did not widely appear in earlier science fiction. The conservative nature of the science fiction establishment probably explains this-- a nature suggested by Kingsley Amis and Robert Conquest, who said that Ballard stressed "what he calls 'inner space' in writing to which the terms 'romantic' and 'beautiful' would be

appropriate"⁷⁵. This avoids the ideological importance of 'inner space' with its psychological significance. Such obtuseness suggests why the changes brought by the New Wave came as a great shock to many writers and critics in the field.

Yet the expression of 'inner space' through science fiction was inevitable, since its worlds and beliefs are mental constructs born of ideas, existing in opposition to the real world. Furthermore, scientists had long known that reality was filtered through a fallible human consciousness-- a school of quantum theory has arisen suggesting that the universe has a consistency which humanity cannot discern. Ballard had been concerned with this idea for some time (as in "Manhole 69", where a neurological operation leads to strange effects)⁷⁶ and other writers had dabbled in the significance of dreams (as in Isaac Asimov's "Belief"⁷⁷). However, Ballard is the first (with Philip K Dick⁷⁸ in the US) to postulate the reality of such alternative visions. Once the bounds of science fiction were thus transgressed, the links between science fiction's secondary worlds and the world of reality became far less clear. Ballard's seemingly mild transgression of reality, ironically, offers scientific justification for the collapse of scientific objectivity.

Much the same is true of Ballard's other deviations from science fiction's norms-- they add up to a great change in the genre, perhaps a revolution. Wyndham's changes had been in milieu rather than genre. It may be useful to compare their styles and beliefs more closely, to discuss this difference.

The most clear difference between their styles lies in Wyndham's first-person narration. This is a hangover from the adventure-story, and guarantees cosiness, since the reader

knows that the narrator survived the calamity if he can write about it. Ballard's text allows no such certainties, although Ballard's narrative offers authorial interventions which may be seen as an objective viewpoint, where Wyndham's text is wholly subjective.

Wyndham is businesslike and unsubtle. At the start of Triffids the central character, alone in an empty hospital, faces blindness. The passage describing this deals simply with how he overcomes practical problems, paying scant attention to the horror of the situation, and using the language of 1930s adventure-fiction: "one thing I put to my credit.... I was not far enough gone.... I could... begin to get a better grip on myself"⁷⁹. These passages seem intended to show the stability of the character, lacking any depth of feeling, dealing in essentials. Sightedness in a blinded world is pleasant, but apart from this the character feels mainly social duty and discipline. The ideal implied by this seems to be the strong, diffident, middle-class British hero of film, adventure story, popular press and comics.

Wyndham's methods of treating emotion (in the light of his avoidance of violent or disagreeable images) is revealing, as in this encounter with a blinded drunken man: "When she found as the kids was blind too, what did she do? Took 'em into bed with her, and turned on the gas. Thash what she done.... She's got pluck, my wife..."⁸⁰. This evokes the false world of middle-class popular culture and its stereotypes, again appealing to Wyndham's implied audience.

By the time of Midwich Wyndham was a successful writer who could reject obvious appeals to popular taste, and it is true that there is less obvious pursuit of such conventions in this

text, but his treatment of a woman maddened by shock is also interesting: "Mrs Leebody took up a position on the lowest step of the War Memorial, and began to speak. She was dressed for the occasion in a garment of hessian, her feet were bare, and there was a smudge of ash on her forehead. Fortunately there were not many people about... she was persuaded home again by Mrs Brant..."⁸¹. Wyndham encourages the reader to distrust Mrs Leebody, because she is sabotaging the efforts of the main characters to hide the strange events at Midwich. Thus she must be undercut, through her religious fanaticism which is contrasted with the discipline with which the inhabitants of Midwich go about their business. Within the text this discipline is heightened by appeals to local patriotism. All this pursues the middle-class ideal of stability.

In Midwich Wyndham discards his 1930s language, even satirising it in chapter-headings like "Keep It Dark" and "Well Played, Midwich", yet the people who best receive such jibes are the middle-class people who used such language in their youth. Moreover, his anti-emotional attitude continues an old technique of the British middle class which was used against foreigners, local minorities and the working class-- as in John Buchan's The Power-House (1916), where a middle-class intellectual hero confronts a Labour MP: "It took me a long time to get Chapman settled down and anchored to a drink.... At that [a question] he fairly blazed up."⁸². The intellectual is calm and acts wisely, whereas Chapman's comic emotionalism leads to ineptitude. Thus the lack of strong emotions which is characteristic of Wyndham symbolises middle-class victory. (Suppression of emotions is common among middle-class heroes, from Sherlock Holmes to James Bond.) The 'stiff upper lip' of

the British bourgeoisie becomes a power-fantasy.

Ballard's style lacks such restraints. He is more concerned with his scientific ideology than with class ideologies of the sort dominating Wyndham's work. Thus Ballard can be more subtle and complex, surprising the reader with intellectual concepts couched in metaphor, rather than simply pointed out. When he calls the submerged planetarium "an immense submarine temple"⁸³ he is preparing the reader for the broad symbolic meaning which that building later assumes. It may be seen that Wyndham's world is static. Each successive stylistic image is much like the last, drawn from the same well of convention. Ballard's freedom from convention allows him to use symbolic imagery to build a new world on the wreckage of the old.

An example of this use of sense-imagery shows how he draws relations between the outer and inner world: "He watched a succession of wavelets lapping at the sloping roof, wishing that he could leave the Colonel and walk straight down into that water, dissolve himself and the ever-present phantoms which attended him like sentinel birds in the cool bower of its magical calm, in the luminous, dragon-green, serpent-haunted sea"⁸⁴. He begins with simple description, passes to meditation and then to passionate, disturbing images which reflect the main themes of the book. The contrast between the social restraints implied by the Colonel and the freedom and mystery of the lagoon is clear. It is impossible to imagine Wyndham, or any 'Golden Age' writer, being so lyrical.

There is little of the spatial or functional description common in earlier science fiction, but nevertheless Ballard's world is sharply realised. Like Wyndham's, it is a world which scientists may study, but these scientists are ecologists

concerned with a living environment. Scientifically descriptive passages flow into more purely descriptive sections: "Driving the submerged silt before them, the new seas... altered the shape and contours of the continents..."⁸⁵. Here the concept of 'neuronic continents' appears by implication. Such a unity of expression and theme was only possible for Wyndham by keeping his themes as commonplace as possible.

Technical passages and lyrical phraseology sometimes appear in the same sequence: "He remembered the iguanas braying and lunging across the steps of the museum. Just as the distinction between the latent and manifest contents of the dream had ceased to be valid, so had any division between the real and the super-real... Phantoms slid imperceptibly from nightmare to reality and back again, the terrestrial and psychic landscapes were now indistinguishable..."⁸⁶. The core of the passage is Kerans' technical analysis of a disturbing dream, yet this becomes part of the Surrealist concepts which Ballard is pursuing, and he drives this home in the passage with symbols of iguanas (in a museum, thus linked to dinosaurs) and vague phantoms.

This blending of science and art suggests that for Ballard subjectivity and objectivity cannot be kept separate. The world must be treated as real, even if it can only be perceived objectively in terms of convention. Science thus has a place in producing that system of convention. Such an idea appears in the word "archaeopsychic", which is meaningless, but seems significant because of its association with scientific terminology. If science is no longer the arbiter of the world, its former role as arbiter remains emotionally useful to Ballard. Despite all the changes which Ballard brings to

science fiction, he appeals to science for his verisimilitude just as Wyndham does.

Ballard is more self-conscious than Wyndham. References to other texts appear frequently, as in the chapter-heading "The Ballad Of Mistah Bones". This recalls Conrad's "'Mistah Kurtz--- he dead.'"⁸⁷, which was also the heading for Eliot's "The Hollow Men" with its images of boneyards. This is a literary equivalent of Ballard's use of Surrealist paintings. Verisimilitude, however, remains important despite this literary self-consciousness. Ballard seems to create a plausible world which can be contrasted with the more mythic world of the reversing cycle, and to do this he must follow the same conventions as Wyndham.

Their characters relate to their landscapes in different ways. Wyndham's characters clash with their environments, seeking to mould them to their wills. This is in keeping with the 1930s belief in the ever-increasing power of technology. Its effect is an alienation of characters from their environment, generating a constant sense of insecurity. This reflects the middle-class situation where social forces determine success or failure. Individuals may succeed by exploiting their gifts or possessions-- Wyndham's landscapes of disaster are an enlarged version of his society, with greater threats and rewards.

By the 1960s a series of ecological and political disasters had challenged the idea of technical omnipotence. (It was ironic that this should happen at the start of the space race-- significantly, many Ballard texts are set in abandoned spaceports⁸⁸.) This, and Ballard's life-experiences, may show why in Ballard's world characters tend to submit to their

environments. Ballard seems troubled by the idea of natural disaster-- the destruction of humanity because of its loss of contact with external reality, a failure to adapt to a changing world. Ballard's individualistic vision tends to see society as flawed not so much because it is dehumanising, but because it hinders adaptation. The individual separate from society is free to recognise his or her place in the universe-- a mystic concept pursued in Ballard's time by the Beats, and later adopted by the Hippies.

Wyndham hymns human triumph. The momentary success of forces beyond immediate human control makes that triumph more impressive. In Chrysalids even the nuclear bomb, the ultimate threat, produces a superhuman race and turns fear into hope. Ballard is not optimistic about human social triumph. Rather he sees hope in individuals reaching their desires. Drowned suggests that humanity's future may not lie in glorious technology, but in escaping meaningless social rituals in turning towards natural sources of self-realisation.

If there is any similarity between these writers which is deeper than the effects of their origin in a common culture, it is in the short-term effects of their ideas. Wyndham believes in progress, but it should be restrained. He desires stability, and his futures are similar to his present-- nothing of real meaning to the main characters ever changes. In Ballard's works change comes rapidly from outside society, and his characters accept it-- but the thrust of the books suggests that social changes are not significant. To look outside society altogether is revolutionary in the sense of rejecting social reality-- but Kerans' actions have no effect on the stultification of Camp Byrd. It can thus be said that socially,

Ballard's ideas are almost as conservative as Wyndham's-- although the thrust of his arguments lies outside the social realm.

Ballard's apparent conservatism should be seen in the light of the field where he was working. Radicalism was not an easy thing to express in the early 1960s, especially not in science fiction. It is likely that Ballard was not free to write what he wished (in contrast to Wyndham).

For instance, in Chapters 11 and 12 of Drowned, "The Ballad Of Mistah Bones" and "The Feast Of Skulls", Ballard's treatment of characters and presentation of events differs sharply from that elsewhere in the book. Elsewhere the main, cycle-accepting characters are passive, their behaviour suited to conditions in the lagoon. In these chapters, though, come Bodkin's bomb attack and Kerans' direct clash with Strangman-- events which seem justified by events but are wholly out of character. The cyclic world is no longer at the core of events-- instead the core is Strangman, who seeks to destroy the lagoons. This seems appropriate, but it is not-- it is obvious that Strangman is too weak and unstable to accomplish anything significant. Then why is so much time devoted to these distractions from the main intellectual concern of the book?

Strangman's attack on Kerans is supposedly launched because his men, for no reason, fear Kerans' passivity. Without any motive, Strangman stages a pageant around Kerans so as to exorcise his far from apparent demonic powers, rather than killing him as he had killed Bodkin. To counter this humiliation, Kerans improbably escapes, rescues Beatrice from an unexplained captivity (which she does not mind) in a way that endangers them both, and then is saved by the unexpected

return of Riggs' team. This sequence of events is so unlikely that it may be intended as a deliberate incongruity to weaken the verisimilitude of the whole passage.

Subsequently, however, Ballard returns to a more verisimilitude-requiring mode. Thus the purpose of such incongruity is not clear-- unless it is to weaken a specific passage in the text. Why should Ballard wish to weaken it? Certainly the passage serves no function in the development of the rest of the text, and could easily be removed if Ballard were free to do so. But was he? Consider these passages:

We had turned a corner to see the street seventy yards ahead of us filled with people. They were coming towards us at a stumbling run, with their arms outstretched before them. A mingled crying and screaming came from them. Even as we turned into sight of them, a woman at the front tripped and fell; others tumbled over her, and she disappeared beneath a kicking, struggling heap. Beyond the mob, we had a glimpse of the cause of it all: three dark-leaved stalks swaying over the panic-stricken heads.⁸⁹

Determined to break Kerans' power for once and for all, Strangman ordered two additional casks of rum lowered from the depot ship, hoping to drive from his men's minds their unconscious fear of Kerans and the paternal guardian of the sea he now symbolised. Soon the square was filled with noisy stumbling figures, tipping their jugs and bottles to their lips, tap-dancing on the drum-skins. Accompanied by the

Admiral, Strangman moved swiftly from one party to another, inciting them to further acts of extravagance.⁹⁰

The treatment is different, but the effect of the two texts is similar. Both are mob-scenes dominated by the forces threatening the central character of the book. The former passage is important because it is one of the few places where Wyndham gives any detailed account of the effects of blindness and triffids upon humanity. The latter, part of Strangman's long campaign against Kerans in captivity, arouses a similar shock at the collapse of social cohesion. Why should such a passage, filled with piracy-images, be important to the book, since by this time it has been shown that social matters are unimportant?

The attitude which the latter passage supports is similar to that which Wyndham presents in his catastrophe novels-- the idea of the collapse of society under stress. It seems likely that this is no coincidence, but that the passage, and the sequence from which it comes, was included to appeal to the audience who bought Wyndham's books. The same theme is strongly present in Wind, but is almost absent from Ballard's later disaster novels, The Drought (1965)⁹¹ and The Crystal World (1966)⁹².

By 1962 Ballard's output had been modest-- a few short stories and one not overly successful novel. It is likely that to secure publication he had to include ingredients which the publisher knew would sell. (Like Wind, Drowned was first published in the US, so that Ballard would have had little direct contact with his publishers.) Hence Drowned was subject

to commercial pressure. When Drowned succeeded, and when Ballard's later works succeeded without any concession to commercialism, publishers became likely to buy Ballard's work on the strength of his name alone, giving him the freedom which he needed. Thus the publishers were educated to see that a change of ideology and technique in science fiction was economically feasible.

This places the difference between Wyndham and Ballard in context, although the similarities between their work should not be ignored. Both were addressing similar forms, and both identify failures in society-- although only Ballard takes this to its extreme conclusion. Nevertheless it is clear that Wyndham, although he was still writing well after Ballard appeared, belongs to an earlier, more stable epoch.

The notion of the collapse of the intellectual monolith of the 1950s is strong in Ballard. It underlies his challenge to reality made clear in his texts and his theorizing: "The only external landscapes which have any meaning are those which are reflected, in the Central Nervous System if you like, by their direct analogues"⁹³. It was an appropriate time to challenge such a monolith, once the myth of Western moral supremacy over the rest of the world had been destroyed by colonialism and by superpower rivalries. The times were truly changing.

This helps to suggest why Drowned depicts a system dismissing socially conditioned behaviour. If there is something wrong with the social world then it should be rejected rather than reformed, and alternatives sought (something characteristic of the New Wave). Ballard's reversed cycle is not only an attack on the myth of progress in science fiction, but on the myth of progress which underlies much of

Western society, a myth, as many New Wave writers stressed, which ran against the entropic tendency of the universe.

Drowned, like the short stories of Ballard, Moorcock and Aldiss in the 1950s and early 1960s, is undoubtedly a camouflaged revolutionary initiative. However, Ballard goes further than the earlier stories, producing a new structure along with the new ideology, one synthesised with it in a way which recalls Surrealist techniques. This latter point may be most significant, for the New Wave was emerging into the open in the way in which Ballard rejected conventional narrative to produce texts which were obviously opposed to run-of-the-mill science fiction. Drowned can be seen as a move towards a kind of science fiction which would overturn the foundations of American magazine science fiction. The very wide success which Drowned gained showed that such new fiction could compete with the older kind on its own economic terms.

CHAPTER II: MID-PERIOD NEW WAVE-- BRIAN W ALDISS AND HARRY HARRISON.

It was surely evidence of a failing in contemporary science fiction when very different writers created similar texts which attacked contemporary science fiction and sought a new aesthetic for the genre. Brian Aldiss and Harry Harrison came from different nations and origins, and began their careers in different field of science fiction. They had only their culture and their age (both were born in 1925) in common. Yet in the mid-1960s they produced some impressive New Wave texts which were strikingly alike.

This might have been because they were friends-- but they also had a common outlook on science fiction which shaped their work. The growth of their work during this period casts light on the nature of the New Wave at the time, and it is useful to study some of these texts in chronological order-- taking into account their personal histories and the way in which these influenced their work.

Aldiss was born in Norfolk, and led a quiet rural life¹. As a child he became a science fiction fan, first of juvenile comics and then of American magazines. Conscripted and sent to the Far East, he found that the visions of science fiction affected his real life: "The Second British Division... was resting in India after its exertions in Burma when the news of Hiroshima was released.... a good friend of mine.... said, 'This bloody bomb they've dropped on the Japs is the thing they've been talking about in your bloody science fiction'"². Aldiss felt that the dropping of the bomb saved him from death in battle. It is likely that his sense of science fiction as a

genre of great importance for real life dates from this time.

By the 1950s he was working in a bookshop, occasionally writing science fiction stories for New Worlds. These pieces seem to accept the conventions of earlier science fiction, but actually subvert them. In "Our Kind Of Knowledge" (1955)³, a war between vast human and alien space fleets is prevented by human-alien halfbreeds who have mental powers greater than the fleets'. Such powers were commonplace in earlier science fiction, but here they are used to poke fun at the pretensions of technological militarism and to urge union between human and alien. Significantly, alienness here is not physically evident. Aldiss evidently sees science fiction conventions as flexible.

Aldiss' literary success began when he submitted short humorous pieces to Faber and Faber's trade journal. The publishers had the pieces collected as The Brightfount Diaries (1954)⁴. When this succeeded, the firm asked if Aldiss had other work to offer. He admitted that he wrote science fiction, and to his surprise the editorial staff proved to be science fiction fans. From the publication of his first science fiction collection, Space, Time and Nathaniel (1957)⁵ his success was assured: "there were few rejected manuscripts, few rejection slips, no starving in garrets"⁶.

Aldiss' first science fiction novel, Non-Stop (1958)⁷ reworked the 'generation ship' theme. It was a response to Heinlein's Universe (1941)⁸, where the interstellar spaceship's purpose has been lost and the action concerns how purpose is restored. In Non-Stop the ship is placed in orbit around its target-sun as a social experiment by the people who colonised the sun before the slow ship arrived. No restoration of purpose is possible, and at the end the ship disintegrates. Aldiss'

challenge to old ideas is not total-- as Griffin observes:

"This story has all the appeal of a fast-moving science fiction adventure..."⁹. Many of Aldiss' early texts, like the alien-invasion tale Equator (1958)¹⁰, are conventional and bland.

Hothouse (1962)¹¹, a surreal tale of a future where the sun is going nova and humanity has shrunk to the size of an insect, is very unconventional. It is full of word-games, irony and philosophical concepts about intelligence expressed through symbolic landscapes, ending with an image of reverse evolution like that in Ballard's Drowned. Aldiss may have had trouble publishing such unusual works-- Hothouse was published not by Nova Publications (New Worlds' book-publishing house) but by Faber. Report on Probability A¹², written in 1962, appeared only in 1968. Evidently Aldiss was moving beyond the boundaries of 1950s science fiction, a movement shown clearly by an extraordinary work also published by Faber, The Dark Light Years (1964)¹³, dedicated to Harry Harrison.

From the first a sense of despair is evident. Dark has a superscript from T S Eliot's "East Coker": "O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark"¹⁴. Aldiss is ironic and sobering in linking Britain's greatest living poet with a science fiction text. Behind Aldiss' apparent flippancy was a grim message, including darkness and death, which are counterpoised with the title's light which measures the cosmos. Thus Aldiss implies that size is associated with death ^{and} is unhuman.

The story, like Aldiss' previous books, is based on earlier science fiction forms, but here these forms are criticised in satire. The 'First Contact' story¹⁵ and the story glorifying interstellar war¹⁶ are taken to logical but bitter conclusions. Science fiction appears as a myth obscuring the evils of

humanity, while Aldiss shows the reality.

An expedition discovers intelligent creatures called utods. Their intelligence is not at first recognised, for they lack the hygiene which is seen as the pinnacle of human culture. Therefore they are killed for sport, even when it is clear that they are intelligent. Humans are chauvinistic: "'This ship, for all you know, may have been... a cattle truck... while two miles away... was the real ship, with real bipeds like us, people--'"¹⁷.

Aldiss inverts science fiction's conventions by presenting humans as more evil than aliens. Evil is piled on evil-- when it is found that utods feel no pain, they are vivisected to reveal the secret for military purposes, since their British discoverers are at war with Brazil. When a human spaceship goes to study utod civilisation they loot the utod home planet and massacre the inhabitants-- an obvious colonial reference.

However, the main source of evil in the book is the US. Americans are more powerful and violent than Europeans, who are compassionate or weak. The one Briton who kills utods eventually drops out of society. Aldiss evidently recognises that the West is wholly dominated by the US.

Eventually the supreme evil of the early 1960s, full-scale war, comes, an ironic result of the discovery of utods. A British exobiologist, Bruce Ainson, humiliated because his belief in utod intelligence is ignored, joins the British army against Brazil. In this time, wars are fought on Charon, tenth planet of the solar system-- but Ainson belongs to a caste banned from fighting. A squabble over this turns into interstellar war which destroys the UK and kills most of the utods. Civilisation is helpless in the face of human evil.

By subjecting science fiction's conventions to realities of the early-1960s world, Aldiss shatters the 'sense of wonder'. There is no grandeur, only self-deception. The traditional technical progress of science fiction is balanced by social decline.

The evils of this situation are shown through images of twenty-first century Earth, where humanity strives to suppress nature. Artificial food is preferred to natural, and cleanliness is a fetish. This is irrational-- Mihaly Pasztor, director of the Exozoo, scandalises people by eating natural food, although he otherwise supports 'progress'. At least the utod need for excrement to sustain health is logical.

This gap between cleanliness and barbarism is shown to be false. Britain has a Gay Ghetto where odd behaviour is tolerated-- since odd people can be useful-- and where life is close to nature. This town is more pleasant than grim London, but it is cut off from the outside world. The 'hygienic' culture does not want to acknowledge links with the unclean and disorderly necessities of life.

The utods are not pure in this regard. Once they had had an Age of Revolutions, when cleanliness was a religion-- starting the three nuclear Wars of Wise Department. Thereafter technology "passed to the ancient priesthood dedicated to maintaining the happiness of the people"¹⁸. From a stage of near-human violence, utods passed to a harmony with nature where even death is part of a cycle linked to the growth of the ammp tree. The utod ethos resembles that in Ballard's Drowned, but Aldiss justifies it in more intellectual terms.

One utod reflects that "the Revolution Age was... a mere flash in the pan, lasting only for five hundred years....

It would seem rather a tall coincidence if the thinlegs happened to be undergoing the same trouble at this moment"¹⁹, as is clearly the case. This view of the nature of technological society ignores the fact that human society was brutal before technology. Despite this, Aldiss' denunciation of technological advance is important in terms of the growth of anti-technological pessimism in the New Wave.

Aylmer Ainson, the exobiologist's son, is marooned on the utod home planet to study their language. The story begins and ends with a scene of him living contentedly among utods. Quilter, the first man to kill utods, arrives to take Aylmer back to Earth now that the war is over. Aylmer leaves behind the weapons which he had been given when he was marooned. A young utod studies them: "He had remained patiently captive for a small fraction of his life. Now it was time that he thought about freedom. Time, too, that the rest of his brothers thought about freedom "²⁰.

The language ('freedom', 'brothers') suggests that the utods will rebel in colonial fashion. Until this time the utods were reasonable pacifists, and there is no clear colonial meaning in the action (the utods were not confined, but exterminated), so that 'freedom' means little. Perhaps Aldiss is offering hope that a force may arise to oppose human evil and prevent humanity's complete victory.

Yet this resort to violence means a return to barbarism, forced on the utods by humanity. On these terms the 'revolutionary' tendencies of this section lead to self-contradiction, for Aldiss is supporting conflicting trends, weakening the book. The propagandistic trend in the text fits the passages denouncing human evil but is harder to sustain

when utods are shown to have equally negative features.

Aldiss' expression of human evil stresses utod superiority:

There were the mines, the foundries... all domesticated down to the level of a cottage industry.... They knew then, as they walked unmolested among the snorting aliens, that they were in the midst of an immemorial race...

Captain Pestalozzi had stopped and lit a mescahale.

"Degenerate," he had said. "A race in decline, that's obvious."²¹

Aldiss thus decries human (and American) chauvinism. But his dislike of American power is not like Wyndham's envy. Aldiss does not feel that the UK is better than the US. Rather, US strength gives it more capacity for evil, where the UK can only be shabby and inept:

Ash and rubbish bins stood all along the pavement, while the gutters were full of litter.... street masks... alone guaranteed that they did not fall swooning from the waste gases pouring out of the cars.... Gigantic hoardings, covering a site where an office block had burnt down before a fire engine could crawl four blocks... announced that Holidays at Home were Fun, as well as... in the national interest.... Mercifully, most of this... was wrapped in a decent obscurity... power cuts imposed semi-blackouts...²²

British worship of cleanliness is self-deceptive. Human actions in Dark are founded on lies, or at best misunderstandings. While utods tell the truth, humans deceive each other. Even their science produces an illusion:

He stared at the universe which the Gansas, in a Buzzardian way, was currently surrounding. Against a uterine blackness stood a number of close and fuzzy bars of light.... an affront to the optic nerve.

But, as the scientists pointed out, the human optic nerve was not adjusted to reality. Because the true nature of the universe could only be glimpsed through the transpotential equations, it followed that this fuzzy grill... was what the stars 'really' looked like.²³

Aldiss' irony is never stronger than when aimed at technocracy, the ideal of earlier science fiction. Science grows so transcendental that the human brain sees no meaning in it. Sophistication kills off normal life-- human culture inexorably grows towards a divorce between humanity and the environment.

The moral implications of this are implied in Aldiss' view of space travel: "The central object would stand out like a pustule, a stormhead of infection. Then it would burst, or appear to burst, and fly outwards."²⁴ Space travel is a symptom of the human disease.

The evil nature of humanity is reflected in Dark's characters. Wingrove observes that "Its [Dark's] characterisation is amongst the weakest examples in Aldiss'

work"²⁵. Many of the characters fit easily-defined categories and have little existence outside their stereotypical personae. They may be intended to present a broad vista of society, but instead they show only what Aldiss wishes the reader to see-- as is painfully obvious.

Two characters have slightly more depth. Mihaly Pasztor is a former explorer who at first supports his culture but grows disillusioned by its evil in the course of the book. However, he can change nothing. His weakness is in keeping with that of all sympathetic characters in Dark. Aylmer Ainson is a younger, naïve version of Mihaly, rebelling and defeated. Eventually, old, with a useless knowledge of utods, he is dragged back to the society which he loathes.

On one hand are confident evil characters, on the other, weak good ones, and when the strong grow good, they become irresolute. The contrast is not effective, though, for the evil characters are lifeless, and Pasztor's and Aylmer's voices rule the book. There is thus no true intellectual conflict.

This neglect of characterisation may relate to the demands of space opera, as do the huge scientific revelations and the rapid pace. The sustained ironic tone undercuts all this: "That's what's so tedious about progress. Nobody seems able to jog it out of that dreary old exponential curve"²⁶. Aldiss' jokes provide an odd perspective on the much-stressed theme of human evil, so that the text is often hard to take seriously-- surely a weakness given Aldiss' evident moral purpose.

Not all of the failures in Dark's expression reflect the stylistic faults of earlier science fiction. The pace is uneven-- the first two-thirds slowly unfold human and utod nature, where the last third rapidly covers vivisection, utod

civilisation and Aylmer's alienation. The change of pace is a flaw in consistency of presentation. Another such flaw is the often crass way in which Aldiss manipulates emotions, as when Mrs Warhoon, formerly a largely unquestioning follower of civilisation, has a change of heart while visiting the utopian home planet: "all this fear of excreta-- can't you see that to these poor unfortunate beings we have captured, their waste products are a sign of fertility"²⁷. This unlikely conversion gives Aldiss a mouthpiece in this part of the book, but does not justify the inconsistency.

Aldiss rejects the progressivist ethos of former science fiction, but does not see technology as evil. It is human immaturity which is the problem, and all else is secondary to this. Dark is a break with the past, both that of science fiction and Britain's colonial heritage.

Aldiss no longer only reworks former themes, but produces the new thesis that humanity is so evil as to corrupt even culture's most value-free elements. Aldiss retains the liking for science which drew him to the field, but denounces the uses to which it is put. This destruction of the underpinnings of earlier science fiction is made clearer than in any earlier text. The book has many structural and aesthetic failings, but it is a huge advance on Aldiss' predecessors and earlier works as a move into the New Wave.

Aldiss tends to see science fiction as a deep-rooted, slowly-changing genre²⁸. It is therefore easy to see how he should have come to see the magazine ethos as a perversion of the field. His experiences outside science fiction's realms would have encouraged him to be critical. However, this vision does not in itself explain Aldiss' conversion to New Wave

values. One of Aldiss' contemporaries who seemed wholly at ease within the old system nevertheless also began producing New Wave texts in the mid-1960s.

Harry Harrison grew up in the Great Depression in New York, the city of the science fiction magazines which he loved²⁹. His experiences in the US Army affected him strongly, and he found it hard to return to civilian life. By the 1950s he was a commercial artist, often illustrating science fiction magazines, finding that: "We were now into the... false spring of science fiction success. New magazines were being started every day and New York was the centre of the science fiction world"³⁰. His work gained him membership of a science fiction club, and his links to the field grew.

His movement away from illustrations may have been encouraged by a campaign launched in the 1950s against the comics,³¹ making him rely more on the science fiction magazines for his income as the comics faded out. While working for Damon Knight's Worlds Beyond Harrison fell ill, wrote a story while in bed and sold it to Knight. Harrison followed this up by writing for pulp 'confession' magazines.

In 1956 he moved to Mexico, where he wrote several pieces for Astounding, beginning with a novelette, "The Stainless Steel Rat" (made into a novel in 1962³²) and a serialised novel, Deathworld (1960)³³. Both texts express original ideas set in a standard galactic-federation world, but suffer from dull style and characterisation. He then went to Europe, settling in Denmark and writing two more novels for Astounding, Planet of the Damned and The Ethical Engineer³⁴. Harrison had sunk into a rut, writing almost wholly for John W Campbell.

However, his work was changing; as he said, "my literary

education had begun. Proximity to England helped"³⁵. Probably distance from New York was as important, for he was working on a text which Analog would never publish (and which Campbell hated when it appeared³⁶). Influenced by Voltaire and Joseph Heller, he was trying to create what he saw as a new kind of science fiction³⁷.

He was not encouraged to experiment. One of his short stories, "The Streets of Ashkelon"³⁸, was widely rejected because it portrayed atheism sympathetically. When he finished his new book it was rejected by Damon Knight, agent for the US publishers Berkley Books, as an acceptable adventure story ruined by bad jokes. Harrison persevered, however, and Bill, the Galactic Hero (1965)³⁹ was published by Berkley and Gollancz, and serialised in Pohl's Galaxy and Moorcock's New Worlds.

It is easy to understand Knight's viewpoint. The book's schema resembles a drab 1940s production⁴⁰-- a man serves in the galactic armed forces, suffers trouble with the authorities, is wounded and put on recruiting duties. All the props of a Golden Age text are there-- but nothing exciting happens.

This is because Harrison is attacking the themes of 1950s science fiction. The theme of interstellar warfare characterised by Heinlein's Starship Troopers is caricatured by a meaningless war in Bill: "'If we don't wipe them out they'll wipe us out. Of course they say that war is against their religion and they will only fight in defence.... But.... They might change their religion or their minds... and then where would we be?'"⁴¹. Not for nothing is this book dedicated to Aldiss. There is even a reference to an 'anthropophagus from

Dapdrof'-- a sure sign that Harrison had read Dark. The situation of man and alien in Dark is almost repeated, but in a more light-hearted way, with less stress given to evil.

Bill's training under Petty Chief Officer Deathwish Drang, after his conscription by fraud and hypnotism, begins a demystification of the experience of war. At Camp Leon Trotsky recruits sleep on carborundum pillows, but in the end everyone is a victim:

'All unessential personnel are being sent out. Probably to die.' He [Deathwish] twanged a tusk coyly and washed them with his loathsome grin.

'While I remain here in peaceful security to train your replacements.' The delivery tube plunked at his elbow... his smile slowly fell to pieces. 'They're shipping me out too,' he said hollowly.⁴²

The starship battles of E E Smith⁴³ are satirised through similar techniques-- 'forcefields' make spaceship life unbearable, since they keep all the heat in. The huge energies of space battle require hundred-pound fuses which Bill has to replace. When, delirious after an explosion, Bill wanders into the main battery, he finds weapons controlled by moving red and green lights on a screen-- war has been reduced to insignificance. Pushing a button, he accidentally saves the ship and becomes a 'fighting fool' who is sent to the Imperial capital planet of Helior for decoration.

This planet is drawn from Trantor in Asimov's Foundation series. It is a bureaucratic nightmare, suffocating in regulations and oxygen shortage. Harrison studies the logic of

a world-wide city, and shows Asimov's idealisation to have been painfully optimistic.

Thus Harrison presents much of science fiction as simply fraudulent propaganda. The collapse of these illusions slowly turns the initially naïve Bill into a cynical and harsh veteran. Lies are always evil, and not only in science fiction.

The enemy are reptilian aliens called Chingers, claimed to be giants but in fact only seven inches tall, a joke against the Cold War's magnification of enemies. This is also mocked when the Galactic Bureau of Investigation forces Bill to join a rebel group. The group is wholly made up of secret police--recalling Norman Mailer's view of early-1960s American radicalism as "three remaining bona-fide Communists of America, and the ten thousand members of the FBI who have infiltrated the Communist Party"⁴⁴.

Bill is then sent to Veniola, where war reveals the essence of the Galactic and American dream. The Empire has invaded this swamp-planet for no reason, and is trapped by the newtlike Venians in a hundred square kilometres of bloody swamp. Bill has to build a road:

'We pushed it ahead at least 30 yards this afternoon,' Bill said to the old prisoner marching at his side.

'Don't mean anything. Venians swim up in the night and take the logs away.'⁴⁵

This obviously refers to the Vietnam war. It goes on because the Empire can neither admit defeat nor win. During a lull, a Chinger exopologist interviews Bill hoping to learn the reason

for the war:

'Fight wars? I don't know,' Bill said... 'I guess because we like to, there doesn't seem to be any other reason.'

'You like to!' the Chinger squeaked, hopping up and down with excitement. 'No civilized race could like wars, death, killing, maiming, rape, torture, pain to name just a few of the concomitant factors. Your race can't be civilized!'⁴⁶

These conclusions are less horrible than Aldiss' only because humanity here is not omnipotent, and its weakness leaves room for comedy.

In the end, Bill escapes Veniola to become a recruiting sergeant, and recruits his own younger brother. He has been dehumanised by a self-perpetuating system. But what is it?

For the first time in his life Bill wondered who they were. Everyone blamed everything on them, everyone knew that they would cause trouble....

'They are everyone who wants to be one of them,' Deathwish said philosophically twanging a tusk. 'They are both a state of mind and an institution.... They die off and are replaced, but the institution of theyness goes on.'⁴⁷

This sense of something being wrong is shown through the contrast between Bill's experiences here and on his pastoral homeworld. The difference between free, good rural world and

bad, unfree urban world relates to the traditional American city-country dichotomy. Bill fulfils the theme of the urban corruption of the pure country boy and the theme of the individual versus the organisation.⁴⁸

The book sees political problems rather than moral ones. People are warped by their leaders. Frequently camaraderie and goodness appear, comically subverted, but showing that such things might otherwise exist. Bill's own goodness is crushed, and thus other characters might once have been good. (Deathwish learned his evil at university.) Civilisation is a corrupting factor rather than a veneer covering corruption as in Dark.

Bill's scientific ideology is abstruse. Mighty technology does not bring real progress, but Harrison clearly enjoys the text's gadgetry. There is no sign of an alternative to the technological lifestyle. Instead, science and technology are irrelevant to human progress-- what is important is simply a change in humanity and its politics.

The position of science in this world is shown by a situation when Bill is working in Helior's waste disposal system. They teleport rubbish into the nearest star, and astronomers try to stop them because the star is about to explode and destroy Helior. While the scientists win, it is evident that in Helior's pecking-order they are below soldiers, who are otherwise at bottom. This suggests a belief like John Wyndham's that the hierarchy of the world needs to be changed. It is important to note, though, that the scientists are no more moral than anyone else.

Harrison makes some effort to show a development in Bill's personality, differing from the normal hero-stereotype. Bill's low social status prevents him from taking a heroic dominant

role. This is not perfect characterisation-- but it need not be, given the book's light-hearted nature and its function satirising a genre typically weak in characterisation. The other characters are two-dimensional and insignificant-- also well-suited to the genre which Harrison satirises.

It is odd that there are no women in the book. The reader might expect there to be few women, as in Catch-22⁴⁹. Yet no women are given speaking parts-- Bill is even stymied on his one visit to a brothel.

This does not seem to be determined by structure. There might be satirical intent in the absence of women, given the abuse of female figures in earlier science fiction. However, this seems too subtle a statement for Harrison. Until this time Harrison's texts had featured women who served no real function apart from providing the male reader with entertainment-- an inclusion probably dictated by the market. In a book which attacked such market-concepts, Harrison may have ignored female characters to escape unnecessary complexities. Obviously this is still sexism. It is interesting to compare this with Ballard's more conventional treatment of Beatrice in Drowned.

Harrison's style, like his characterisation, shows the influence of his pulp experience. He writes in simple declarative sentences; almost the only punctuation is the comma, which is often elided from long sentences. The impression given, probably positive in the eyes of early-1960s editors, is that of a writer rejecting complexity. If this is no advance on Harrison's earlier work, at least it suits this type of book.

There is one challenge to the language of science fiction. Four-letter words never appeared in science fiction before the

New Wave appeared. Harrison needs profanity to portray military life, and he invents the universal expletive 'bowb'-- the words which it supplants may be guessed from context. Thus Harrison provides profanity while showing how science fiction writers avoided it-- a minor denial of realism.

Bill is comic but bitter, depicting a world made of all the aspects of US society which Harrison hated. His criticisms of it are rooted in American ideology-- especially Populism⁵⁰, the amorphous rural philosophy of the late 19th and early 20th century which held that good rested in rural people, and that democracy could cure all evils. Harrison seems to believe this in theory-- but there is no sign that it will happen. The pain underlying the comedy will endure-- as, perhaps, will the betrayal of the American dream.

Dark and Bill are similar texts, which is not surprising given their writers' commonality of concern for society, condemnation of the West and criticism of science fiction. Bill resembles conventional science fiction so as to satirise it, whereas Dark is a complex effort to bring more sophisticated ideas into the field of science fiction. Few science fiction texts showed so little faith in human ability to solve problems as these. Neither text offers easy solutions to the problems which they identify-- another contrast to earlier science fiction.

Why did the writers attack their targets so strongly, and why those targets? Both were in strong positions to do so-- Aldiss because he could be sure of publication, Harrison because he was free from Analog's restraints. Meanwhile their societies deteriorated-- especially in the US, which was ruled by technocrats who took the world close to war⁵¹. It is not odd

that both writers were aghast at the world's plight.

Bill is probably more successful. It is less ambitious than Dark in style and vision, yet achieves more, partly because it is less concerned with a tendentious pursuit of evil. Harrison is light-hearted, and the reader is likely to find the text more entertaining and hence more easily accessible than Dark, with its bleak schemes of good and evil which ultimately grow confusing and self-contradictory. Alfred Bester accused Aldiss of being "too brilliant. I've had this argument with Brian for ages"⁵², and here he seems justified.

These books are not the last word on their subjects. Both criticise the past of science fiction and the plight of society without offering improvements for either. Neither exploits the literary potential of the writers. It might be expected that concepts in these works would be enlarged on in later ones-- and the successors to these books bear out this anticipation.

Aldiss' next book was Greybeard (1964)⁵³, a novel about the end of human fertility, but clearly Dark's literary successor was a later work, Earthworks (1965)⁵⁴, which like Dark begins with a relevant extract of poetry (written by computer):

While life reached evilly through empty faces
While space flowed slowly o'er idle bodies
And stars flowed evilly upon vast men
No passion smiled...⁵⁵

Earthworks concerns overpopulation-- not an unusual topic, but originally interpreted. Technology is used to avoid worldwide famine, but this makes vast deserts, and surviving farms become mechanised and uninhabitable amid rains of poison.

The demands of efficiency have produced huge centralised cities like those in Wells' The Sleeper Awakes⁵⁶.

This has happened to the First World, while Africa is the hub of the planet, with many powers on the edge of war. The President, Sayid Abdul El Mahasset, has brought temporary peace. In earlier science fiction the action would have concerned the securing of peace and plenty for all-- but this is too simplistic for Aldiss. Instead he questions the possibility of such an easy solution.

These central political questions are not the core of the book, however. Instead it is a Bildungsroman about how Knowle Noland comes to see the nature of his society and his role in it. He narrates the text ineptly and unclearly, showing his confusion and the bewildering nature of his society.

From childhood Noland is aware of insecurity. His city is ruled by the Farmer, about whom children sing "You're-- the-- maker-- of-- dis-- eases..."⁵⁷. All evil in his world seems to come from above. Yet his protector, the philosophical rag-picker March Jordill, has a broader view: "There is no future for our generations.... Below a certain living level, there is nothing for the individual but today."⁵⁸. This shows a concern for the psychological effects of overpopulation which also appears in Jordill's chant:

Gaze at each other, people!

You should not have stopped your looking

People of people, like unwatched topiary

You grow unlikely shapes

Out of the bulworks of you [sic] birthworks

From the multitudinous bums

Of your gods, no eye regards you--

Look to yourselves, Earth's people, Earthworks!

Look, look hard, and take a knife,

Carve yourself a conscience!⁵⁹

This somewhat contrived poem comes from a suppressed cult called Manskin, which evidently sought to focus attention on individual needs. This may explain why the cult was crushed--an expression of the pains of overpopulation seems likely to cause instability. Overpopulated Britain is necessarily totalitarian, and Jordill is arrested. Noland lets another youth be arrested with Jordill, so that he himself can escape--the first of his many betrayals.

Thus from childhood Noland is full of guilt and of lies generated by his alienation from society. Guilt is amplified when he betrays Jess, the famed leader of the rebel Travellers who struggle against the oppressive system. It haunts him even though this betrayal gains him the Farmer's approval, escape from the farm and control of a ship. Lies pervade Noland's life-- even the nature of the ship is a lie. It appears mighty, but it is obsolete and vulnerable, eventually running onto a reef near Walvis Bay where its nuclear reactor explodes. Noland likes the ship because it frees him from overcrowding--but his negligence helps to destroy it. His world is ruled by confusion, ignorance and a sense of sin.

Amid all this confusion, it is not so surprising that Noland should become involved in a political plot through improbable means. When, by coincidence, a man floats across the sea to Noland's ship-- a surreal image justified by the antigravity device which the man wears to protect his health-- Noland finds

love-letters from a woman named Justine in the corpse's clothes. Intrigued, Noland hunts for her in Walvis Bay. This unlikely sequence of events-- vital for Noland's spiritual growth-- is made credible partly because of Noland's hallucinatory illness which makes nothing seem impossible, partly because guilt and fear make him prey to a desire to find meaning in his life and escape from his anxiety. Like his ship and his culture, Noland is not under effective control.

Noland had thought himself a small man abused by the Farmer, and thus morally superior to him. Yet Justine proves to be an Abstainer, devoted to chastity and birth control, morally superior to Noland. Her lover is Peter Mercator-- the Farmer, who shares this moral superiority! Noland's expectations are overturned. On top of this confusion, he finds that Justine and Mercator intend to kill President El Mahasset. Noland realises that there are neither villains nor heroes, and his auto-erotic sense of suffering is false-- the whole world is suffering. The contrast with the neatly separated good and evil in Dark is obvious.

Noland, striving to maintain his illusions, decides that Mercator wants to start a war to serve his economic interests. However, Noland's guilt at his own betrayals keeps him from acting. He can change nothing-- his bitterness has cut him off from reality. Still, his experiences enlighten and empower him. In the final sequence, in a tower overlooking El Mahasset's rostrum, Justine confronts Noland with the real nature of the Abstainers. Deciding that "you cannot force them [ideas] successfully on a population that has sunk below a certain level of social awareness"⁶⁰, they decide to provoke nuclear war and destroy this corrupt system. The Travellers will

survive to build a new world. "We're not really assassins.... We're midwives"⁶¹, says Justine, asking Noland to use the rifle which she cannot. Such expedient language casts doubt on her credibility-- but Aldiss is surely simply locating her as a revolutionary. In the end the reader does not know whether El Mahasset is killed-- but this is unimportant compared with Noland's growth to understanding.

Earthworks transcends Dark in its depth of understanding and its seriousness. Noland's life is a search for solutions, whereas the characters of Dark scarcely know of any problems. Earthworks is narrated plausibly, extrapolating a bizarre but credible world. Everything in the text is ruled by the needs of overpopulation-- in accord with the verisimilitude of earlier science fiction.

The narrative style is fractured, and the flashbacks disrupt the chronological order. These flashbacks reveal the nature of society through Noland's experience, coming at points when Noland seeks to recall his errors and his acts. Thus by depicting one man's life Aldiss achieved what he failed to do with all the characters in Dark-- provide an overview of society, with a unity of action and of treatment.

The non-linear narrative is also disrupted by Noland's hallucinations, caused by an allergy (most people in this world are ill). These visions cast light on Noland's unconscious motivations. His sense of being dogged by a Follower suggest paranoia-- and the Follower proves to be himself, stressing the lack of a good-evil dichotomy in the book. Noland refuses to accept that he is ill and that these are visions. This self-deception is important, for by doing this he stresses their importance in the text-- rightly, since

they illustrate the development of his character.

The most important vision comes when Noland leaps from a building with a defective antigravity unit, and thinks himself killed. There is a synaesthesia about his experiences after this: "streets and buildings of all kinds... were... too close, pressing against my eyes, in fact"⁶², placing him in a half-world between dream and reality. He hears stories which resemble popular myth. Two elements ruled by the unconscious, vision and myth, become one and provide a privileged view on reality.

One story concerns sheep: an old sheep explores a railway line to see if the grass there is safe to eat, but derails a train which kills the whole flock-- and the grass grows tall. This parable suggests that technology might kill off humanity-- thus saving the rest of nature-- and that technology thus poses a mixed threat. Another tale deals with the Devil, who is so frightened of death that he becomes a townsman, accepting technological society. Technology thus separates humanity from nature-- recalling Dark. Noland cannot see the faces of the speakers, and he gives them the mystical authority of oracles.

Finally he sees himself on his ship, travelling the world to view the human predicament: "It was as if that anxious jerking of the loins by which they begat duplicates of themselves was part of a universal death agony "⁶³. He fights his doppelgänger, the Follower, kills it, and finds that it is himself. "From the ocean of myself, I knew something had evaporated. Almost for the first time, I was conscious of the way in which my life had been dogged by illness and delusion."⁶⁴. This revelation eventually forces Noland to change-- he recognises that the Abstainers are right even

though his conscious mind is ruled by his paranoiac memories.

Noland is Everyman-- suffering all that his society can do to him so as to gain enlightenment. Aldiss does not offer physical solutions to problems, but rather a different frame of mind. Calamity comes through selfishness, which is what Aldiss protests against through his presentation of contemporary evils which links the problems of the First and Third worlds into a single whole.

The book resembles a dream, full of unlikely actions which fade into surreal images. Walvis Bay, future capital of Africa, is full of half-finished buildings. This adds to the aura of unreality-- useless, airy, fragmented and empty. Noland's confusion is encouraged by this environment-- so that the book resembles one of Noland's visionary parables.

Aldiss argues that humanity perverts itself through perverting science. Control of the world is useless without self-control. The message here is clearer than in Dark or Drowned. Humanity seems doomed-- the African states inevitably make the errors of the First World. Decline is clearly omnipresent. Good cannot triumph, the Abstainers argue, unless the mass of evil humanity is swept away. This callous elitism resembles an extreme form of nineteenth-century anarchism⁶⁵.

Such an ideology is in keeping with the despair about the West found in Dark and relates to Aldiss' desire to escape from his conclusions drawn in that work. Science alone is not enough. Traditional political or ethical changes may not be enough either. Aldiss' extreme answer is a response to the extreme conditions which might arise from contemporary errors. Earthworks warns that unless the problems of 1965 were solved, the time might come when the greatest fear of the time, nuclear

war, might be preferable to survival.

A problem in Aldiss' system is that the Travellers, the future race, are sterile and will die without issue. Is this a further pessimistic point for the future? This is unlikely, for it makes the optimistic ending a joke against the book's generally earnest tone. This is unlike Aldiss-- his jokes are normally within his systems, not outside them. Perhaps Aldiss simply forgot this point-- not a disastrous flaw, since the book's merits remain evident in spite of it.

One of these merits is presentation. Noland is a self-conscious narrator: "I see why things like writing and civilisation, I mean chiefly culture and the limits it imposes, were given up; they were too difficult."⁶⁶ He adds: "I begin to get the feel of this writing. It's just a matter of recalling everything and omitting some things, only you have to get the proportions right."⁶⁷ This self-reflexivity adds to the psychological content of the text-- and allows the reader to challenge Aldiss' reality and Noland's delusions.

Wingrove in Apertures argues that this narrative style harms consistency⁶⁸. In fact, this style is fully in keeping with Noland's nature and purpose. Earthworks deals with Noland's development towards an understanding of himself and his society. A self-critical stance is vital to this. Moreover, it makes the reader aware of reading the book-- serving Earthworks' aim of changing the reader's view of reality, since the reader thus becomes aware of both story and message-- enlarging on Suvin's dictum of estrangement. This style also furthers Aldiss' aim of presenting human consciousness through his text, a step outside the bare technical realism of most 1950s science fiction. (Aldiss' 1960s magnum opus, Barefoot in

the Head (1969)⁶⁹ follows this aim to the point of using a pastiche of Joyce's style in Finnegans Wake to show the aftereffects of a war waged with psychogenic chemicals.)

Even the names of characters have significance, adding to the ways in which Aldiss injects meaning into his text from directions unusual in science fiction. Knowle Noland, 'know no land' surely reflects alienation from society, while Peter Mercator contains the power of Saint Peter and the global nature of the Farmer's activities. Justine (De Sade's heroine) is sexually significant, with her Abstainer beliefs and Noland's desire for her. These figures are thinly presented, but they are impressive by comparison with the flimsy cartoons of Dark, and Noland is possibly Aldiss' best-realised character up to that time.

Earthworks' style is more effective than that of Dark. The lack of cynicism gives Aldiss freedom to express his own ideas, so that his moral vision gains coherent expression. Language is generally more imaginative than in Dark, and more succinct, thanks to freedom from naïve realism.

Although the aim of this narrative is to preserve a picture of my times rather than myself, how could I present myself except as the scenes in which I was temporarily lodged? Perhaps my skeleton inside me lives a vivid life, seeing the universe in his terms. It gives a man little sense of responsibility to imagine his skeleton may enjoy, in its absurdity, grand thoughts of cosmology and first causes.⁷⁰

Earthworks is a considerable improvement on Aldiss' earlier

work, achieving more and in a more consistent way. He creates a new vision rather than criticising or exploiting older ideas--important for the development of a new science fiction.

Concepts which would have been rejected earlier appear without any sense of being shocking. Contemporary problems are addressed outside the normal frameworks of science fiction.

This is another movement from Aldiss' roots towards a new system, part of a movement traceable throughout his earlier work. Harrison's Bill, though, had been a complete break with his 'pulp' past, to which he might have been expected to return. Instead of doing this, though, Harrison produced a text showing his commitment to the new system: Make Room! Make Room! (1966)⁷¹.

The book took a long time to write-- unlike most of Harrison's works. It has a seriousness absent from Bill-- there is even a bibliography. Harrison extrapolates from social sciences just as earlier writers had used physics and engineering-- and following the same ideas as Aldiss, portrays an overpopulated world. Unlike Aldiss, Harrison provides a warning through completely realistic prediction.

The resemblance to Earthworks is not great; Harrison may have read it, but he had begun Make Room before that⁷². Admittedly, the main character is male, in a responsible post (the police), finds himself a lover by chance and is aided by a garrulous old sage. Yet the differences are huge. The scene is New York, 1999, near enough to the present to be familiar, different enough to be shocking. Harrison is deliberately concrete in his presentation.

Andy Rusch's role as a policeman draws on elements of the contemporary American police-fiction novel epitomised by the

works of 'Ed McBain' (Evan Hunter)⁷³. There, in the course of crime investigation, the reader is confronted with harsh realities of insecurity. Superimposed on this realism are plots where good struggles against and defeats evil, for reasons which a study of McBain identifies: "the contradiction between a mechanical, value-free view of and treatment of events and a humanly-valued, subjective world-view is central.... The very dominance of the objectified urban world-view... is so disturbingly oppressive that the fiction.... must... falsify it out of a controlling force"⁷⁴. McBain thus cannot accept the implications of his own realism. For Harrison, though, the realism is the most important part. There is no victory of good over evil-- to Rusch, his good lies in his willingness to struggle against the terrible conditions of an overpopulated US.

This complex use of genre to further Harrison's aims is more sophisticated than the simple narrative of Bill. Harrison is here concerned with the development and presentation of ideas. Verisimilitude is needed to present a plausible environment for contrast with the reader's experience, so 'pulp' writing is discarded in favour of more descriptive passages:

The August sun struck in through the open window and burned on Andrew Rusch's bare legs until discomfort dragged him awake from the depths of heavy sleep. Only slowly did he become aware of the heat and the damp and gritty sheet beneath his body. He rubbed at gummed-shut eyelids, then lay there, staring up at the cracked and stained plaster of the ceiling...⁷⁵

This is careful sense-based description. Images of discomfort are used in detective fiction to show the hero's devotion to duty-- but the flippant gestures of 'toughness' common in detective fiction are absent here. Rusch is not allowed illusions which might hide the painful reality of New York in 1999.

The police force, like everyone, suffers shortages of labour. Nevertheless Rusch's unpleasant chief tells him to find a gangster's killer, though this is absurd in this overpopulated world. Both know that the order has come from the gangster's bosses. Rusch cannot change this-- he simply does his job: "If someone gets murdered and there are witnesses, okay, we go out and pick the killer up and the case is solved. But in a case like this... we usually don't even try."⁷⁶

Incredibly, Rusch finds the killer, the street-child Billy Chung who provides an idea of the misery of the underclass. Billy tried to rob the gangster O'Brien, but got away with nothing. Billy escapes arrest by accident, but Rusch has shown himself a good policeman-- a role which is clearly useless. Rusch's pride in his work is an illusion.

The pains of overpopulation are shown without dramatisation. Everything is old or made of recycled materials. Machines break down and are not fixed, buildings go unfinished, potholes are not filled. Even the police are affected; Rusch's riot bombs were sealed in 1974. For O'Brien, luxury is a regular supply of water. (Rusch finds O'Brien's water unpleasant because it has no rust in it-- a horrible idea for 1966 America.) Collapse is clearly coming.

Make Room's challenge to the progressivism of science fiction runs deeper than Bill's, because it relates directly

to American politics. By the mid-1960s science fictional ideals had been absorbed into the American dream by the technocratic Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Prestige depended on the space programme, and it was hoped that technology would win both the War On Poverty and the Vietnam War. Harrison challenges such optimism from the Prologue onwards:

By the end of the century... this country will need more than 100 per cent of the planet's resources to maintain our current living standards... there will be about seven billion people on this earth at that time and-- perhaps-- they would like to have some of the raw materials too.⁷⁷

Harrison's characters show what this implies. Billy's life is dominated by instant self-gratification and suffering. Yet he is not a caricature-- he has been forced to this level, and still shows flashes of intelligence which reveal that he might have lived better given the chance: "No one ever noticed him as long as he stopped some place where there were other Chinese in the area. He kept moving and it kept him busy, this way he didn't worry too much about what was going to happen to him. It would be all right as long as his money lasted."⁷⁸ Billy has the strength and self-awareness to flee successfully where a weaker character would fail-- yet he knows that he is doomed. He is the book's main victim.

Shirl, O'Brien's ex-mistress who moves in with Rusch, seems to be another victim. Unlike the clinging women of Harrison's earlier works she is a credible character existing in, and responding to, a real world. Her aim is like Billy's-- to

survive under a handicap, which in her case is femininity. She needs a bodyguard when outside O'Brien's flat. Unsurprisingly, she moves in with Rusch when a bodyguard is not available.

Rusch's world is not O'Brien's, where her main problem had been being manhandled in bed. She finds it hard to enjoy lower-class life. Rusch's love and respect keep her with him, but when a vile family moves into their flat, she leaves him for a rich man-- her beauty is her one escape. She may be sad to go, but she is used to making such choices. This shows Harrison's realism-- in similar circumstances in 1950s science fiction she would have remained faithful to Rusch⁷⁹. Harrison does not show the mental lives of his characters as Aldiss does, but Make Room's characterisation is better than in any earlier work by Harrison.

This is less true of Solomon Kahn, Rusch's other roommate, whose main motivating force is a desire to understand the crisis around him. This old man recalls the past and provides authoritative ideas. However, these ideas are often abstract, and his refusal to compromise with his surroundings seems unreal. He makes the best of life, growing ingredients for cocktails which he cools with a bicycle-powered refrigerator. He is a contrast to the Eldsters, the organised aged who stage riots for absurd reasons. Sol's well-informed nature challenges the reader also to become informed. An ex-Army man of 75 (the same age that Harrison would be in 1999) Sol is evidently an idealisation of the author, the narrator of the truth.

Sol identifies all evils as due to overpopulation. He tries to give a worldwide perspective on this, but his world-view is strangely stereotypical in the light of Harrison's worldwide

travels:

All of England is just one big city and I saw on TV where the last Tory got shot defending the last grouse woods when they came to plow it up....

Russia maybe? Or China? They been having a border war for fifteen years now... one way of keeping the population down.... Denmark maybe. Life is great there if you can get in... but they got a concrete wall right across Jutland and beach guards who shoot on sight...⁸⁰

This conventionalised vista detracts from his logical assessment of the US' future. Perhaps Harrison's origins triumph over his experience, or perhaps Sol is being presented as a conventionally ignorant American.

When famine comes because of "'some mistakes made by the President's Emergency Food Planning Board'"⁸¹, a bill for birth control appears, opposed by conservatives. Sol marches to support it, is hurt in a fight and dies-- the voice of sanity is stilled. With his death the obnoxious Belicher family (a significant name) arrives to break up Andy and Shirl's relationship. They are stupid, lack foresight and breed seven children with an eighth on the way-- and the government offers them accommodation. The people responsible for the problems are winning.

At the end of the book decline is foreshadowed. Rusch finds Billy and has to shoot him, embarrassing the police force. His superior breaks him to patrolman for this. Rusch has lost all, but his determination to be a good cop keeps him from seeking a

better job. His pride has trapped him in this situation-- he is an emblem of the world's predicament, doomed to disaster by its inability to solve so many problems.

The conclusion comes in Times Square at midnight at the century's end, where a minor religious character appears, exulting in the Millennium:

"And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new..."

"Maybe you have the wrong century," Andy said, holding the man by the elbow and guiding him out of the crowd. "It's after midnight, the new century has begun and nothing has changed...."

"It must end," he called in a tortured voice. "Can this world go on for another thousand years, like this? LIKE THIS?"

The screen hurled its running letters across the empty square.

CENSUS SAYS UNITED STATES HAD BIGGEST YEAR EVER
END OF CENTURY

344 CITIZENS IN THESE GREAT UNITED STATES.

HAPPY NEW CENTURY!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!⁸²

Only humanity can save humanity now. Harrison rejects all but rational answers-- provided by the "Suggestions for Further

Reading". Evidently Harrison hopes through this book and this further reading to turn his reader into an activist for birth control.

Make Room makes full use of the liberatory and educative ideals which earlier science fiction writers had claimed for their genre. Like earlier works it is dominated by an emotional aim— here, to produce a sense of horror rather than that of wonder. Its solution is superficially technical— the loop and the Pill— although Harrison really seeks a change of heart. These elements of earlier texts contained in the more forward-looking body of Make Room show that Harrison is not obsessed with newness. His style, too, is very much in the same mode as that of earlier writers (although an improvement on most of them) and is far from the ornate and modernistic techniques used by Aldiss, Moorcock and Ballard.

Harrison's concern with the expression of surfaces to illustrate social problems is reminiscent of Naturalism— and like most Naturalists he looks to science for a way of explaining this world. This is a traditional science-fictional technique— but again, more sophisticated than in earlier works.

Harrison's clarity of understanding produces plausible, uncontrived images. Characters suffer as prisoners of their society: "he had to step over the outstretched leg of an old man who sprawled there.... His foot was bare... and a string tied about his ankle led to a naked baby... the only work he had to do in the world was to act as an anchor for the baby and he could do that job as well alive or dead"⁸³. Such suffering is imposed from without, as Sol explains: "They've just never been told, they've been born animals and died animals, too many

of them. I blame the stinking politicians and so-called public leaders who have avoided the issue and covered it up because it was controversial"⁸⁴.

This builds on beliefs expressed in Bill. Government can act against the public will because of public ignorance. If they were informed this would change (which is clearly why Make Room was written). There are easy solutions if they could be explained-- in contrast to Aldiss in Earthworks, Harrison has hope for the near future, and his world really does contain villains.

Harrison's faith in democracy is unsurprising-- it was so ingrained into American culture that radical groups like the Yippies called for a "Second American Revolution"⁸⁵ and tried to broaden democracy. It is ironic that a work furthering the British New Wave should have been rooted in 19th-century techniques and politics. This appearance of Make Room as a novelty demonstrates the conservatism of earlier science fiction.

Make Room disappeared quickly. It did not succeed as did Harrison's more cheerful works, although it was filmed in the 1970s by M.G.M.-- with birth-control references deleted and a cannibalistic sub-plot inserted⁸⁶. Its gloom may have discouraged readers-- or perhaps its dual membership of the old and the new systems led both sides to reject it. Its significance is that it was one of the first New Wave texts to reaffirm that science fiction was a world-changing force. The New Wave was realising its own importance-- as Earthworks also shows.

The four texts show a continuity of themes, of responses to social issues, and of the development of expression, which

suggests the growth of a movement. In the later texts, both writers escape from the constraints of earlier conventions and ideas. At the same time that their texts were showing their literary ideas in concrete form, Aldiss and Harrison collaborated on one of the first journals of serious science fiction criticism, SF Horizons⁸⁷. Clearly both writers were re-evaluating their ideas about science fiction.

Both writers were not only ceasing to decry the old-- they often showed affection for old techniques. Aldiss' The Eighty-Minute Hour (1974)⁸⁸ is a good-natured parody of Golden Age writing which suggests that Aldiss felt that the genre deserved serious attention. Many other New Wave writers such as John Sladek and Thomas M Disch went on attacking earlier science fiction⁸⁹. The New Wave writers often felt that the old science fiction had to be discredited, as Moorcock remarks: "That kind of science fiction, which pretends to solve problems... you might call it Campbellian... I do find fairly pernicious..."⁹⁰. Meanwhile, Aldiss and Harrison were building a science fiction to replace the old, with more variety and depth.

This was a time of struggle, even financially-- New Worlds was constantly in debt even before Moorcock became publisher. However, the growth of New Wave ideology encouraged writers to persevere. Harrison did not let Make Room's failure stop him, but continued writing serious anti-establishment texts like In Our Hands, The Stars (1970)⁹¹ while sustaining himself with 'pulp' texts like the Stainless Steel Rat series⁹². Such perseverance about a belief was almost unheard-of in the conformist world of earlier science fiction.

Aldiss and Harrison's themes are a declaration of independence from the control of publishers, but these writers

also show this independence in their expression. This is perhaps more subversive of the authoritarianism of earlier science fiction than their themes-- they call on their readers to criticise the world about them, never offering easy answers. Instead of cosy adventure stories there are grim warnings of a peril which (unlike the dangers of most earlier science fiction) was neither imaginary nor a truism.

The texts agree that technology alone is no answer for human ills-- that a change of heart is also required. This differs from the world of Ballard's disaster novels, where the threat to the central characters is natural or unforeseen. Aldiss and Harrison stress the recognisable dangers of society itself. At the same time political alternatives are presented, although these often have little meaning for the mid-1960s world.

Thus, between 1964 and 1966 the New Wave may be said to have matured. Moorcock's New Worlds was becoming the dominant force in British science fiction and hearing echoes in the US. The scene was being set for the appearance of a more fully expressive and more elaborate set of texts which would appear by the end of the decade. By this time the New Wave had become a vigorous philosophy wholly opposed to what was seen as the stagnant, uncritical, science-worshipping ideas of earlier science fiction.

CHAPTER III: MATURE NEW WAVE-- MICHAEL MOORCOCK.

Moorcock became editor of New Worlds in 1964, remaining so continuously until 1969, and intermittently thereafter¹. He became publisher in 1967, presumably so as to have total freedom to print what he wished. Unfortunately, he suffered from a "total lack of organisational and managerial abilities"², and the magazine survived chiefly through British Arts Council grants. Charles Platt, Moorcock's successor as editor, describes Moorcock's life at this time as a "penniless, despairing crusade in the cause of some strange kind of literary idealism"³. Moorcock's idealism led to trouble-- in 1968 New Worlds was banned by W H Smith's booksellers for alleged obscenity⁴-- but New Worlds printed some of the best science fiction of the decade. After his departure from the editorship, Moorcock remarked that "we have continued to encourage experiments.... The only thing that is important-- this has always been our policy-- is that the work should be successful within its own terms."⁵.

Moorcock's early writing did not reflect this policy. In the early 1960s he was best known for sword-and-sorcery texts of poor quality⁶. Aldiss claims that these were produced to finance New Worlds⁷, but Moorcock wrote such books before and after his New Worlds period⁸. Obviously he enjoyed writing them and thought them worthwhile.

The texts were badly written with stereotypical characters and dialogue, but they were innovative. They dramatised a struggle between order and chaos in a shifting world called the 'multiverse'. His hero was usually the 'Eternal Champion', appearing in many guises, ever struggling against chaos

(though not always winning, and not always heroic). While these texts did not win Moorcock fame as a good writer, they allowed him to experiment with concepts and characters (like the tortured Elric of Melniboné) which would have been rejected by science fiction editors before the New Wave's appearance.

His early-1960s science fiction was unimpressive in quality. The Blood Red Game (1962, significantly by Nova Publications)⁹, The Shores of Death (serialised 1964)¹⁰, The Winds of Limbo (1965)¹¹ and other grandiloquent titles shared similar themes-- one man could stop a disaster which engulfed or might engulf the world, and one man opposed him. Individuals revealed societal evils-- in The Shores of Death one man brought fascism to a threatened society. Moorcock was preoccupied with dehumanisation and decay.

Despite trite and crude expression, these texts show a concern for practical politics which Moorcock's fantasies only address allegorically. Law and order grow totalitarian, madness arises, utopia crumbles and this leads to racial suicide. This happens against the background of the technocratic world of 1950s science fiction-- but the virtues of scientific progress are doubted. Moorcock's message was thus unsuited to his mode of expression.

Many of these problems were resolved in The Final Programme, serialised in New Worlds in 1965-6¹². This text is a collage of elements of contemporary popular culture, a combination of science fiction and thriller. The violence, pace and spatial movement of 1960s thrillers (with the unreality of James Bond films) are linked to the worlds of pop music and high technology, guided by counter-culture concepts such as Eastern philosophy, Jungian mysticism and drug experiences. Its hero is

Jerry Cornelius, main figure in a comic-strip in the underground magazine International Times (drawn by Mal Dean, a New Worlds artist, and written by science fiction authors¹³) who personifies the counter-culture's challenge to the middle-class establishment.

The book's ambitious theme is the destruction of the establishment and its replacement by something better. Foundations for this are laid in the Prologue, when Jerry and his male lover discuss Hindu apocalyptic and cyclic concepts and their relationship to physics. (This happens in the Angkor Hilton Hotel in Cambodia, an ironic union of West and East.) The rest of the book elaborates on this.

For most of the book, though, Jerry is unconcerned with the implications of such concepts. A former Jesuit and physicist, he has become hedonistic in the face of the coming collapse, a life-style which is seen as positive, but is also a flight from responsibility. His main concerns apart from sheer pleasure are his incestuous love for his sister and his jealousy of his drug-dependent brother Frank.

His image resembles that of the Mods of the mid-1960s. Brake notes their "elegant dandyism... cool distance of sophistication.... an attempt to abstract themselves from their ascribed class location"¹⁴. However, Jerry's life-style seems more concerned with rebellion against all conformism than with joining the comfortable conformity of the contemporary youth-culture, which had its own conventions.

Jerry is diffident and withdrawn, in the 'outsider' tradition of the thriller genre of which Palmer says: "the hero... has to demonstrate his strength, not only to beat his enemy, but also to control everything in himself that might

reduce his self-reliance"¹⁵. In a dangerous world, Jerry must maintain control and not show weakness to the bourgeois people around him. He also maintains his independence and integrity this way-- showing his superiority over the bourgeoisie through contemptuous irony. His isolation is significant in Romantic terms as well as in terms of the thriller-- but he is no revolutionary.

His withdrawal from society forces him into flight from the effects of that society's decay-- showing the weakness of the counter-culture, dependent on its establishment base. This may be an argument for a more political rebellion-- which Miss Brunner, creator of DUEL (the computer which contains all the creations of Western culture-- the final programme) provides. Jerry is at first reluctant to join her, but when DUEL is threatened, he is mortally wounded in its defence. Thus despite his enigmatic pose he is willing to fight for some ideals.

Jerry's ironic tone allows him to manipulate others:

'I'd like to know just why you're helping us, mind you, Mr Cornelius.'

'Would you understand if I told you that it was for revenge?'

'Revenge.' Mr Powys shook his head rapidly. 'Oh yes. We all have these grudges from time to time, don't we?'

'Then it's revenge.'¹⁶

The truth is far more complex-- but Jerry has no reason to tell the truth, and Mr Powys' conventionality makes him believe Jerry. Jerry may be honest to his equals or to innocents, but

he ruthlessly exploits the weaknesses of corrupt bourgeois characters. In this world, "'Suckers Deserve It'"¹⁷.

Most of these characters work within Western culture for money or power, concepts which will be meaningless when society collapses. Jerry's passivity is a far more appropriate response to conditions. However, this passivity clashes with Miss Brunner's plans, and she conscripts him.

In an earlier science fiction story Miss Brunner's plan to alter the cycle of the world would have been the core of the text, but here Jerry's responses to this are equally important. He is not like Noland in Earthworks, for he does not develop so much as come to change his mind, but Moorcock is refusing to allow technological matters to appear more important than his characters. The clash is between individual desire and the ethos of discipline and responsibility. Jerry eventually finds the latter more powerful. Complete freedom is dangerously weak, a point made by Aldiss in Barefoot.

Miss Brunner offers Jerry support as well as demanding it, for after he accidentally kills his sister he has little to live for. Jerry's theories form the basis of Miss Brunner's work, and he represents the kind of being who could people the world after the apocalypse. She is no less significant, for in the course of creating DUEL she hastens the collapse of the West as if the computer were the culmination of this culture, and she were some kind of catalyst.

Jerry and Miss Brunner reject middle-class power, manipulating it to their own ends. They have similar ideals, and slowly Jerry comes to see the world Miss Brunner's way. He helps her by killing Baxter, who sought to rescue the world from her through 'tranquillomats'— in accepting her

apocalyptic vision he comes to loathe conventional people.

Jerry and Miss Brunner have physical similarities-- they are the most attractive figures of their respective sexes in the text. Both live off the life-force of others:

He found that he didn't need to eat much, because he could live off other people's energy just as well.... Catherine was the only person off whom he hadn't fed.... Indeed, it had been his delight to feed her with some of his stolen vitality when she was feeling low. She hadn't liked it much...¹⁸

Miss Brunner, though, wholly absorbs her victims in secret, a disturbing Vampire Woman. (This shows her links with male fantasies and fears in terms of her role. It is an ironic image of sexism in science fiction and thrillers, and her eventual victory is also a defeat for such sexism.) This alarms Jerry-- until in the end she reveals to him that he can also do it.

This life-force concept violates the verisimilitude of the thriller and science fiction genres, where worlds must be realistic if glamourised. The absorption of a body, without even spurious technological grounds given to provide an aura of plausibility, is fantastic. It is reminiscent of the qualities of Elric's sword in Moorcock's fantasies, and at odds with the nature of the text.

However, this anomaly does not destroy plausibility, because genre verisimilitude is much weakened in this text. The persistent irony makes a reader anticipate reversals of apparent reality. The appearance of fantasy is surprising-- but it is only a small thing, and is presented in a very vague way. In

this text the reader has accepted the unlikely, so why not the impossible? The anomaly extends the criterion of the acceptable rather than going outside it. This is a break with earlier science fiction, which relied on complete verisimilitude and where all events had to be plausible.

In the end, though, this is still science fiction, not fantasy, and the equally implausible event which forms the climax of the text is given scientific validation. DUEL absorbs Jerry the theoretician and Miss Brunner the practical figure and fuses them into a perfect creature, Cornelius Brunner, "The world's first all-purpose human being..."¹⁹. This use of science fiction, though, subverts the earlier ideals of the genre, for the hermaphrodite coming-race figure has come to destroy humanity and make room for its own future. (This differs from similar themes in Earthworks because everything is under control-- there is no open ending.) Cornelius Brunner leads Europe lemming-like into the sea. Since Europe is "ahead of the world"²⁰, it seems likely that the rest of the world will follow.

The superiority of Cornelius Brunner is made plausible by the dominance of Jerry and Miss Brunner. Other characters are far less important, serving only to support them, and usually die through their own folly. Near the end, social collapse is shown by the disappearance of individual characters. Thus "a crowd came in, its thick snake-like body squeezing through the glass double doors and flowing to fill the interior"²¹. Jerry's friend Shades becomes "The Part" of the crowd, and Jerry kills him. Jerry may be a decadent figure, but his decadence is rebellious and vital, whereas society is declining towards a collapse where individuals are powerless.

The world deserves destruction, and by this time Jerry is willing to eliminate the unfit. He is separated from humanity, and kills at whim. Other people are merely the landscape where he moves, and it is likely that he would kill Miss Brunner if he dared. This is the Social Darwinism of Earthworks:

'Where are we heading?'

'Towards permanent flux, perhaps, if you'll forgive the paradox. Not many would have the intelligence to survive. When Europe's finally divvied up between the Russians and Americans-- not in my lifetime, I hope-- what expertise the survivors will have!'²²

Such elitism appears even in the sense of reality which the book generates. Miss Brunner uses undiscovered Nazi nuclear weapons to blackmail Europe-- unlikely, but it is acceptable in thrillers that the text concerns things about which the public know nothing. Moreover, if bourgeois culture is founded on lies like the myth of progress, then its facts themselves are not necessarily truths. The text challenges reality outside the terms of an elite in which the reader is included. Elitism thus serves the needs of the thriller as well as the needs of Moorcock's ideology-- and focusses attention on Jerry and Miss Brunner.

The nature of cyclic change is not made clear. The Hindu cycle is discussed, but it is not clear that this repeats eternally-- Miss Brunner may be changing it, challenging Jerry's fatalistic belief in perfect repetition. Despite this, the world is declining in Programme, and Jerry's decadent

response to this resembles that in the UK in the late 19th century.²³ The Decadents worshipped style, created artificial personae and formed an elite escaping social realities-- Jerry's actions resemble those of Des Esseintes in Huysmans' A Rebours²⁴. Beardsley's drawings are reflected in the appearance of Jerry and Miss Brunner, and Jerry's cynicism and style may be drawn from Wilde²⁵. This provides an ethos by which to judge the book, just as Ballard's Surrealism aided the presentation of his own ideas.

Science is not the core of the book-- rather, the core is an aesthetic idea of fitness and a kind of justice. However, science is important-- DUKL brings the apocalypse, and Baxter implies that science could have delayed it. Science is at least as important as mysticism, and Moorcock's presentation is in the tradition of earlier science fiction. Many science fictional icons, like the post-apocalypse superhuman²⁶, nuclear war²⁷, space travel and computers²⁸ appear along with quantities of technical jargon. These do not rule the text-- but it is evident that science can be used for escape from the evils of the world. It is a tool of potential liberation as well as tyranny. Ironically, however, in terms of the norms of earlier science fiction, such liberation proves to require the destruction of the world.

Such irony pervades the book, and nothing is to be taken completely seriously. There is irony in Moorcock's narrative: "Her hair was red and long, curving outward at the ends. It was nice red hair, but not on her. He was the son of Dimitri Oil, rich, with the fresh, ingenuous appearance of a boy. His disguise was complete."²⁹ Such passages suggest that nothing is what it seems-- appropriate in a world where so much is

illusion and ignorance.

A clear example of this is the Newman manuscript, written by an astronaut (an icon of technology, not a scientist, but still given credence by science). It contains "the complete objective truth about the nature of humanity"³⁰, the words 'ha ha ha' repeated for 203 pages. Newman, whose name may refer to the future race (Cornelius Brunner?) is killed after revealing this, just as the world cannot survive Miss Brunner's revelations-- another irony.

Newman's book has serious significance. Laughter is a comment on the act of writing. Referring to avant-garde literature, Ihab Hassan said of some 1960s works that "these experiments have tended towards vanishing forms. They carry intimations of silence... trying to twist free of words and things.... Wide-eyed, the postmodern spirit sees everything-- or nothing."³¹ Newman's manuscript says much what Programme does-- through silence rather than through ironic speech.

Emptiness is faced in Jerry's desire "'To study the similarities between the Ragnarok theme and the second law of thermodynamics."³² There is no escaping the end. This text, though, suggests that the cyclic system and the process of entropy are much the same. This is obscure, since entropy implies a steady decline towards an end which is never quite reached, whereas the cyclic system implies an ending followed by a new beginning. (Moorcock is always obscure about this, as will be seen. However, the importance of entropy is in its scientific support-- however spurious-- for Jerry's situation.)

Miss Brunner, however, is not an ironic figure, There is only victorious renewal in her universe. She wants to destroy the world to create something better-- again, as in 19th-

century anarchism. Technology gives her control over this, and this, with mysticism, forms the base for her revolution. The aim of her actions is suggested at the end, in a conversation between Cornelius Brunner and the last surviving policeman:

A man, unshaven, clad in a ragged uniform, was panting up the slope. He called. 'Monsieur-ah!'

'Monsieur-Madame,' Cornelius Brunner corrected politely.

'Are you responsible for this destruction?'

'Indirectly, yes.'

'There is still some law left in the land!'

'Here and there. Here and there.'

'I intend to arrest you!'

'I am beyond arresting.'³³

Eventually, "Cornelius Brunner turned the official round, smacked his bottom, gave him a gentle pat on the back, and sent him running down the slope. He ran joyously, the smile still on his face..."³⁴. With social order destroyed, the policeman has lost his role and can only be ecstatic; the tyranny of law is over. The final answer to the bourgeois world and any system which needed conventions has been provided. This is heaven on earth, without fear, hatred or compulsion. "'A very tasty world.'"³⁵, says Cornelius Brunner contentedly.

Other New Wave writers criticised the old order. Moorcock denounces the society where that order arose and dreams of escape from the system. Programme offers a set of ideals reflecting Moorcock's political beliefs and referring to much of the ideology of the burgeoning New Wave. There would be no

gender discrimination, no social controls, no traditions or family ties (Jerry destroys his father's house and kills both his siblings.)

This is a development of the vision expressed in Moorcock's early texts. Moorcock praises adaptation to changing conditions. Some of his ideals may be found in the subculture, but Moorcock makes it plain that no system has all the answers. Hence the book is a collage, so as to criticise everything.

It is not only a collage of elements of wider society, but also contains elements of many earlier New Wave texts. It is, however, so uncompromising as to have the quality of a manifesto. By 1966 the New Wave's challenge to the science fiction establishment had succeeded, and an alternative to that establishment needed to be built. Apart from Aldiss, Ballard and Harrison, most of those involved in this work were young, so that a generation gap developed between them and earlier science fiction. Moorcock associates youth with the rise of the new science fiction in Programme, and young fans should have had no doubt about their choice. Thus Programme is important in building this aspect of the New Wave, where the movement's growth was most energetic.

Programme is better written and clearer than earlier Moorcock texts, but it is also inconsistent and rambling, although Moorcock evokes some impressive images:

Overhead the glass ball revolved, and the light struck Miss Brunner's face... it seemed to offer a clue to her real identity.... He saw her now as a prism, and through the prism Miss Brunner ceased to be a woman...³⁶

Such imagery resembles Aldiss' style and technique.

Programme is thus lively but scamped, better than Moorcock's early works but still defective. However, its freedom and its expression of Moorcock's talent show that he had the ability to carry out his aim of making New Worlds the core of a new science fiction movement. As he said in 1967, "There is a new spirit in sf these days... and so far it has only been given a strong voice in the British magazines."³⁷ He did not immediately follow Programme with a sequel, perhaps because of his workload, but he and others used Jerry Cornelius in short stories to develop New Wave ideas.

By the late 1960s the New Wave was widely using entropy as a metaphor for collapse. This was a preoccupation of much of Western culture at the time. Lewicki links the appearance of entropy in American literature to a literary concern with science as expressed in 1940s naturalism, and to the broad knowledge of science among the American public³⁸. Science fiction, of course, was associated with both factors.

However, it would be dangerous to say that the New Wave and Postmodernism were identical. Most of the American Postmodernists saw entropy in terms of "a plot designed by a mysterious Them"³⁹. They often depicted the disintegration of language and form, in a movement towards meaninglessness. This was true of some New Wave works⁴⁰, but Moorcock's notion of an apocalypse which was fuelled by entropy but renewed itself again would have been too optimistic for most Postmodernists. Probably it would also have been too self-contradictory.

Yet the world was moving along a path which made a revitalising apocalypse seem the best hope for the future. Programme had been written in a society with a strong counter-

culture which seemed to offer an escape from the problems of the establishment, but in the late 1960s this fell apart. The American counter-culture split into black activists, Vietnam activists (increasingly alienated from their society and turning to terrorism) and the hippie culture, all doomed to failure⁴¹. In Europe the counter-culture dissipated itself in violence like that of the late-1960s student revolts. A contemporary idealist could find little comfort in the political climate of the day. Meanwhile the world was shocked by the Six-Day War, the Nigerian and Rhodesian civil wars, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and escalation in Vietnam. The world economy was slumping. It seemed that the gloomiest prophecies of Moorcock's early texts would be fulfilled.

A Cure for Cancer (1971)⁴² was published by Allison and Busby and then by Penguin, showing that radical science fiction could gain support from established publishers. Cancer is more complex and ambitious than Programme.

It opens with acknowledgements to periodicals where "Parts of this novel originally appeared..."⁴³. This does not refer to pre-publication of sections of Moorcock's writing, but to the use of sections of other publications in Cancer. The disclaimer ironically gives them equal status to Moorcock's work, suggesting that literature and journalism are identical.

The Western media establishment is used to refresh Moorcock's imagery, and is criticised as part of a polemic against all establishments. Moorcock's chapter-headings parody the jargon of the cited articles, condemning their stupidity and criticising the society which generates them. A story about three million US troops sent to Europe is headed:

"America takes 'No Nonsense' line"⁴⁴, a bitter attack on media

distortion. Moorcock is more politically conscious here than in Programme.

The evils of the bourgeois world are widely shown, linked to a quotation from Hitler about the value of terror. Several quotations from political writers encourage thought about political solutions. There must be something better than a world which advertises toy nuclear missile-carrying submarines for its children. Evidently the book's title has social significance, and the chapter-titles, like "Blood Sample", evoke cancer surgery. The nature of this cancer is not immediately clear.

Bishop Beesley, head of an organisation opposing Jerry, writes an article called Heroin: A Cure For Cancer?. Heroin was used as an analgesic for terminal cases, since the effects of heroin addiction would not appear before the patient died. This death is obviously the cure which Beesley is advocating. Much the same is said by US President Boyle when his air force drops napalm on London while loudspeakers bellow "BURN OUT THE CANCER"⁴⁵. To these people, life itself is a cancer. However, Jerry seems to be the surgeon in the book's cancer operation-- his victory is entitled Operation Successful. The true cancer is thus those who oppose Jerry-- the bourgeois world and its allies.

Jerry is following a plan much like Miss Brunner's-- to bring about apocalypse and create a new race, not by a deus ex machina like DUEL but by crudely brainwashing 'transmogs' to survive the change. This builds on Jerry's ideas of natural selection, but here it is under his control, and there is no conceptual disunity between Jerry and the changing world, as in Programme.

To justify this project, Moorcock presents a grim image of bourgeois society. The book begins in the roof garden of Derry & Toms department store, an artificial country-scene where middle-class restaurant-goers are trapped: "They had been able, every day between three o'clock and five o'clock, to see the waitresses laying out the little sandwiches, scones and cakes... If a lady signalled a waitress the waitress would wave, smile apologetically and point at the notice which said that the restaurant was closed"⁴⁶. This is a microcosm of middle-class dehumanisation, where the ladies must starve because social decorum cannot be breached.

The US provides a larger image of a nation refusing to adapt to changing conditions and trying to force its solutions on the world. Moorcock sets the Vietnam War in Europe to show the horrors of Western society, as Ballard had done in a 1966 story, "The Killing Ground"⁴⁷. Behind the madness of war is a mad American society, run at first by the Mafia under President Teddy 'Angel Face' Paolozzi, and then by Ronald Boyle, whose Greater American Party sets up concentration camps to secure Law and Order. (Law and order had been a keynote of Nixon's 1968 campaign, and Cancer's America embodies Moorcock's response to this⁴⁸.)

The Fascist parallels are almost overdrawn. Bishop Beesley remarks that "'President Boyle... will soon have the planes landing on schedule."⁴⁹ The US commander in Europe, General Cumberland, meeting European generals, "shuddered every time his flesh touched theirs"⁵⁰. He explains that the Americans are destroying Europe because it lacks American virtues, and he thus displays an immunity to reality which relates to the earlier bourgeois imagery. He trusts nobody, not even the

generals: "'They're all fairies, of course. Decadence is a terrible thing to witness.'"⁵¹.

Inevitably this leads to self-destruction:

The cap on the general's head bore the legend C-in-C Europe and he wore a green, fringed shawl... a long yellow dress... a huge green sash, puffed sleeves.... 'They're all queer! Queer! Queer! Queer! Queer! Burn 'em out! Out! Out! Out! 'Sissies! Pansies! Asslickers!' roared the general. He turned, spraying the soldiers with his flame-thrower.... There was a WHOOMP, a scream of pure ecstasy and he went up in a roaring fireball.⁵²

Moorcock shows how fear of weakness leads to weakness (as in earlier books fear leads to fascism), using homosexuality as an example because of American military machismo. The bourgeois mythos destroys itself-- a powerful critique of it and of the American system.

Equally evil is Bishop Beesley, a symbol of those in power who seek to maintain the status quo. In actions and persona the Bishop resembles Jerry-- and his obscene delight in sweets recalls Jerry's lifestyle in Programme. The Bishop also seems to have gained some of the confidence which Jerry no longer possesses:

'I believe in everybody having a say. Free will, Mr Cornelius. That's what the good God gave us, heaven help us.'

'Amen.'

'But there is a difference between free will, I would point out, and insane nihilism.'

'Naturally.'

'And anarchy. We are put on this earth to order it. The rhythm of the spheres, you know.'⁵³

Beesley is an insider where Jerry is an outsider. His ideal is given form in the Calliopic Orrery, a steam-driven Cartesian universe which Jerry's presence throws out of control, showing the failure of Beesley's (and the bourgeois world's) dream of bringing order to the cosmos. Jerry is at least a realist.

Jerry has become "a revolutionary of the old school"⁵⁴, "a man of will and integrity, not without a marked moral sensibility, and his first loyalty was to his organisation. He was a total convert and he couldn't afford to relax until there were a few more around"⁵⁵. He is the opposite to his old passive self, and is a negative of the old Jerry, with black skin and teeth and white hair, which is sometimes used in vague reference to race, but more probably refers to his new role.

Since Jerry is now part of an organisation, he needs law and order. It may be said that he differs from Beesley because he is trying to save humanity-- but Jerry's cynicism about such motives in Programme should be noted: "'When pop stars started getting a social conscience, that was the beginning of the end for the social-conscience business.'"⁵⁶.

Is Jerry really a liberatory force? In Programme he had supported sexual liberation, and Miss Brunner was a dominant figure. In Cancer sex is more explicit-- but it is male-ruled. Miss Brunner has become a man who lives only to help Jerry, and all the female characters are dominated by Jerry in the manner

of a male fantasy. Jerry asks faithfulness of Karen von Krupp without offering anything in exchange. He has become sexist.

This may be because Moorcock had been influenced by the new political and subcultural climate of the time. The Mod subculture had been tolerant of women's advancement, but by the late 1960s this had changed. The American black activist Stokely Carmichael remarked that "the only position for women in SNCC [the Students' Non-Violent Coordinating Committee] is prone"⁵⁷, and similar attitudes appeared in the British youth culture: "Traditionally in the more dramatic forms of male-dominated subcultures, girls were in a structurally passive situation.... dissociated from the respectable working-class image of femininity, but still contained within the ideology of male supremacy.... counterparts of the male, but yet remaining the property of the male"⁵⁸. Anti-feminism was thus a strong force for those in contact with youth movements and radical politics.

Not only does Jerry no longer seek total freedom, but he does not seem to enjoy himself. His delight in style and his emotional energy in Programme give place in Cancer to a spiritual and moral deadness under the dictates of his commitment. His language grows ugly and he feels fear, misery and jealousy as never before. These 'realistic' interventions into the conventions of the thriller destroy his former image as a self-contained superman:

'The poor sods,' said Jerry. 'The poor bloody sods. Is this your doing? You traitor...'

'Think of Frank, Comrade Cornelius. Your brother. What would he have done?'

'Uncle Frank...' Jerry's brain misted over again.
'Where's...?'⁵⁹

Perhaps Moorcock's presentation of Jerry grows confusing because of the clash between the improbable realistic world of Greater America and the fantastic universe which Moorcock presents underpinning it.

Elements of Greater America subvert the political quasi-realism with which it is presented. The US is finally destroyed by a farcical uprising of Indians with Jewish accents. Many images of Americans in Europe relate more to nightmare than reality: "The sky was grey, the sunlight blocked by the planes.... The napalm sheets kept falling."⁶⁰, or "The American jets were dancing in the frozen sky. For several minutes they performed complicated formations then regrouped into conventional flights and flew away."⁶¹. Equally subversive of realism is the 'multiverse' of Moorcock's fantasy, which appears in Cancer through mystifying images like the Shifter (which moves people between different planes of reality) the Silver Bridge and the ornithopter of the Count Brass fantasies (Cancer's contemporaries).

It is evident that Moorcock is trying to destroy the distinctions between science fiction and fantasy (distinctions which had been important for the maintenance of earlier science fiction as a separate magazine genre). This would free Moorcock from the restraints of genre, which would be a huge advance on the freedom of expression of earlier science fiction. Hassan's comment on some postmodern writing would then be appropriate: "In this 'total communications package', the history of artistic genres and forms becomes irrelevant."⁶².

However, Moorcock does not achieve this in Cancer. Although the 'realistic' aspects of the text are undercut by irony and fancy, they remain realistic, because these aspects are strengthened by Moorcock's use of the images of anti-American propaganda, with its deeply serious message. Thus the genres of science fiction and political propaganda fuse into one powerful whole which dominates the book. The fantastic elements in the text are either separate from this or artlessly superimposed on it, and in either case clash with the realistic sequences. The effect of this collision of relatively well-defined genres is that of complete confusion, rather than the homogeneity and united effect which Moorcock was surely seeking when he tried to break down the barriers of genre.

Moorcock does sometimes make good use of his freedom, even if this leads to complications of plot which are a further drawback to homogeneity. He links the entropic universe to Jerry through a mysterious box which Jerry has created, which is connected to the cosmos and collects life-force. Jerry wants to bring about apocalypse and at the same time revive his sister Catherine from suspended animation. He fuels the box by killing people until it has enough energy (each death bringing more entropy to the world), then puts the box into reverse, somehow bringing apocalypse as Catherine revives. In this part of the text plausibility is suspended, and by mingling science and myth, Moorcock makes both categories irrelevant. However, the links between this section of the book and the earlier, more clearly realistic sections are so tenuous that this section has a shockingly disruptive effect on the rest of the book, as if this section had come from another text altogether.

While science alone is not of much importance to Cancer,

technology is significant. Here it has the same meaning as in Programme, but is used more elaborately. Devices such as a vibrator-gun (with obvious sexual meaning) and a swimming and flying Rolls-Royce draw on the growing absurdity of thriller-film gimmickry. Access to, and the ability to use, such technology makes Jerry one of the elite-- an extension of Mod dandyism. However, American warfare provides a dark side to technology. Technology brings no salvation, any more than in Earthworks-- a sharp contrast to Programme and DUEL.

In fact Cancer offers no salvation at all: "There was still work to be done. He had to find the converts, set up a new organisation, get back on the job."⁶³ Jerry's entropic ideal is challenged by the building of such an organisation as he seeks to create. Moreover, the clearer that Moorcock makes his image of entropy, the harder it is for the reader to believe in a productive apocalypse. Such confusion and contradictions add to the bewilderment which the reader is likely to feel. Cancer may be pleasantly exuberant-- Jerry's activities are more extensive than in Programme-- but it is also inchoate.

Probably Moorcock was experimenting. Cancer opens with a warning: "THIS BOOK HAS AN UNCONVENTIONAL STRUCTURE"⁶⁴, although it does not have any really unique features, focussing on one character and narrating his experience in linear fashion with a simple, brisk style. This warning may be ironic, but it may also be a declaration of unconventional intentions which were never quite fulfilled.

Cancer was an ambitious failure. Moorcock tried to link fantasy and science fiction, to attack the establishment, to unify his own works and to further the cyclic mythos common to many New Wave texts. None of these aims is wholly

accomplished.

Probably Moorcock realised this, for he produced another Jerry Cornelius book only a year later. The English Assassin (1972)⁶⁵ is carefully structured and crafted. In Cancer structure was the subject of an extended metaphor, but Assassin's structure is a statement in itself-- its chiasma, starting and ending with similar images, suggests a recurring cycle. The book is divided into Shots-- with reference to cinematography as well as intravenous drugtaking.

Each Shot contains five chapters, a "Reminiscence", a "Late News", an Alternative Apocalypse, and then the same structure is repeated in reverse. There are four Shots, with the Peace Talks, a section in itself, coming at the end of the second; the Talks open with a short "Preliminary Speech", then "The Ball", and end with brief "Concluding Remarks". The text, as will be seen, is crafted to depict timelessness.

Passages called The Alternative Apocalypse, at the core of each Shot, are significant in terms of genre. The genre of Assassin is generally that of the historical novel. Portions of the text concern things which were once realities-- but which are jumbled in place and time with an entropic randomness. Thus there are links with reality, but at the same time a definite separation. In the Apocalypse passages this separation from common reality is intensified. These short views of alternative worlds are more violent and confusing than the body of Assassin. If they present plausible worlds in parallel with the world of Assassin, as Assassin's world parallels our own, a swelling spiral of ever greater disruption-- ever greater entropy-- is suggested. In the last Apocalypse sections the world has been destroyed. This is the

end-point of entropy, which also comments on the events in the last Shot where the cycle returns to its beginning. The question of whether Moorcock's world is cyclic or apocalyptic seems to be resolved here by the revelation that it is both—a revelation made possible by Moorcock's freedom from realism in Assassin.

Sections called "Late News" contain newspaper clippings about the death of children. These are seemingly objective accounts of contemporary violence, selected for their lack of sentimentality. This is more effective than the quotations in Cancer, especially because of the lack of bias in the texts. Short pieces called "Reminiscence" evoke acts and places which arouse emotions in the implied reader which are appropriate to events in the main text. For instance, "Reminiscence (B)" includes "Save us.... From the poverty trance."⁶⁶, referring to the life-style of the working-class Cornelius family in this Shot. Thus emotions are heightened and conditions underlined.

At odds with this symmetrical sequence is the irregularly-appearing "Prologue", extracts from Maurice Lescoq's Leavetaking 1961. These deal with Lescoq's childhood suffering and meditations on the morality of abortion and murder, the significance of life and of human allegiance. Violations of the book's symmetry cast attention on these sections-- doubtless to stress their concepts which relate to the themes of the book, and encourage the reader to speculate about these themes.

In Shot One the characters (many of them new to the Cornelius pantheon) are introduced-- as is Moorcock's mode of writing, for the chapters leap from place to place. These chapters are situated in twentieth-century environments, but there are anachronisms, perhaps to place these strange people

in familiar surroundings, but also to prepare the reader for anomalies of time and space. The whole Shot deals with the movements of a coffin containing Jerry's comatose body.

Shot Two's chapters are named after human occupations or concerns, like "The Observers". Groups, social roles and the way in which people manipulate each other are depicted. Politics and class-relationships are important even in language, as where Mrs Cornelius dons a hat "as if it were the Crown of England"⁶⁷. The Shot is set in late Victorian or Edwardian times, but again with anachronisms and unreality. Jerry is absent, although the chapters are linked by a concern for the nature of society, a society which may be reflected in Jerry's ideals. At the end of the Shot, at the centre of the book, comes "The Peace Talks", dealing with role-playing diplomats, but standing on its own as a relatively peaceful moment to discuss whether to end the perpetual war going on in Assassin.

Shot Three's titles are artifacts, stationary in the first half and mobile in the second, where people live and work. The focus is on human achievements and the culture generating them. Characters here show more individuality than in the previous Shot, although they cannot escape collective pressures. The artifacts involved often delineate the emotions and social ambience of the characters. The time is generally the 1920s, and the setting is worldwide rather than Eurocentric as in most of the rest of the text. This Shot shows a movement towards concern for the relations between individual, culture and world.

In the first half of Shot Four the titles concern ways in which people represent their world-- like "Observations" and

"Estimates", becoming ever more abstract. In this Shot there is a constant sense of uncertainty, despite seemingly secure surroundings; the milieu is post-war. In the second half of the Shot the titles and the narrative concern a rural landscape-- perhaps to create the illusion of a return to peace with a return to England. Actions here are brutal, and at the end of the Shot a naval destroyer devastates all of the areas described. Yet in this chapter, the Cornelius family picnics in the area where Jerry had initially been washed up from the sea at the start of the book, and here Jerry suddenly emerges from his coma.

The system employed in these Shots had been experimented with in an earlier Moorcock text, Breakfast in the Ruins (1971)⁶⁸, where historical situations illuminated contemporary problems. In Assassin Moorcock uses the same techniques with the Jerry Cornelius world, giving these techniques an appropriate form and cast of characters.

The text is highly allusive. Moorcock juxtaposes events to generate emotional and intellectual concepts from such juxtapositions-- as happens in the cinema, where "from a cumulative massing of contributory details and pictures, an image palpably arises before us"⁶⁹. Through these methods, the issues of Moorcock's contemporary world are dissected.

All the characters from earlier books appear, with many new ones. The dominant characters are more thoroughly realised than in earlier texts, although Moorcock does not neglect large numbers of lesser characters-- to follow the cinematic metaphor, he studies society with both 'close-ups' and 'pans' until Assassin appears as a world in itself. Most of the characters are fighting a worldwide war to establish anarchy

or stability. There is an ambivalence about this, for while there are no huge stable organisations, there are few real outsiders, but only small groups working for or against entropy. These organisations are also unstable, and nothing is secure. The only stable structure is the Cornelius family itself, focussed not so much on Jerry as on Mrs Cornelius, indomitable working-class mother.

This family, when together, is situated in working-class, victimised conditions. Mrs Cornelius, a cheerful Cockney, shows how trouble can be overcome or hidden by a sense of humour and of style. She is the one contented character in the text, not through self-deception, but through an acceptance of the transitory nature of pleasure. Jerry's emergence into the midst of this family at the end illustrates how the family sustains itself and its members. Mrs Cornelius' maintenance of her family is an effort to escape the disruptive effects of Moorcock's world.

Jerry appears to symbolise the clash between struggle and freedom. He is the English assassin of the title, working on a small scale, no longer concerned with worldwide apocalypse. When he emerges from his book-long coma he wears a pierrot suit, taking the role of the loser-figure of the *Commedia dell'arte*. In the era of the book's concerns (the late 19th and early 20th centuries), Pierrot has the role of a more wistful and lovelorn loser, sensitive and suffering⁷⁰. This is a suitable mask for Jerry, relating to the situation of humanity in an entropic world, constantly losing, but with style, which is the preoccupation of most of the characters but especially relates to Jerry.

Jerry's style is not merely a copy of Pierrot's-- rather he

emphasises the idea of entropy:

"It's been a bloody long haul, all in all. You don't mind if I get half an hour's kip in, do you? Clausius summed it up in 1865: "The entropy of the universe tends to a maximum." I suppose that's when it all started. Did anyone celebrate his centenary?"⁷¹

(Moorcock 'celebrated' the centenary with Programme, and this passage surely retrospectively affirms the importance of entropy in that book.) This support for entropy seems to reject apocalypse. Jerry can change nothing (although during the Peace Talks he acts to ensure that entropy will not be kept from dominating society).

Jerry is set adrift on a raft after the destruction of his Rowe Island base-- doubtless a remnant of Cancer's worldwide organisation, itself vulnerable to entropy. He plunges into the sea and emerges much later (though at the start of the book) in a coma, encoffined and remaining so for the whole book. He suffers deeply, with "insensate, agonised eyes... slowly filling with tears"⁷². In one Apocalypse sequence he is crucified by Beesley, and this Christian emblem may be relevant. The exact meaning of his suffering is not made clear, but he may be a scapegoat who takes suffering on himself both to purify himself and to ensure the maintenance of the world in suspense between order and entropy. Jerry is being prepared for a role which the Pierrot-costume suggests will be that of ultimate victim.

There is no monolithic ideology, scientific or otherwise, guiding this text. Rather, there are conflicting ideologies

related to progress and entropy, as in the fantasy texts, and Moorcock does not choose. There is one vision of order: "Colonel Pyat had first met Colonel Cornelius in Guatemala City, in the early days of the 1900-1975 War, before the monorails, the electric carriages, the giant airships, the domed cities and the utopian republics had been smashed, never to be restored."⁷³ These orderly Wellsian dreams suggest a desire for harmonious progress-- reversed entropy. Poignantly, Moorcock presents it as real, but as having been destroyed by war and by entropy.

With the earthly paradise destroyed, violence and disruption rule. Assassin's world is unharmonious; progress is piecemeal, technology destructive (bombs, tanks and rayguns feature). Everyone is involved in a war which peaceful characters cannot escape, but there are no clear sides, nor any winners. All are corrupt, apart from Mrs Cornelius and Jerry, victims generally excluded from the system. Entropy has individual importance, and decline is inescapable. Even Una Persson, dominant throughout the book, is eventually raped and tortured in a downfall which may be compared to Jerry's plight:

The greatest discomfort she felt was in trying to breathe beneath the weight of their heavy, sticky bodies. She had never cared for the country and now she knew why. From the distance came the sound of the record player starting up again with Cliff Richard's Living Doll. She realised that her eyes were still open. She closed them. She saw a pale face smiling at her. Relieved, she smiled back.

It was time to split.

As the fifteenth rural penis rammed its way home, she left them at it.⁷⁴

This refusal to acknowledge pain or emotion seems to resemble Jerry's mood in Programme, but here is taken to the extreme of ignoring self-preservation, which Jerry never did. Good and evil, or pleasure and pain, have little meaning in the face of the heat-death of the universe. Entropy does not concern itself with human needs.

A product of this attitude is that war does not seem horrible. At the same time, nothing deserves loyalty any more. In The Alternative Apocalypse 7, Una and Jerry are the last allies: "Civilisation's had it. The human race has had it."⁷⁵ They kill the other survivors-- a logical end to the weeding-out process of Programme, and in keeping with entropy.

The book is "A Romance of Entropy", and this is the one important point in the world. All actions lead to it, and might seem equally meaningless, but in fact the style of action is important. Scientific realism is not central, although the notion of entropy is given force by science. What is central is the human response to entropy, and here style rules because Moorcock is not so much interested in realistic individual reactions to events as in abstract human responses to entropy in society, which would be reflected by style.

It is difficult to survive in the face of entropy:

'If time could stand still,' said Hira reflectively. 'I suppose we should all be as good as dead. The whole business of entropy so accurately reflects the human condition. To remain alive one

must burn fuel, use up heat, squander resources, and yet that very action contributes to the end of the universe-- the heat death of everything! But to become still, to use the minimum of energy-- that's pointless. It is to die, effectively. What a dreadful dilemma.⁷⁶

Evidently there is something wrong with the desire to avoid the problem by simply preserving the status quo. Preservation is stasis, and it requires law and regimentation in a deliberate struggle against entropy. This is denounced in The Alternative Apocalypse 6, when Jerry and friends raid the Wordsworth Museum, smashing some things, stealing others and destroying what remains.

Moorecock depicts various responses to entropy in differing societies and differing periods. These periods generally relate to ideas of entropy, and generally run from the late Victorian era to the early 1920s, sometimes mingled with contemporary scenes to show the relevance of Moorecock's descriptions. While this is not to be seen simply as a Modernist work, it is worth noting that as well as having the 'book-as-world' character relating to the ambitions of writers like Joyce and Proust, the focus of Cancer is the 'Modernist era' of 1890-1929.

Each era is decadent-- approaching heat-death, but never reaching it. Each is presented in a slightly different way, of significance for the development of the book. Thus, for instance: "He opened the door and drew his muffler about his mouth and chin as the fog surged in. He fitted his tall hat on his head. There came the sound of horses' hoofs on the road outside."⁷⁷ These are precise, confident sentences

characteristic of the mood of the era. This contrasts to the post-World War I era: "Prinz Lobkowitz straightened his uniform and stood shakily up in his own staffcar as it rolled into Wenzslaslas Square in the early afternoon. The troops, in smart black and gold uniforms, stood in their ranks, straight and tall and ready for review."⁷⁸ The optimistic quasi-fascism of the scene is made unstable by the shakiness of the leader-- awareness of entropy is growing. The post-Second World War security policeman is Orwellian: "His skin was coarse, his eyes were stupid and there was a sense of pent-up violence about him."⁷⁹

The clearest expression of the mood of the book, though, is at the Peace Talks, not located in time but incorporating elements from this whole era. Here the importance of decorum is that of maintaining a good impression on the edge of collapse. Decorum is, of course, vital for diplomacy, and hence it is prominent in this scene. There is clearly a code of conduct for all, which suggests the importance of maintaining self-respect in the face of heat-death: "In the Yellow Room Bishop Beesley was struggling to get his surplice on over the hardening chocolate, leaving the half-eaten ex-nun where she lay. He adjusted his mitre, picked up his crook, stopped for one last lick and then hurried out."⁸⁰ This may be a joke on Victorian delicacy (with a small reference to the Yellow Book of the British decadents) but while the Bishop may be a cannibal, he cannot let himself be seen in public without his signs of office, even though delay may mean death, and though he is so chocolate-coated that his new escort takes him for a Negro.

Jerry disrupts the Peace Talks because they seem likely to

end in some efforts to restore order and work against entropy: "Peace was just around the corner."⁸¹. He corrects this error with style:

The figure wore a short top-coat with its wide lapels turned up to frame a long, pale face. The eyes gleamed in the reflected glare from the flashlight. The figure entered the ballroom and pushed its way through the silent throng until it stood beneath the musicians' gallery.

The voice was cool. 'There's been a mistake. It's time to call it a day, I'm afraid.'

'This is difficult for me,' said the figure. It directed the flashlight upwards. 'It's to do with the third law of thermodynamics, I suppose.'⁸²

Style is personified by the figure of the heroic dandy, who puts style ahead of all other aspects of life— another facet of Jerry⁸³. He appears fighting for anarchy in Scotland in tweed suit and monocle, while in Guatemala he is uncomfortable in an inelegant military uniform. At the Peace Talks he wears black suit, white shirt and crimson tie— appropriate for purity among diplomats, and for drama. He is a dominant dandy, given power by his beliefs and a determination born of faith in himself and his style. He is an outsider who can influence the world simply by his appearance.

Two other figures seem to be portrayed by Jerry— a dandy strolling into the flames of a burning music hall, and one being hanged by the Kuban cossacks, whose ataman remarks

"Surely courage is a characteristic of the dandy?"⁸⁴. The dandy is an individualist, for style can never be truly collective. Entropy fragments the universe, but the fragments may keep their integrity, and all of the characters (except Major Nye, the sole bourgeois main character, whose mere presence as a major figure shows how far Moorcock has come from merely denouncing the bourgeoisie) are individualists, and generally dandies. Moorcock provides an answer to the problem of retaining individual freedom while pursuing good-- it is a matter of taste, which is a free choice. Taste rules Assassin's universe, determining victory:

The Panthers in their own well-cut cream uniforms, looked inquiringly at their Head. It was unquestionably a problem of taste. The Panthers lived for taste and beauty, which was why they had been the most virulent force against the barbarians. The war between the two had been a war of styles and the Panthers, under their American leaders, had won all the way down the line.⁸⁵

Taste is also aesthetically important for the text, as at the Peace Talks:

Commentators said that it was equal in magnificence to the Great Exhibition, the Diamond Jubilee, the New York World's Fair or the Berlin Olympics....
Illumination of every sort was used. There were tall Berlage candelabra of silver and gold in which were fitted slender white and yellow candles;

Schellenbühel crystal chandeliers holding thousands of red candles; Horta flambeaux in brackets along the walls; huge globular gas mantels, electric lights of a hundred different shades of colour, neon of the subtlest and brightest, antique oil lamps the height of a man, and little faceted glass globes containing fireflies and glow-worms, strung on threads...⁸⁶

The variety and anachronisms suggest that Moorcock uses these illuminations to show what beauty the West can create, using words like 'antique' in this timeless context to denote quality. This mode is comparable to that in Programme and Cancer where artifacts like gadgets provide an elitist appeal. The imagery here is equally elitist, but more attractive and linked to no particular genre. This section at the heart of the book is so aesthetically pleasing that the failure of the talks is unimportant compared with the beauty which they create.

It is not surprising that there is little irony in the text. There are no establishments against which irony could be aimed, nor value-systems by which others could be judged. Assassin simply offers concepts through which readers may explore their own worlds, and affirms the ideal of individual choice.

Moorcock has freed himself from conventional verisimilitude without being self-consciously outrageous. He is free to follow his own aesthetic desires. Although this text seems no longer concerned with such matters, this is a final denunciation of the 'ghetto' concept of science fiction. Fantasy and science fiction lose their meaning as genres in the universe of Assassin. Characters die, reappear, move about in time--

Assassin contains all possibilities, a realization of the Shifter of Moorcock's fantasy texts and Cancer, and also related through this to other New Wave texts such as Barefoot in the Head⁸⁷.

The change in style and form which this implies is an important break with Moorcock's early work, and with the mid-1960s New Wave texts which had stressed some form of social realism. Actions in those texts had had to be physically possible or psychologically explicable-- ultimately they were naturalistic. Moorcock discards such conventions successfully while making similar points to theirs in a more open framework.

Is Assassin, then, science fiction? Perhaps it is best to say that it suits this genre more than any other. The main validation of Moorcock's arguments is entropy, and so science is at the centre of the book. The ideology of the book is not directly related to science except in this sense, but still it can be argued that this significance of a scientific concept means that a scientific ideology is being expressed through Assassin, even though this is far from the whole of the book. Most passages in the book are naturalistic, although the work as a whole is not. Moorcock's aims-- of heightening the awareness of his readers and expressing his own beliefs-- are science fictional. Thus this third volume in the series is a crucial development in the growth of New Wave science fiction.

The book is also a New Wave victory in terms of its rejection of social norms in an aesthetically fitting manner. For instance, it will be recalled that Cancer showed a retreat from Programme's stand in terms of both sexism and social freedom. In Assassin, anarchy (and hence freedom) is total. Important female characters appear, and sexuality becomes an

issue of pleasure for all sexual tendencies rather than a matter of machismo. It may not be perfect in this regard, but it takes a major step towards a critique of the confines of contemporary society expressed in science fiction. It also rejects the dictates of contemporary radicalism (unlike the works of some of Moorcock's contemporaries, such as M John Harrison's Situationist The Committed Men (1971)⁸⁸).

This shows that the New Wave was taking advantage of its opportunities, and was becoming serious about the importance of its ideology, although Moorcock rejects easy solutions. He also seems to see criticism of earlier science fiction as irrelevant to Assassin. A new science fiction has been created, radical, all-encompassing and seeking to include all of fantastic literature in its realms. At the same time Moorcock had produced a text which in style, form and concerns bridged the gap between science fiction and the more established literary system which earlier science fiction writers dubbed 'mainstream'. Assassin reveals what many New Wave critics had claimed-- that the only real difference between science fiction and other literature lay in a choice of material.

Moorcock's Jerry Cornelius texts form a progression leading up to Assassin, and for all their faults they are some of the most striking achievements of the New Wave in Britain. They show that the ineptitude displayed by many of Moorcock's earlier works was not a permanent failing. Instead, it was evident that he had the right to lead the New Wave on literary grounds as well as the grounds of his control of New Worlds. The trilogy expresses the rapid rise of the New Wave from a strong position to one of complete dominance over the world of British science fiction. Paradoxically, Assassin appeared as

New Worlds was ceasing to appear regularly, and while this did not mean that the New Wave was fading away, it represented a significant problem. By this time some of the most important texts of the movement had been produced-- including J G Ballard's The Atrocity Exhibition⁸⁹ and Aldiss' Barefoot; Ballard's Crash⁹⁰ was to appear the following year. After such brilliant successes it was difficult to see what more could be done in such a relatively restricted field. In 1972 it might have seemed to some that Moorcock and the New Wave could go on forever, but it was soon to become apparent that the movement had reached its peak.

CONCLUSION.

The New Wave may be said to have reached its apex of consistent achievement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Despite New Worlds' financial problems, which forced it to become a quarterly rather than a monthly in 1971¹, the New Wave which had grown up around it had gained control of British science fiction and no longer depended on the magazine alone. Even the staid New Writings in SF collections by John Carnell were infiltrated by New Wave writers and influence in the late 1960s².

The New Wave also found support in the US. As in the UK, in the early 1960s young American writers (such as Harlan Ellison and Roger Zelazny³) began producing texts which went outside magazine conventions. Two such writers, Thomas M Disch and John Sladek, moved to the UK to write for New Worlds⁴. In the mid-1960s Judith Merrill, author and anthologist, visited the UK, becoming New Worlds' book reviewer for a time. She publicised the New Wave in the US through her Year's Best S-F⁵ collections, rounding this off with a collection of New Wave writings from the UK published in the US as England Swings SF (1968)⁶.

The US magazine response to the New Wave was complex. Analog, the most conservative magazine, paid little attention to the debate even in its letters column (which shows either that its readers were not concerned or that editorial censorship was thorough-- Campbell undoubtedly grew intolerant as time passed⁷). Analog book reviews by P Schuyler Miller sometimes acknowledged the existence of the New Wave.

The same, however, did not seem to be true for most Analog fans. When in November 1967 Analog published the results of a poll of fans asked about the popularity of authors, it proved that Robert Heinlein, Eric Frank Russell and Isaac Asimov were by far the most popular authors. Less conventional writers did worse-- Alfred Bester coming 17th and James Blish 20th. J G Ballard, the sole New Wave writer mentioned, came 31st. Evidently Analog's public were interested only in conventional American writers.

In December 1967, though, Samuel R Delaney's Babel-17⁸, an unconventional text, gained favourable mention in Miller's column. Best Stories from New Worlds won similar praise in August 1968. However, Aldiss and Harrison's anthology Best SF 1968⁹ was criticised in September 1969: "This annual anthology is down a notch in my estimation from last year's. I think it's the effect of the 'New Wave', which finds virtue in incoherence for confusion's sake..."¹⁰. Miller praised Moorcock's Behold the Man in January 1971 with similar reservations: "Moorcock has used some of the 'new wave' techniques.... I feel he has diluted the portrait..."¹¹. Miller was ready to tolerate New Wave texts if he was not obliged to see them as new and revolutionary. He could accept science fiction of quality, but where new trends became apparent he was suspicious. This was a liberal attitude in comparison to the policy of his editor, since New Wave texts were all but excluded from Analog until Campbell's death in 1972 brought the more flexible Ben Bova into the chair.

By contrast, Amazing Stories involved itself in the New Wave debate from an early stage. A guest editorial by Laurence Janifer in March 1966 declared that science fiction had

changed during the previous few years by introducing a more realistic view of sexuality and an improved quality of style, but complained about extremism and humourlessness. A favourable review of Joanna Russ' Picnic on Paradise in that issue says that the book's literary qualities "are not ordinary in science fiction and I have the horrible feeling that they will raise cries of 'mannerism' and 'New Wave' and other such nonsense"¹², showing that at this stage the New Wave was still a term of opprobium.

In February 1968 Harry Harrison, Amazing's new editor, expressed the opinion which Amazing was to take up from then on: "There is no New Wave in science fiction. Or, to put it another way, Amazing is the New Wave."¹³ Harrison argued that science fiction should be judged on the bases of stylistic and imaginative quality, and that since no other criteria applied, there was no reason for rejecting a text as 'New Wave'. (This tone is strikingly like that in Moorcock's September 1964 article in New Worlds quoted in the Introduction.)

Harrison encouraged Aldiss to write a letter describing events in London, but did not claim that London was the hub of science fiction. In later editorials he suggested that there had been first generation science fiction, second generation work which re-evaluated the merits of the first (citing Aldiss' Non-Stop as an example) and third generation work incorporating concepts like Ballard's 'inner space' (citing Aldiss' Earthworks as an example). Obviously Harrison was avoiding the use of New Wave terminology. Such an eclectic approach had become common in the magazine by this time; in June 1968 James Blish reviewed Harlan Ellison's New Wave anthology Dangerous Visions and remarked that none of the

stories included in it could not have appeared in other magazines rather than in a special anthology. Even if this was exaggeration (some stories in the anthology, such as Philip Jose Farmer's "Riders of the Purple Wage"¹⁴, were probably too unconventional for general publication), it was true that the new science fiction was winning widespread support. (Isaac Asimov had written the introduction for Dangerous Visions.)

By May 1969 Amazing's editor Ted White was asserting that the magazine would print New Wave stories, conventional writing and would also reprint stories from the 1920s and 1930s. Readers would be exposed to all alternatives and could make up their own minds. In response to this approach, the letters column flourished with speculation on the future of science fiction, denunciations of the New Wave by traditionalists and, by 1970, denunciations of White and Amazing by New Wave supporters¹⁵. It was common to see a book praised by a traditionalist reviewer in one issue and damned by a New Wave reviewer in the next-- or vice versa.

Thus by the early 1970s Amazing, along with many other American science fiction magazines, had absorbed the New Wave's ethos. The rule of traditionalism was broken by a slow change in perception by readers, editors and writers who saw that the traditional mode often lacked qualities present elsewhere. This was also a way of containing the New Wave's threat to the establishment-- by presenting it as one among many alternatives, rather than as a revolutionary threat. Thus it did not drive out the old system. No American New Worlds appeared, and New Wave partisans either joined established magazines or were marginalised.

This was made possible because of the size of the American science fiction system. The big magazines had large resources, so that it was difficult to attack them. When these magazines accepted the New Wave it became impossible to draw away their readership by providing New Wave stories in alternative media. The New Wave readership war was thus easily contained within the establishment, and even within its original critical framework, for there had always been unconventional writers in American science fiction, and the New Wave could be presented as an extension of the work of writers like Cordwainer Smith.

In the UK the New Wave had developed very differently, and the history of New Worlds after it achieved dominance is instructive. New Worlds became first a quarterly, then (in 1973) a biquarterly¹⁶. Britain was left without regular science fiction magazines of importance. The only alternative to New Worlds, the irregularly-appearing New Writings in SF, was deeply influenced by the New Wave. Since they had control of the bulk of the market, the New Wave writers could produce virtually whatever they wished.

The core of the British New Wave was formed by a handful of writers and critics with clear ideas about what the New Wave stood for-- it concerned experimental writing related to the decline of civilisation and of human relationships. The effect of such clear aims, coupled with the absolute power of those writers and critics over publication, was a growing sameness in product which became almost complete when Moorcock left the publication and was replaced by Hilary Bailey, who was his wife at that time. New Worlds 7, 8 and 9 (1974-5)¹⁷ all include stories from Moorcock's "Dancers at the End of

"Time" series. Most of the other stories in these volumes are atmospheric pieces, floridly written but saying very little, and here a sameness of technique among different authors is evident. There are book reviews by M John Harrison and John Clute where New Wave texts are praised and earlier science fiction or fantasy texts damned. (In New Worlds 8 Clute even attacks Aldiss' The Eighty-Minute Hour as pretentious and backward-looking¹⁸.)

The common world of these volumes was narrower than that of conventional science fiction, and showed an obsession with decline, the expression of which varied little from year to year. Often style became so ornate as to be almost incomprehensible. In this most market-oriented of all genres, New Worlds refused to appeal to a mass audience.

Instead, the aim seemed to be to educate the public. Critical pieces show a similar consistency in decrying non-New Wave texts as not worthy of serious comment. Writers like "Larry Niven-- the one with the fixed grin..."¹⁹ deserve only contempt. Aldiss' Eighty-Minute is denounced because it falls outside the accepted boundaries of the New Wave-- it is a betrayal. This criticism depends on a sense of absolute good and evil, which in turn implies censorship. Thus those who submitted for New Worlds had to follow a limited format.

New Worlds had become an exclusive club. The same authors reappear time and time again, while new authors rarely appear twice. The magazine parochially concentrated on a dichotomy between a supposedly unacceptable conservatism in other science fiction and their own work-- which grew less and less realistic with time. It was not a pleasant thing for anyone outside the club to face, as Ian Watson says:

I thought it [New Worlds] was dreadfully pretentious.... self-congratulatory and self-satisfied.... I'd get a scribble from Moorcock, about six months late, saying, "Sorry, can't use your story, try next time." Meaning, try in six months, by the time he'd produced his next issue full of his friends.²⁰

While this was happening to the magazine which formed the core of the New Wave, the four authors who had helped the movement become dominant gradually moved to its periphery. Harry Harrison produced fairly conventional texts in the 1960s-- Technicolor Time Machine (1969)²¹, a satire of Hollywood, and In Our Hands, The Stars, a denunciation of superpower amorality. Far more New Wave-like was A Transatlantic Tunnel, Hurrah! (1973) about an alternate world where Britain retained its North American colonies, written in mock-Victorian style. However, Harrison's account of how he came to write this text (in Explorations of the Marvellous²²) shows that it all arose from the idea of the transatlantic tunnel-- a gadget, and the New Wave elements in the book have little to do with New Wave ideology. Evidently his concern for the movement had waned.

Aldiss continued to pursue a concern with human perceptions of the nature of reality. Frankenstein Unbound²³, perhaps his best work on this subject, pits a 20th-century American politician against Mary Shelley and Frankenstein as reality breaks down completely-- in part a Gothic exercise, stylistically conventional. Eighty-Minute was a pastiche of space opera, but with a sub-plot concerning human confusion by

artificial realities. Gradually Aldiss moved away from the idea of applying the quest for reality to the contemporary world; The Malacia Tapestry²⁴, an alternative Renaissance world, is concerned more with the elaboration of its alternative universe than with modern realities. New Wave themes seem to have become of limited relevance to Aldiss.

Harrison and Aldiss had, to an extent, been outsiders within the New Wave. Ballard and Moorcock, though, also failed to exploit the opportunities opened by the New Wave's dominance in Britain. Ballard's Crash (1973)²⁵ explored human nature, technology and violence more thoroughly than had The Atrocity Exhibition, but after this Ballard's next major work was The Unlimited Dream Company (1979)²⁶, a fantasia of power and escape. Dream may be seen as a late New Wave text, but it is much more mystical than most New Wave works, rejecting virtually all relevance to reality. Ballard had come to terms with his 1960s themes, and had found a fantastic form for their expression which suited them better than science fiction. He had drifted far from the core of the New Wave.

Moorcock wrote many more New Wave texts in the early 1970s, but after The English Assassin his science fiction output fell off. He concentrated on the "Dancers at the End of Time" fantasies of decadence²⁷, and on potboilers such as the later Warlord of the Air books²⁸. There was no sign that Moorcock had lost faith in New Wave values, but his expression of those values had become so complex that he seems to have found fantasy an easier vehicle for his thoughts. The idea of creating a new science fiction had been replaced by a need to make appropriate personal statements.

This short survey suggests that these writers had

difficulty in keeping their work within the limits prescribed by the New Worlds school-- or indeed within the New Wave as they had seen it in the 1960s. It is surely not coincidence that Moorcock, Ballard and Aldiss all moved towards fantasy to express values which the 1960s had seen expressed in science fiction. Although fantasy had always been a part of the New Wave, it had never been so dominant. By contrast with this increasing flexibility of genre, New Worlds writers who remained in the field became more rigid. The decline of the New Wave as a hegemonic movement within science fiction was clear-- and by the mid-1970s it had almost ceased to exist.

Was the New Wave, then, a failure? It had a short life-span (because of its limited terms of reference) which was unwisely prolonged by some who felt that the movement deserved to rule the field. The failure of the New Wave to sustain itself shows the inaccuracy of this belief. It had always been vulnerable to attack from conservative opponents, and the way in which it became more esoteric and less in touch with a broad readership fuelled the flames of opposition wherever such opposition could grow. When it disappeared it could be argued that the New Wave had left behind only a few traces, such as themes of differing views of sexuality and more distrust for technocracy-- themes which in any case grew important in general society by the early 1970s.

While the New Wave was vanishing, a generation of writers who had either stopped writing or fallen out of critical favour returned to the fold, including Asimov, Clarke and Van Vogt²⁹. These writers had usually altered their styles and content to suit the changed framework of science fiction, changes encouraged by the New Wave. Nevertheless, the success

of these earlier authors suggested that some fans felt a nostalgia for the secure era of the 1940s and 1950s when these writers had been most successful. The idea that the New Wave could ever sweep the earlier writers away was thus decisively rejected.

Another profound change taking place in the late 1960s and early 1970s was the appearance of successful female writers in science fiction. Sarah Lefanu declares that "it must be significant that while between 1953... and 1967 there were no women winners of the Hugo Award [the science fiction prize awarded by fans] between 1968 and 1984 there were eleven"³⁰. Lefanu adds that "the majority of work that I draw on is by American writers: there were... more of them"³¹. Lefanu does not speculate on the reason why the feminist wave should have won ground in the US and not in the UK. Her suggestion that there are simply more writers in the US is not adequate-- there were many male writers in the UK, so why was there no representative sample of female writers? This point may be related to the remarkable appearance of feminist writing in a field with strong sexist traditions.

There had always been a few women science fiction writers. There had long been a tendency for women writers to concentrate on fantasy (for instance, A A Merritt), a genre held in low esteem by science fiction editors of the Golden Age period, and this may have explained why female science fiction writers were few in number: they drifted to another genre. In addition, the social ethos in the 1930-1960 period tended to keep women out of the field of science and engineering, so that there were few women likely to provide an audience for stories on such subjects. Women won little

prominence even when they did work within the male-created parameters of the genre, like Judith Merrill and Zenna Henderson. Merrill's later success as an anthologist was probably made easier by her marriage to Frederik Pohl, which gave her steady access to the field of science fiction editors.

The sexism of most pre-1960 science fiction must also have discouraged women from working in the field. Lefanu quotes Joanna Russ as saying that "There are plenty of images of women in science fiction. There are hardly any women."³² Stereotypes included weak women who needed protection, dominant women who needed to be conquered and matriarchal women who needed to be supplanted so that society could run more smoothly. Female central characters were few. Occasionally texts appeared condemning such sexual stereotyping (as in Theodore Sturgeon's Venus Plus X (1960)³³ about a unisexual society) or trying to show that women were at least human beings rather than stock figures, but such efforts had little effect on the broad field.

The New Wave failed to address this problem in science fiction even though the ideal of the liberation of women was widely held among 1960s intellectuals. Perhaps the problem of science fictional sexism was so deep-rooted that the acute critics of the New Wave failed to see it. The texts discussed in this thesis are representative of the failure of the writers concerned to come to terms with sexism. Women often appear as symbols of the immediate gratification of male desire. Aldiss, perhaps the writer most concerned with effective characterisation, produces the most effective and human female characters. In Barefoot, Angeline Brasher almost

dominates the text because her lover Colin Charteris, the main character, has been deranged by psychic poisons. Even in this text there are images of the denigration of women: "And the intermittent tattooed tattered prepuce / Does bayonet practice on a syphilitic civilian girl"³⁴. The environment here is that of the rock concert and the dehumanised groupie.

This is interesting, because it relates to the New Wave's denigration of women in the same way that 1960s youth groups treated their female counterparts. Other New Wave writers, with complete freedom to express their fantasies, often produced viciously misogynist texts, like John Clute's "The Disinheriting Party":

"You cunt," she whispered.

The Greek sailor stripped her quickly, she hardly fought...

She felt the sailor enter her, the sand scraping.

Fumbling in his cape, Balliol said:

"Whore."³⁵

With such texts being produced even by the New Worlds critics who were arbiters of the movement's taste, it is easy to see that potential British women science fiction writers might have been driven away from the genre. By contrast, the American New Wave was far less sexist. Norman Spinrad's The Iron Dream (1972)³⁶, supposedly written by Adolf Hitler, is a brilliant satire of science fictional sexism.

In the male-ruled environment of science fiction magazines, women writers had a difficult time. They fought their battles in much the way that the New Wave writers had, through

stealth. Alice Sheldon became an established writer under the pseudonym of James Tiptree, Jr.. Her early-1970s texts were male-narrated, often with "convincingly misogynist"³⁷ personae, and were often published in Analog. City Of Illusions (1967)³⁸, one of Ursula LeGuin's first novels, had a male protagonist and a fictional universe owing much to Van Vogt. Working within the male-created rules undoubtedly made success more likely.

Once established, though, the women writers began working against male domination. They found the fictional world of science fiction as inadequate as the New Wave writers had done: "Could it be that Mrs Brown is actually, in some way, too large for the spaceship.... so that when she steps into it, somehow it all shrinks to a tiny tin gadget..."³⁹. LeGuin's "The Word for World is Forest" (1968)⁴⁰ denounces male violence with reference to Vietnam, while The Left Hand of Darkness (1969)⁴¹, still male-narrated, deals with a planet where sexuality changes with the seasons. Joanna Russ' "When It Changed" (1972)⁴² deals with the invasion of the feminist utopia Whileaway by an absurd, obnoxious group of men, and Sheldon's "Houston, Houston, Do You Read?" (1977, as Tiptree)⁴³ concerns a group of male astronauts returning to a world where men have died out. Increasingly, the male supremacist notions of science fiction were challenged head-on.

These latter texts were printed by conventional science fiction publishing houses for mass audiences. Feminism had become acceptable a very short time after it had been rejected throughout the field. Why had feminism won such a swift victory?

It could be argued that this paralleled the growth of feminism elsewhere in society. This might have been a factor-- but science fiction was not a major concern of 1960s feminism and there had been no protest against the earlier exclusion of women from the field. The appearance of female writers doubtless attracted a female audience which provided economic incentives for publishing more such texts-- but science fiction had previously survived without that audience. Editors in the early 1970s, such as Campbell, could still exclude feminist debates. Hence the broad growth of feminism does not explain this problem.

The nature of the science fiction establishment must provide the answer. In the 1950s science fiction had been an ideological apparatus concerned with optimism about technology, which sustained the institution of science fiction publishing. Such optimism pandered to the fantasies of readers, who responded with support by which the success of texts was closely gauged. Thus ideology changed slowly with time according to the economic interests of writers and publishers. Editors and authors felt that they were important despite their weakness within the system, because they produced works which showed that they had a special understanding of the nature of the world and humanity which other writers lacked:

All the brave adventurers and aviators might vanquish their enemies. Doc Savage might own an inexhaustible gold mine under a mountain in South America. But only Campbell's heroes had the real equaliser: the infinite policing powers of the

mind, the inexhaustible forces beyond the atom!⁴⁴

[science fiction] is much more realistic than is most historical and contemporary-scene fiction and is superior to them both...⁴⁵

Gradually, because of the power of this self-praising system, some writers began taking their own stories seriously. John W Campbell spent decades seeking 'psionic forces' and 'space drives'.⁴⁶ L Ron Hubbard invented a mental discipline called Dianetics for one of his stories, decided that it was real, and turned it into the religion which became Scientology⁴⁷. Richard Shaver came to believe his own stories about evil 'dero' aliens⁴⁸. On this level the science fiction establishment hovered on the edge of madness.

The New Wave's achievement was to attack the ideology itself rather than disagreeing with manifestations of it, and acting on the level which sustained the ideology. When it was shown that stories based on other ideologies could win public support, the justification for maintaining only one system vanished. New Wave ideology seemed more exciting and vigorous than the old, and made converts. Thus the attack hit both intellectual and economic structures-- authors, fans and publishers. Some readers and editors who had become absorbed in the self-congratulatory ethos of earlier science fiction could not understand what was happening:

Let the New Wave sneer and snarl and cry that science fiction is dead and its vision of galactic futures dead; let them present their writings of

despair filled with shock words and shock concepts:
 they have been defeated already by the cry Frodo
Lives!⁴⁹

The New Wave crowd seem to think the McLuhanism is a
 new dimension. To me it's symptomatic of... a
 nervous breakdown.... I find it difficult to
 identify with a nut. Which is why I prefer well-
 written mystery yarns... to much of sf these days.⁵⁰

These complainants failed to realise that the New Wave
 included valid criticism of the weaknesses of science fiction.
 They did not see that the old guard no longer controlled the
 common universe of science fiction.

The destruction of the old fictional universe was not
 followed by the creation of a new one (except briefly in the
 UK where the New Wave ruled). The destruction of the common
 ideology shared by fans, editors and writers meant that
 editors and publishers no longer had guidance in selecting and
 editing texts. Authors gained greater power, for editors were
 obliged to accept their texts for testing in the marketplace.

It is surely not coincidental that this was the time when
 women entered science fiction. They could no longer be
 excluded on traditional ideological and economic grounds, for
 these had been destroyed. Once feminist writing succeeded,
 winning not only the Nebula Awards presented by a panel of
 writers, but also the Hugo Awards given by fans and showing
 mass popularity, they could not be legitimately suppressed by
 any means. Public approval was the acid test.

Thus it seems clear that the New Wave, despite its

restricted view of the function of science fiction, was a force which liberated science fiction from the old shackles, just as the major New Wave writers had hoped in the early 1960s. It seems unlikely that feminist writing could have succeeded otherwise-- the failure of exclusively New Wave magazines⁵¹ shows the difficulty of establishing anything which disagreed with the established publications.

Paradoxically, the failure of the New Wave to establish its own ideological monolith may have been one of its greatest gifts to science fiction.

Since the 1970s, no ideological structure has arisen to replace the old. Instead, the field has been cross-pollinated by cultural workers making use of the elements of science fiction for their own purposes. The renaissance of science fiction cinema and the work of writers like Douglas Adams⁵², Russell Hoban⁵³ and Iain Banks⁵⁴ suggest that science fiction is no longer confined to an often-ignored ghetto, but has merged with wider culture. (This is further confirmed by the presence of science fiction studies at university level. It might be argued that had the New Wave never appeared it would have been difficult to justify writing a thesis on science fiction, except from a sociological viewpoint.)

Hence the New Wave almost accidentally transformed science fiction and gave it a new literary role. The effects of the New Wave caused what was probably the most important change in the field of science fiction since the appearance of science fiction magazines in 1926. Without it, by the 1960s science fiction might have become formalised, with a shrinking, aging readership. By the 1980s the genre might

then have entirely vanished, and an important expression of popular culture would thus have been destroyed by the contradictions of the system which had been created to exploit it.

Notes

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