"Light is the left hand of darkness": Breaking away from invalid dichotomies in Science Fiction

by

Arnika Nora Ejsmund

Submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of

Magister Artium (English)

in the Faculty of Humanities

University of Pretoria

Pretoria

August 2002

Supervisor: Ms. Molly Brown

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank:

- Ms. Molly Brown for her support, encouragement and endless supply of guidance and books from her private library
- My mother, Dr. Marta Ejsmund, for her constant love and unwavering support
- Louise Mabille, for translating the summary
- Ania Rokita, for efficiently dealing with my computer queries

Dedication

In the memory of my father, Dr. Wojtek Ejsmund, who loved Science Fiction

Summary

The study explores the complex relationship between various manifestations of the self and the other in twentieth century Science Fiction (SF). According to Richard Bernstein (1983), much modern thought is still influenced by Cartesian Anxiety, a deeply-rooted tendency to polarise or dichotomise arguments and living entities, demarcating one side as positive, necessary and desirable and the other as negative and destructive. Various embodiments of the self and the other are polarised in such a manner in both literature and life and this results in an impoverishment as the parties involved never really engage in dialogue, understand or learn from one another. Because it features a variety of truly alien creatures, SF literature has been chosen as the genre within which the concept of otherness will be discussed. Moreover, as an innovative and subversive genre, SF approaches old issues from a new perspective. It is believed that SF can shed new light on the old dichotomy of the self and the other. The study includes randomly and personally chosen works by authors such as Wells, Wyndham, Butler, Le Guin, Card and Tepper.

The tendency to demarcate women, alien offspring and alien life forms in general as the other is discussed in separate chapters, with the focus on why given selves and society feel compelled to marginalise and destroy otherness. Various theories as to what the fear of the other represents are laid out and the Jungian interpretation that fear of the other is linked to anxiety about expressing what Jung calls the psyche's shadow side is suggested. Hermeneutic principles, particularly the theories of H-G Gadamer, are then used to provide a model of a fruitful discourse between a self and other where the decentered self engages in an equal and open-ended dialogue with the other, resulting in greater understanding and acceptance as both parties learn from one

another and incorporate that new understanding into their sense of self-identity and humanity.

Key terms: self, other, SF, hermeneutics, polarisation, Le Guin, Butler, Card, Wyndham, Wells

Opsomming

Die studie ondersoek die verskillende manifestasies van die self en die Ander in Twintigste-eeuse wetenskapfiksie (Wf). Volgens Richard Bernstein (1983) word baie denke steeds deur Cartesiaanse angstigheid beinvloed, 'n diepgewortelde neiging om argumente en lewende entiteite te polariseer of te verdeel: een kant as positief, noodsaaklik en gewens te bestempel, en die ander kant as negatief en destruktief. Verskeie beliggamings van die self en die Ander word op so 'n wyse gepolariseer in beide die letterkunde en die lewe, en dit lei tot 'n verarming, aangesien die betrokke partye nooit werklik in dialoog betrokke raak nie, mekaar verstaan, of van mekaar leer nie. Omdat 'n verskeidenheid werklik vreemde wesens daarin figureer in Wf gekies as die genre waarin die konsep van andersheid bespreek sal word. Boonop benader Wf as innoverende en subversiewe genre ou kwessies vanuit 'n nuwe perspektief. Die standpunt is dat Wf 'n nuwe lig kan werp op die digotomie van die self en die Ander. Die studie sluit in toevallig gekose en persoonlik gekose werke deur outeurs soos Wells, Wyndham, Butler, Le Guin, Card en Tepper.

Die neiging om vroue, vreemde nakomelinge en vreemde vorme van lewe oor die algemeen as Ander af te baken, word in aparte hoofstukke bespreek, met die focus op die rede waarom gegewe selwe en die samelewing verplig voel om andersheid te marginaliseer en te vernietig. Verskeie teoriee oor wat die vrees van die ander behels, word bespreek, en die Jungiaanse interpretasie dat vrees verband hou met angstigheid om wat Jung die psige se skadukant noem, uit te druk, word geseggureer. Hermeneutiese beginsels, in besonder die teoriee van H-G Gadamer, word dan gebruik om 'n model van vrugbare diskoers tussen 'n self en 'n Ander te voorsien waar die gedesentreerde self betrokke raak in 'n gelyke en oop dialoog met die Ander, wat uitloop op 'n beter begrip en aanvaarding terwyl die twee partye van mekaar leer,

en hulle nuwe begrip van mekaar in hulle onderskeie self-identiteit en humaniteit inkorporeer.

Sleutelbegrippe: self, Ander, Wf, hermeneutiek, polarisasie, Le Guin, Butler, Card, Wyndham, Wells

Table of contents

Chapter One: Introduction

This is the porcelain clay of humankind.
John Dryden

Throughout the ages, philosophers, writers, psychologists and sociologists have explored, debated and tried to describe the phenomenon of the individual self in relation to other beings. Put simply, that interaction forms an integral part of "the porcelain clay of humankind" and, much like porcelain clay, it is simultaneously delicate and precious and clumsy and coarse. Difficult at the best of times, interaction between the self and any given other becomes increasingly complex when the self perceives the other being as different, unequal or wholly separate from itself. This thesis will concern itself with the dynamics of such interactions in which the self struggles to come to terms with another being.

It has struck me as both curious and disturbing that, in an age that considers itself liberal, there still exists a tendency to endorse polarity or dichotomy. This system of thought reduces a complex issue to two opposing sides or arguments, supposedly to make the choice between them easier. In order to support one side, it appears necessary to reject its opponent in all shapes and forms. According to Richard Bernstein, the hermeneutic philosopher, much intellectual and cultural life is still underlined by a tension between various binary oppositions such as objectivity and subjectivity, rationality and irrationality or objectivism and relativism (Bernstein, 1983:1). This phenomenon is not limited to the philosophical arena - the debate between those who believe in secure, founding principles of knowledge and their opponents who state that much of our knowledge and many of our beliefs are not absolute but socially determined has been fought in a variety of situations (Bernstein,

1983:3). This manner of reasoning is thus not applied exclusively to abstract or ethical arguments. On the contrary, the choice presented can be between two living entities. A war conflict, in which opposing sides try to eliminate one another in a deadly duel between "us or them", can be cited as a classic example of this. In my thesis, I have chosen to explore the dichotomy of the self and the other as represented in randomly chosen works of SF, and to a lesser extent, fantasy. These genres have been chosen because in their attempts to explore alternate realities, they often move beyond restrictive polarities.

Firstly, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by the two key terms, self and other, in relation to the works this thesis will examine. In its everyday use, the term "self" is our basic point of definition; it is how we choose to view ourselves, who we are or even pretend to be. It is the proverbial "I" which is the centre of how we see the world. This study will designate the title of self to the protagonists of the novels to be examined. As the discussion progresses, the reader will notice that these protagonists are presented by their authors as central fixed points around whom the narrative pivots, so it seems natural to view them as selves.

The concept of the other is more difficult to define. As Renos K. Papadopoulos (1984:55) points out, the meaning of the term "depends upon the specific theoretical territory within which it is defined". The word "other" is always context dependant - we usually ask "other to what?" It is thus logical that the other can take many forms and identities which depend on the point of reference of the self. I have allowed the protagonists of the novels to be examined to designate the role of the other to the diverse beings, ranging from members of another gender to a variety of alien creatures, met in the course of their adventures.

The philosopher Jean Baudrillard (1995:134), points out that there need not be a mutual reciprocal relationship between a self and an other. In other words, just because something is other for me, it does not automatically follow that I will be the other for him or her. The relationship is not always symmetrical. Some of the novels discussed in this thesis reflect that idea. In chapters two and three, for example, we meet protagonists who are presented as selves to the reader but, for a variety of reasons, are regarded as other by members of their society.

It is crucial to point out that although a distinction has been made between the self and the other, this alone does not endorse designating the two as polar opposites. On the contrary, I believe that although the two are separate entities, they are nevertheless locked in complex interdependent relationships. Polarising the two undermines that relationship precisely because it does not acknowledge that they might somehow be bound to each other. Even the origins of the word "other" point to a curious connection. Papadopoulos traces the etymology of the word to its Greek origins and notes that the English term has two Greek equivalents, *allos* and *heteros*. This translation leads him to interesting findings:

> Thus, although in colloquial English the 'Other' usually suggests a separation or an opposition, this brief excursion indicates that in the linguistic family of the 'other' some seemingly contradictory meanings are included: a) difference, separation b) sameness; c) interior, main substance, harmony. (Papadopoulos, 1984:55-6)

The term thus incorporates seemingly paradoxical meanings. Its essence is underlined by a tension of contradictory forces, stretching in seemingly opposite directions. This

begins to explain the elusive nature of the other and hints at the complex relationship that the self and the other share.

Needless to say, there are numerous ways in which the self and the other can relate to each other. The two broad types of interactions we will be concerned with are, firstly, the marginalisation of the other by the self and secondly, attempts to resist the separation of the two and instead embrace incorporation.

As the following chapters will illustrate, the desire to marginalise or even attempt to destroy the other is fairly common. The self encounters the unfamiliar other and feels threatened by this new-found presence. This threat can be real or imagined. Whichever it is, in a dark corner of the given self's mind the question will arise as to whether the other is about to start competing for the self's carefully nurtured niche in life. Insecurity , in turn, often breeds fear. Such fear induces the self to either ignore, negate or marginalise the other in the naive hope that this approach will strengthen its own position or choose a more sinister and proactive approach by trying to eliminate the other being.

Both reactions necessitate an abrupt end to any connection the two beings might have shared if a relationship had been allowed and encouraged to develop. This is problematic because, according to John Donne (1624), all beings are interconnected:

> No man is an *Iland,* intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the *Continent,* a part of the *maine* ... I am involved in *Mankinde.* (in Maxwell-Mahon, 1992:2)

Because of that involvement, the self cannot negate or destroy another being without somehow being affected itself. A prominent SF writer and critic, Ursula Le Guin, is of the opinion that:

> If you deny any affinity with another person or kind of person, if you declare it to be wholly different from yourself - as men have done to women, and class has done to class, and nation has done to nation - you may hate or deify it; but in either case you have denied its spiritual equality and its human reality. You have made it into a thing, to which the only possible relationship is a power relationship. And thus you have finally impoverished your own reality. You have, in fact, alienated yourself. (Le Guin, 1989b:85)

An alienated self robs itself of the opportunity to learn and develop through open and unrestricted interactions with others. Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) envisaged a grim future for such an individual:

> The wretch, concerned all in self,
> Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
> And, doubly dying, shall go down
> To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
> Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.
> (in Cohen, 1976:305)

Although the pattern of negation and even destruction of the other is prevalent in several of the novels that will be discussed, it is by no means the only mode of relation between the self and the other. The other is not always considered to be a threat to the self. On the contrary, some critics and authors believe that it fulfils a vital role in the growth of the self and is an important entity in itself. Jean Baudrillard (1995:126) goes as far as stating that intelligence always comes to us from interaction with the other. In a series of essays entitled "The Transparency of Evil", Bauldrillard (1995:124) proposes contentiously that the crude and hard otherness of race and

poverty has been overcome and "our sources of otherness are indeed running out; we have exhausted the Other as raw material" (Baudrillard, 1995:125). This, he suggests, could have dire effects on the self:

> Alienation is no more: the Other as gaze, the Other as mirror, the Other as opacity - all are gone. Henceforward it is the transparency of other that represents absolute danger. Without the Other as mirror, as reflecting surface, consciousness of self is threatened with irradiation in the void.
> (Baudrillard, 1995:122)

Such a firm belief that the presence of otherness is essential if the self is to grow and mature is reflected in the works of authors such as Ursula Le Guin and Orson Scott Card which will be explored in later chapters. Instead of marginalising the other, the protagonists of such works embrace the foreign entity and try to understand its way of life. By incorporating select aspects of the other into their own life story, such selves constantly redefine their own sense of identity.

An encounter with the other is full of diverse possibilities. In my opinion, this is what makes this area of study so interesting. An examination of an impoverished reality of a self that has marginalised or destroyed an other can serve as a word of caution to readers who are struggling with diverse forms of otherness in their own lives and may at times feel inclined to do the same . The stories of protagonists who bravely face other beings and find the courage to reach out and learn from them can, in a small way, help us to become more tolerant of and open to new ideas.

The relationship between the self and the other is explored in numerous literary genres. For example, it features prominently in the nineteenth-century novel. Why

then has Science Fiction (SF) literature specifically been chosen for the purposes of this study?

Although SF is generally seen as a twentieth-century genre and Jules Verne and H.G. Wells are widely acknowledged to be its fathers (Parrinder, 1980:8), its origins can be traced back to the seventeenth century. Mark R. Hillegas (in Parrinder, 1979:2) notes that the theme of voyages to other worlds (moon and sun in particular) was already employed in select works by the 1600's. The eighteenth century saw the appearance of the theme of voyages to the world underground (Parrinder, 1979:7), while in the nineteenth century Mary Shelley wrote her groundbreaking novel *Frankenstein,* thereby opening people's minds to the possibility of the creation of human life through deviant uses of technology. As one can easily imagine, all these themes were new and thought provoking at the time of their publication. As a genre, SF thus has a long history of questioning norms and exploring new possibilities. Readers have now come to associate such innovative ideas with SF.

Today, there are several ways in which SF writing can be subdivided, the distinction between "hard" and "soft" being one of the most common. Whereas older hard SF tends to focus on hard facts and at least seemingly realistic speculation about the future (Parrinder, 1980:15), soft or New Wave SF writers who emerged in the 1960's began to turn inwards. J.G. Ballard claims that " 'outer space' fiction is really a projection of 'inner space'" (Parrinder, 1980:17). Science fiction has thus begun to explore human relationships within the futuristic world it envisions and it is thus soft SF with which this thesis will largely concern itself.

SF, of course, has been perceived negatively in the past. Numerous critics have pointed to its "outsider" status in relation to other, more mainstream, literary genres. During her discussion of this phenomenon, Avril Rubenstein (1998:3-5) uses the term "SF ghetto" and a Freudian critic, Rosemary Jackson, devotes an entire work entitled *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* to the thesis that fantasy, and by default SF, are literary forms that subvert the real and other norms. Furthermore, critical responses towards the genre have ranged from repudiation by the academic fraternity which has led to labels such as "sensationalism" and "commercialism" (Rubenstein, 1998:2) to accusations of escapism which will be dealt with shortly. However, other critics have reacted more favourably and recently SF has begun to edge out of its ghetto and slowly gain recognition. Over the last three or four decades, the genre has enjoyed the attention of prominent literary critics such as Northrop Frye, Karl Kroeber and Darko Suvin.

Due to its "stormy past" and in some limited cases, present, and its choice of subject matter (progress and alienation can be cited as examples), I believe that SF as a genre has a lot to contribute to the topic of otherness. As a young and innovative literary form, it also experiments not only with its subject matter but, since the New Wave, also with narrative form. This combination of the outsider experience and the constant quest to develop or play with and test well-established literary boundaries makes SF unique. Moreover, as Le Guin (1989a:48) suggests, this makes it dynamic and creative:

> The dance of renewal, the dance that made the world, was always danced here at the edge of things, on the brink, on the foggy coast.

The variety of critical responses to SF go some way towards explaining the diversity of different definitions of what constitutes SF literature. Patrick Parrinder (1980:1) points out that defining SF is a far more tricky task than it might initially appear - it is not simply fiction about science or the future. Avril Rubenstein (1998:15) claims that the fact that almost every SF theorist and writer provides his or her own definition, only compounds the confusion surrounding the topic. She suggests that:

> SF ... creates fantastic worlds which - given the acceptance of some basic hypothetical concept from which all else logically flows - can be accommodated with a minimum of intellectual discomfort by the rational reader. (Rubenstein, 1998:16)

This point will be kept in mind during later discussions of individual texts. Darko Suvin (1979:7-8), perhaps the most well-known modern SF critic, also mentions the role of the intellect in his definition of SF:

> ...a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment.

This definition hints that the balance between the logical and the imaginative and creative is a delicate and central component of good SF writing. Furthermore, Suvin implies that estrangement posits the presence of a self and an other separated by either distance or disagreement.

Ursula Le Guin (1989a:9) also emphasises the central role of the imagination:

> One of the essential functions of science fiction, I think, is precisely this kind of question asking: reversals of a habitual way of thinking, metaphors for what our language has no words for as yet, experiments in imagination.

For Le Guin the world that SF exemplifies is an open one - full of possibilities to explore. She is an adamant defender of SF and fantasy against the old accusation that these genres are escapist. In critical essays such as "Why are Americans Afraid of Dragons?" (1989b:31-6) and "The Child and the Shadow" (1989b:49-59), she repeatedly asserts that imagination ought to be disciplined and harnessed if it is to be a positive tool in our lives. If it is not well controlled, it begins to feed on vulgar material, for example, stock modes of writing, and instead begins to control us. Thus Le Guin makes the valid point that escapism is a choice each reader makes for him or herself and not a construct of the genre itself.

Rosemary Jackson, on the other hand, sees fantasy and SF in more confined terms. She defines it as "a literature of desire, which seeks that which is experienced as absence and loss" (1991:3) Jackson goes on to argue that this desire can either be expelled or expressed. Although the Jacksonian model of fantasy provides a useful perspective, I find it too polar in its outline of possible avenues to be explored when dealing with desire. Brian Attebery, author of *Strategies of Fantasy,* points out that C.S. Lewis has identified a third option: desire can also be aroused (1992:23). This approach appears to me to be much more balanced. It also takes into account the positive creative element in SF.

It is perhaps such creative and innovative elements that contribute towards the feeling of wonder and enchantment that occurs during the reading of well-written SF literature. This "it" element is difficult to define - the very point of wonder, as Parrinder (1980:53) suggests, is that it is fluid and not confined to a formula. However, Darko Suvin (1979:5) explains this magical confrontation very aptly when he says:

> Whether island or valley, whether in space or (from the industrial and bourgeois revolutions on) in time, the new framework is correlative to the new inhabitants. The aliens - utopians, monsters, or simply differing strangers - are a mirror to man just as the differing country is a mirror for his world. But the mirror is not only a reflecting one, it is also a transforming one, a virgin womb and alchemical dynamo: the mirror is a crucible.

Once again, we see the focus falls on the dynamic and creative aspect of the genre - it is, to use a use a modern "buzzword", interactive. It requires the reader to actively think and participate in the dynamics of a new imaginary world. Rubenstein (1998:21-3) expresses similar sentiments:

> Indeed, rather than being engaged in a process of exorcism (as Jackson would have it), the reader of SF and fantasy is involved in a wondrous act of acknowledgement... Thus, SF at its best presents, in a dramatised form, those eternal metaphysical or existential questions that have consistently tormented the consciousness of humanity.

Questions concerning the self and other are precisely then issues that can only benefit from being examined from the new angle that Science Fiction literature, as a genre that emphasises the role of the intellect, imagination and wonder, so often provides.

SF's emphasis on the positive role of the imagination becomes a particularly useful tool when we are confronted with dichotomous thinking which is rigid and provides us with only two options. We are forced to ask ourselves what is so alluring about polar thinking that humanity still clings to it in this day and age.

Richard Bernstein explores this issue in his work, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism,* by tracing the manner in which a polar argument is structured. He examines the

works of the French philosopher, Rene Descartes (1596-1650). In his classic works, *Meditations,* Descartes wrestles with many significant problems and questions such as mind-body dualism, theories about the foundations of knowledge and issues concerning external versus internal reality. Bernstein, however, chooses to examine the *way* Descartes argues rather than the content of his arguments. He believes that for Descartes and his readers "*The Meditations* portray a journey of the soul." (Bernstein, 1983:17) Seen in this way, the work is a search for a fixed point to hold on to in times of uncertainty. The allure of wanting to uncover such a point is understandable; after all, certainty is a luxury many crave. Descartes then explores the terrifying option - what if there is no such fixed point we can grasp? Bernstein (1983:18) writes:

> With a chilling clarity Descartes leads us with an apparent and ineluctable necessity to a grand and seductive Either /Or. *Either* there is some support for our being, a fixed foundation for our knowledge, *or* we cannot escape the forces of darkness that envelop us with madness, with intellectual and moral chaos.

The underlying principle behind this way of thinking or arguing is that there are only two choices. More importantly, the one is obviously not only more attractive than the other, but also presented as being necessary if we are to survive with our sanity and identity intact. Put simply, the polarities are portrayed as being totally irreconcilable. Although logically we know that in most areas of life there are more than just two options, the old habit that demarcates one option as good and the other as evil is deeply rooted and thus difficult to transcend.

Bernstein coins the term "Cartesian Anxiety" to classify this way of polar thinking and the fear it plays upon in our minds. Although the term uses a derivative of

Descartes' name, it is not a critique exclusively directed at the philosopher. Rather, it is a construct that is aimed at helping readers grasp the primary issues concerned (Bernstein, 1983:16).

Bernstein chooses to focus on the objectivism/relativism dichotomy but his insight into the nature of polarity will be applied in this thesis. Like many other opposites, various manifestations of the self and the other are often approached as irreconcilable dichotomies. The self is usually shown to be the fixed point of reference whose existence and well-being are presented as both vital and desirable while the other is painted as a threat to the paradise of the self. The two are laid out as polar opposites locked in an age-old *either* one *or* the other game. The dichotomous approach is a way of thinking, based on evoking fear, that forces us to make an *either/or* choice where none is really necessary. Bernstein (1983:30) urges us to move beyond false polarities and suggests that a hermeneutic approach may offer a viable alternative. This option, along with other suggestions, will be explored in the later part of my thesis.

Dichotomous thinking is the result of the manner in which an issue is approached. Because polarisation is the outcome of the way in which an argument is structured, it is important to find an approach to SF literature that may help break such a dichotomous mode of thought.

Obviously, a particular approach can shape the way we interpret the given subject. It can, for example, shape the way we interpret various definitions of SF. Patrick Parrinder (1980:29) rightly states that "separation between 'critical' and 'sociological' approaches to literary material is often artificial". Darko Suvin (1988:74) agrees and

argues that in order to understand SF as well as possible, critics and readers have to combine the so-called formal, also known as critical, and sociological approaches in their examination. This fusion, he believes, will give a broader and more rounded view of SF.

Brian Attebery (1992:1-18) explains that fantasy, together with any other literary form, can be approached as a mode, formula or genre. He argues that the genre approach is the balanced middle between formula writing which, although it may be well-constructed, is essentially closed off from the realm of countless possibilities, and mode which, according to the author, is so open some readers and writers may find it intimidating (Attebery, 1992:8-10). For the purposes of this thesis, both SF and fantasy will thus be dealt with as genres.

The genre of SF and fantasy can, in turn, be approached from different sociological angles. Patrick Parrinder (1980:29) explains:

> The sociologist may approach a SF story in one of three ways: as a *product,* bearing the imprint of social forces at every level from fundamental narrative structures to the precise forms in which it is manufactured, distributed and sold; as a communication or a *message*, with a particular function for a particular audience; and, finally, as a *document* articulating and passing judgement upon the social situation from which it emerges. The considerations involved in seeing science fiction or any other cultural form as a product, message, and document are so diverse that it may be misleading to bring them under a single heading.

Indeed, the three sociological approaches are very different. A critic like Scott Sanders who sees SF as a product of various social forces might argue that:

> ...science fiction's tendency to present de-individualized world of robots, androids, and featureless human beings results not from its artistic inadequacies but from its grasp of the phenomena of twentieth-century alienation. (in Parrinder, 1980:31)

A critic who approaches SF as a message might, on the other hand, choose to explore what the phenomenon of fandom says about this literary form (Parrinder, 1980:34-5) while a person who believes that SF is a document might choose to trace science fiction's path of ideas and examine how that information shapes other views (Parrinder, 1980:42-4). All three of the sociological approaches contribute valuable insights into the genre. SF's role as the document and product of social forces is particularly useful in connection with understanding the shift from hard to soft SF. However, seeing each in isolation may be limiting to our study. What can other non-sociological approaches teach us?

Parrinder points out that SF can also be viewed as a form of a fable (1980:68-87) or an epic (1980:88-105). Although a thorough examination of these approaches will not be undertaken in this study, the reader should take note of the diversity of interpretations open to a SF critic.

Perhaps one of the most well-known interpretations of SF is that it is a mode of the old romance genre (Parrinder, 1980:49). Parrinder (1980:57) warns us that although "SF is full of repeated elements of one kind and another; what we must avoid is the temptation to draw over-hasty conclusions from this." There are similarities between the two genres, certainly, such as use of myth, subject matter and elements of wonder (Parrinder, 1980:51) but this does not mean that SF can be hailed as the new romance. For example, viewing SF as continuation of romance as the "literature of wonder" can

prove to be more problematic than it might initially appear. Again, Parrinder (1980:53) cautions:

> Romance which relies on predictable elements of suspense and melodrama is likely to produce the experience of wonder with the diminishing success of a habit-forming drug. We should look upon wonder as an admirable literary side-effect, rather than a deliberate aim.

A sense of wonder is an important element in SF literature as well and this word of warning is equally applicable to both SF and romance. This sense of wonder is not something that has a fixed point, rather, it should be fluid in order to avoid becoming formulaic. As has been previously discussed, many critics, and no doubt readers, see this element of enchantment as an essential part of SF writing. I believe that if we allow for the possibility of seeing SF as a form of play it can only help to recover this wonder element and thus add to a richer approach.

In his work, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-element in Culture,* J. Huizinga expands on his thesis that man is not only a reasoning (*Homo Sapiens*) and working (*Homo Faber*) being, but also a creature strongly defined by his or her playful abilities and activities. Furthermore, the author proposes that play is a cultural phenomenon, that is, "culture arises in the form of play" (Huizinga, 1949:46) - not from but *in* and *as* play (Huizinga, 1949:173). The author explores the play element in areas such as law, poetry, philosophy and war. Could SF be regarded as a form of play?

Huizinga (1949:28) defines play as:

> ...a voluntary activity or occupation executed within certain fixed limits of time and place, according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, having its aim in itself and

> accompanied by feeling of tension, joy and the consciousness that it is 'different' from 'ordinary life'.

Furthermore, he points out that play and seriousness are not direct opposites - play is often serious (Huizinga, 1949:5). Rather, the relationship between play and seriousness is always fluid (Huizinga, 1949:8).

Is SF is a pleasurable, voluntary activity that can move between forms of play and seriousness with ease and can, without difficulty, be distinguished from reality? If so, what makes the play element so vital in a well-rounded experience of SF?

At times, SF plays with language - specific examples will be dealt with in chapter two, explores new themes and worlds. Sometimes this is done in the form of satire or even comedy as in the Terry Prachett novels; at other times, issues are explored more overtly seriously. In still other types of SF, the boundaries between what is play-like and serious can blur. It can thus be concluded that the relationship between play and seriousness is not a static one in the SF genre.

Like play, the choice to enter the world of SF, whether as a critic, reader or writer, is a voluntary activity. Logically, this implies that the person involved is exercising his or her freedom of choice. According to Le Guin, the choice to explore SF and fantasy frees us by freeing our imagination. She sees a direct link between imagination and play as well as their important purpose:

> By 'imagination', then, I personally mean the free play of the mind, both intellectual and sensory. By 'play' I mean recreation, re-creation, the recombination of what is known and what is new. By 'free' I mean that the action is done without an immediate object of profit - spontaneously. That does not mean, however, that there may not be a

> purpose behind the free play of mind, a goal; and the goal may be a very serious object indeed. Children's imaginative play is a practising at the acts and emotions of adulthood; a child who did not play would not become mature.
> (Le Guin, 1989b:33)

The benefits of play for the imagination are not limited to childhood alone. The process of learning about ourselves and the world, together with the quest for maturity, does not end abruptly at eighteen - it is, or rather should be, continuous. In this thesis, the reader will witness that protagonists whose personal growth has been stunted by their refusal to engage in a meaningful dialogue with an other never fully mature to become well-rounded characters. On the other hand, heroes and heroines who are open to new experiences and beings constantly redefine their sense of self-identity.

Both play and well-written SF do not cut us off from reality. Even children who read SF and fantasy are able to differentiate between reality and fantasy (Le Guin, 1989b:36), just as they are able to see the difference between a play construct and the real world. Once again, it is false to label play and SF and fantasy as escapist.

Lastly, the pleasure element present in play is also there during the discovery of an excellent SF novel - the exploration of a well-constructed new planet, its inhabitants, problems and pleasures is a literary joy. Thus, like play, SF reading is a pleasurable activity. Part of that pleasure, I believe, comes from what readers discover about themselves as they become engrossed in the adventures of protagonists who face diverse beings in new and exciting worlds.

Huizinga (1949:146-53) also notes that philosophical reasoning and discussions often proceed in the language of play. He cites the rhetoric of the Ancient Greek Sophists

as an excellent example of this. Utilising some form of the play image is, in fact, not a new phenomenon in philosophical thought. Arguably one of the most influential hermeneutic philosophers of the twentieth century, Hans-Georg Gadamer, has chosen to build upon the play image in the tradition of thinkers such as Huizinga, Wittgenstein and Heidegger. Like several hermeneutic thinkers before him, one of Gadamer's main concerns is the ontological nature of human understanding. David West (1996:105) refers to the words of another thinker, Palmer, when he talks of Gadamer's theory of understanding:

> ...understanding is 'not conceived as a subjective process of man over and against the object but the way of being of man himself'.

To summarise, human understanding, its limits and conditions, can be described as the primary focus of hermeneutic thought. West (1996:106) goes on to point out that:

> Gadamer shares with the hermeneutic tradition as a whole the belief that understanding, this most fundamental dimension of human existence, cannot be made sense of within the categories of the 'methodical' natural sciences.

Gadamer urges us to dismiss our preoccupation with method as the path towards understanding and suggests that the construct of play can help us in this regard. Linge (1977:xxiii), a prominent philosophy editor, explains:

> For what reveals itself as most characteristic of the phenomenon of playing is that the individual player is absorbed into the back-and-forth movement of the game, that is, into the definable procedure and rules of the game, and does not hold back in self-awareness as one who is 'merely playing'.... it is precisely a release from subjectivity and self-possession. The real subject of playing is the game itself.

This concept of losing oneself in the game may, upon first glance, appear to be dangerously escapist and contradictory to Huizinga's definition of play. However, we should keep in mind that for Gadamer, as for Huizinga, play can also be serious. In her study of Gadamer's philosophy, L.D. Derksen (1983:87-8) explains:

> In this tradition, play has become something 'serious': it is not a game for children, not something restricted to frivolous moments. Gadamer himself uses the expression 'sacred seriousness' to describe play... It becomes a structural concept to describe human action and knowledge.

She goes on to elaborate on the role of the subject in a play situation:

> If we go back to our discussion of the concept of experience and see how it is a critique of the scientific mode of thinking, the conclusion emerges that the scientific way of thinking thinks from out of the subject who in his freedom and by the use of his sound reason can obtain knowledge and mastery of the world. The factors of history and the conditions that govern knowledge are not considered important. In opposition to this, Gadamer wants to decenter the subject. The subject, within a certain situation, is confronted and opened up to that which comes to him. This is a process in which the subject and that which confronts him interact: neither subject nor object remain the same.... (Derksen, 1983:92)

Though the introduction of play/game, Gadamer thus breaks away from the age old Cartesian construct of an all-knowing, prejudice-free, detached subject who views the object of his inquiry in a clinical manner. To paraphrase, Gadamer proposes that we dethrone the subject or the self, thereby freeing it to interact on a more equal ground with an other. Gadamer's theory of understanding is that it is a more immediate process where there is an active interaction between two subjects (Derksen, 1983:88). One could thus say that real understanding has to be played.

This insight into the importance of play as a weapon in breaking away from old dichotomy of subject/object that has ruled our way of thinking for centuries, can be applied to several forms of the dichotomy between a self and the other. Linge (1977:xxii) makes a valid observation:

> As Gadamer points out, the difference between methodological sterility and genuine understanding is *imagination,* that is, the capacity to see what is questionable in the subject matter and to formulate questions that question the subject matter further.

As has been previously noted, good SF literature shares both the faith in the power of a well-trained imagination and a history of questioning norms. If we allow, as Le Guin has suggested, for a disciplined play of the imagination in our approach towards SF literature, our understanding of the relationships between the self and the other can only benefit.

This thesis will examine texts that both reject and embrace various forms of otherness. As has been briefly mentioned, the choice of texts has been both random and personal. It is hoped that these texts will in small part reveal the diversity of responses to otherness within the genre. The following chapter will examine whether women were, or in some cases, still can be, considered as the other in SF literature. Alternative gender relationships envisaged by SF writers such as Le Guin and Russ will also be explored. Thereafter, the next chapter will be concerned with the topic of otherness within the context of a creator/creation relationship. Texts ranging from Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Wells's *The Island of Dr. Moreau* to more contemporary novels by authors such as Weldon and Butler, among others, will be examined. Several manifestations of the creator/creation relationship, including human host

mothers giving birth to alien children and genetic engineering, will be analysed in terms of how they effect the dichotomy of the self and other. Chapters four and five will trace how our views of the proverbial other in SF, the alien, have shifted with time. The initial fear of alien beings portrayed in older texts by authors such as Wells and Wyndham will be discussed, together with theories concerning possible origins of this fear, including links to Cartesian Anxiety. The reader will witness a change of attitude towards the alien other in more contemporary texts by selected authors such as Card, Le Guin and Tepper. Once again, hermeneutic theories will be utilised, at least in part, to explain this shift.

In the course of writing this thesis I have come to believe that SF reading and criticism is a process that takes an active and willing participant on a journey of discovery and, as always, the discovery of the other is intimately linked to the discovery of self:

> Where did you fall to, and what did you discover?
> (Le Guin, 1989b:129)

Chapter Two: The Other Sex

Follow a shadow, it still flies you
Seem to fly it, it will pursue
So court a mistress, she denies you
Let her alone, she will court you
Say, are not women truly, then
Styled but shadows of us men?
Ben Johnson

In Ben Johnson's time (1572-1637) the idea that women might be independent of men, whether materially or spiritually, was almost unthinkable. Except in few select cases, women were seen merely as men's shadows - incomplete human beings whose identity was defined as the other. The nineteenth century saw the beginnings of interest in women's issues - ranging from some recognition of the "fairer sex's" political and human rights to debates about women's potentially changing place in modern society after the feminist revolution. Today, considerable attention is being paid to the complexity of male/female interactions. Feminists and writers have begun exploring and defining female experience in the light of the gender's infamous history of being oppressed and how this effects the forming of current identities. Marina Benjamin (1993:20) believes that:

> The dichotomy between subject and object and the related dyad of mind/body are as central to defining feminism as they are to defining woman.

The demarcation of women as the other, mere objects in relation to the masculine subject, has left its mark on female identity. However, while this may have been an early definition of womanhood, today it is only one of the clues a reader follows when trying to piece together a definition of what it means to be a woman in contemporary times and to contemplate what the future might hold.

Various forms of literature, from novels to non-fiction, have chosen to focus on so-called women's issues and, at least compared to previous eras, there has been an explosion of female writers on the market. Like the focus on gender issues and women in particular, the interest in SF literature is relatively new. Certain thinkers like Rosemary Jackson (see chapter one) claim that SF and fantasy often subvert the norms established in realistic writing. I believe it is worthwhile to ask how such a new and subversive genre as SF approaches complex modern issues like gender and women's place - past, present and future - in society.

After noticing SF's futuristic and innovative subject matter, one might hope that the genre's approach to gender issues would also be fresh and original. According to Lucie Armitt (1991:2), the reality is often disappointing:

> Unfortunately, irrespective of its superficially futurist stance, mainstream male-oriented science fiction has traditionally been a genre obsessed with nostalgia and conservativism.

However, women's initial absence, both as characters in and writers of SF literature, has finally been noticed. Today, despite many obstacles, SF written by or about women is gaining greater recognition. Armitt (1991:2) comments:

> However, I do believe that the emergence of women's SF as a force to be reckoned with has played a large role in broadening out the readership of SF beyond the specialist clique to the more general reader interested in women's writing and issues, and indeed in contemporary literature *per se.*

Although it may strike many readers as ironic that a previously unrecognised sex has contributed towards forcing a "nostalgic and conservative" genre out of its cosy ghetto, such broadening of readership and views can only benefit SF as a literary

form. As has been noted in the introductory chapter, one of the essential functions and characteristics of SF is the expansion of the boundaries of imagination. A genre which hopes to call itself innovative cannot afford to explore the existence of new races on faraway planets while ignoring the "other" half of Earth's own population.

The first section of this chapter will examine how women have been portrayed as the other in relation to men in earlier twentieth-century SF writing. The broad implications of such binary opposition logic will be briefly considered before the discussion moves to certain aspects of the feminine coming of age. Octavia E. Butler's *Wild Seed* will then be used to illustrate a complex but finally successful relationship between female and male elements. Finally, writings by several women authors which sketch alternative visions to the heterosexual model will be explored together with interconnected issues of female narrative and the role that language can play in changing the perception of women as the other.

All the novels discussed in the following section were written by male authors and, although H.G. Wells, Jack Finney and John Wyndham wrote in slightly different time periods, all the works can be broadly termed hard SF. This implies that the narrative is largely event-based and although the narrators of these novels at times pause to consider the implications of events, the primary focus is on a particular scientific theory or hypothesis and how it may affect our world. Patrick Parrinder (1980:14-15) reminds us:

> 'Hard' SF is related to 'hard facts' and also to the 'hard' or engineering sciences. It does not necessarily entail realistic speculation about a future world, though its bias is undoubtedly realistic.

This, however, does not mean that the portrayals of women in these novels are in the least realistic. Le Guin (1989a:156) aptly describes the silencing of the female perspective on events by using an old-fashioned birth scene from Tolstoy's *War and Peace:*

> A rendering scream in another room. And Prince Andrey comes in and sees his poor little wife dead bearing his son. - Or Levin goes out to his fields and thanks his God for the birth of his son - And we know how Prince Andrey feels and how Levin feels and even how God feels, but we don't know what happened. Something happened, something was done, which we know nothing about. But what was it? Even in novels by women we are only just beginning to find out what it is that happens in the other room - what women do.

The wife of the main narrator in H.G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds* (first published in 1898) is a good example of a woman banished to the silent room. While the two male narrators recount the terrifying events as aliens from Mars invade the Earth in the late nineteenth century, we do not hear any female perspective on what has happened. We never learn the names of the people in the novel; the narrator refers to himself as "I" and to his spouse only in relation to himself as "my wife". The scene at their dinner table just after the Martians arrive on Earth perfectly epitomises their relationship and her insignificant position in the novel's events:

> With wine and food, the confidence of my own table, and the necessity of reassuring my wife, I grew by insensible degrees courageous and secure.
> 'They have done a foolish thing,' said I, fingering my wine glass. 'They are dangerous because, no doubt, they are mad with terror. Perhaps they expected to find no living things - certainly no intelligent living things.'
> 'A shell in the pit,' said I, ' if the worst comes to the worst, we will kill them all.'
> The intense excitement of the events had no doubt left my perceptive powers in a state of erethism. I remember that dinner-table with extraordinary vividness even now. My dear

> wife's sweet anxious face peering at me from under the pink lamp-shade, ... (Wells, 1997:23)

During this rather lengthy quote the woman does not speak once - to borrow Johnson's image, she is only her husband's shadow. A perceptive reader can only imagine her worry and fear but she is not permitted to voice them. She simply sits and passively absorbs her husband's news and hypothesis. She is described in stereotypically feminine terms as having a sweet and anxious face in the light of a pink lamp-shade. Later on in the novel she utters a question, asking her husband where she should go, thereby giving him the perfect opening to authoritatively take charge of the situation (Wells, 1997:29). When she is reunited with him towards the end of the novel (having been conveniently removed for the majority of the action), she again only utters a few words before swooning into his arms:

> And there, amazed and afraid, even as I stood amazed and afraid, were my cousin and my wife - my wife white and tearless. She gave a faint cry.
> 'I came,' she said. 'I knew - I knew -'
> She put her hand to her throat - swayed. I made a step forward, and caught her in my arms. (Wells, 1997:142)

To paraphrase the point about silent women in hermeneutic terms, such feminine presence is marked by a glaring absence of true characterisation. Elizabeth Russell (in Armitt, 1991:15) comments:

> They [these women] are depicted by silence rather than sound and only exist in so far as they internalise male desire and imagine themselves as men imagine them to be.

The persona of Becky Driscoll from Jack Finney's *Invasion of the Bodysnatchers* (first published in 1954) is another good example of the product of such sexist male projection. Becky is the love interest of the male protagonist, Dr. Miles Bennell, who

tries to save them both from being taken over by bodysnatchers from space. Even though we meet Becky in the opening pages of the novel and learn a few personal snippets about her past, her function soon becomes apparent. She is used to introduce the seemingly absurd notion of bodysnatchers through the announcement that her cousin believes her uncle to be not quite himself (Finney, 1978:8). The author cunningly lets a level-headed woman bring up the subject so that the pressure to do so is taken off the male protagonist who can now comfortably fall into the role of a rational investigator and capable protector.

Although she passively participates in most of Miles's adventures, her presence is very much that of a token female - she is occasionally allowed to come up with a possible solution but never to follow through with it actively. Instead, she makes breakfast (Finney, 1978:62), obligingly shares Miles's bed (Finney, 1978:91) and makes forgettable comments from time to time. She is the insignificant, if sympathetically portrayed, other of an active and strong male protagonist - designated to be everything he is not.

In John Wyndham's *Chocky* (first published in 1968) a sketch of an essentially good but silly mother is painted for us. Again, to paraphrase Russell, such women are mere projections of how men imagine them behaving in these situations. Mary, the mother of little Matthew whose consciousness is visited by a friendly alien mind in *Chocky,* is portrayed as a silly, misguided but well-meaning mother. She is properly concerned about her son but refuses to acknowledge the fact that Chocky, the alien mind, can be real. This, in turn, makes her insensitive to Matthew's feelings and allows her husband, the narrator of the story, to act as a guide for the boy. Father and son have long conversations, take long walks together and generally acknowledge the fact that

Chocky's presence has to be kept hidden from "mummy" (Wyndham, 1977:106). Even as the child's mother, Mary, is excluded from the cosy "boys' club", the author makes it clear that despite her best intentions she is just too limited to properly understand the situation:

> 'But what is the matter?' she insisted.
> I shook my head. When we were down in the hall, safely out of earshot of Matthew's room I told her.
> 'It's Chocky. Apparently she's leaving - clearing out.'
> 'Well, thank goodness for that,' Mary said.
> 'Maybe, but don't let him see you think that.'
> Mary considered.
> 'I'd better take him up a tray.'
> 'No. Leave him alone.'
> 'But the poor boy must eat.'
> 'I think he's - well, saying good-bye to her - and finding it difficult and painful,' I said.
> She looked at me uncertainly, with a puzzled frown.
> 'But, David, you're talking as if - I mean, Chocky isn't *real.*'
> 'To Matthew she is. And he's taking it hard.'
> 'All the same, I think he ought to have some food.'
> I have been astonished before, and doubtless shall be again, how the kindliest and most sympathetic of women can pettify and downgrade the searing anguishes of childhood.
> (Wyndham, 1977:117-8)

By contrast, some of Wyndham's other female characters such as Josella in *The Day of the Triffids* (first published in 1951) and Angela in *The Midwich Cuckoos* (first published in 1957) are allowed a limited degree of understanding and participation. After a mysterious blackout during which most of the fertile women from the village of Midwich become pregnant, it is Angela, the wife of one of the central characters, who speaks to all the women at a town meeting (Wyndham, 1979:67-73). Later on in the novel she is also the one who voices the protest that her husband, or any man for that matter, cannot understand what it feels like to be an "incubator" for another species (Wyndham, 1979:87). However, it is disappointingly her husband who finds

the final solution to the Midwich problem. We will return to this novel in later chapters.

The Day of the Triffids tells of the battle between humans and triffid plants after a mysterious meteorite causes the majority of the Earth's population to go blind. The narrator, who luckily avoids losing his sight, rescues a sighted woman, Josella, from slavery to a blind man (Wyndham, 1980:64). This classic Prince Charming-rescues-Cinderella motif is slightly diluted when he recognises that through rescuing her he has also saved some part of himself:

> 'Thank you, Bill.' She paused. Then she added: 'Have I said thank you before? I don't think I have. If you hadn't helped me when you did -'
> 'But for you,' I told her, 'I should probably by now be lying maudlin and sozzled in some bar. I have just as much to thank you for. This is no time to be alone.'
> (Wyndham, 1980:88)

This, albeit a little clumsily, takes a step towards putting them on a more equal footing as they embrace their new lives. Josella can hardly be described as a strong or independent woman but she is not as helpless and dependent on Bill as the Wellsian wife is on her husband.

Overall, not very much can be said about these women. Both collectively as a gender and individually, they are poorly developed by their authors and we might justifiably hesitate to even call them characters. They are emblematic of a sexist male projection of what women should be like - silent, silly, caring, adoring, weak and obedient.

By contrast, the male protagonists in these novels are everything the women are not - strong, very much present, opinionated, self-assured and surprisingly resourceful.

Although individual aspects of their personalities are as poorly developed as the women's - Miles, Bill and *The War of the Worlds* narrator are interchangeable - the collective strong and capable male persona is crafted with meticulous care.

The structure of binary oppositions between the sexes is evident in such novels. In fact the two genders are portrayed as so different, that a perceptive reader might question whether the author has truly decided who is to be the real alien in the novel - the creature from space or the woman.

In fact, Alice Sheldon, writing under the pseudonym of James Tiptree, Jr., plays on precisely that kind of chauvinistic projection in her short story "The Women Men Don't See" (1973). Written from the masculine perspective of Don Fenton, a stereotypical adventurer, the story focuses on four strangers, a mother, her daughter, a pilot and Don who are forced to interact when the small plane they have been sharing goes down over a deserted marshland. As the four individuals await rescue, we witness Don trying to take charge of the situation and assume the role of protector and guide to the women. The story is defined by a curious tension. On the one hand, Don intuitively feels an inexplicable disquiet about the women. They constantly subvert his expectations about how women should behave in a distressing situation - the mother, Ruth Parsons, is not hysterical or helpless. Instead, she is calm and volunteers to help (in Sargent, 1995:312-314). Don announces:

> I have Mrs. Parsons figured now: Mother Hen protecting only chick from male predators. That's all right with me. I came here to fish.
> But something is irritating me. The damn women haven't complained once, you understand. Not a peep, not a quaver, no personal manifestations whatever. They're like something out of a manual. (in Sargent, 1995:312-313)

On the other hand, he stubbornly insists on ignoring his instincts that something is amiss and continues to try to pigeonhole and neatly define Ruth. Despite several conversations, Don does not really, as the title suggests, see the real Ruth or even Ruth as a fellow human being. To him, she is defined by her roles of mother and woman. Ruth herself is not comfortable with this role, saying sadly: "What women do is survive. We live by ones and twos in the chinks of your world-machine." (in Sargent, 1995:326)

Don is thus understandably shocked when the two women disappear with aliens in a space ship. The reader is less surprised - perhaps because they share the label of non-entities in a rational masculine frame of reference, the women and the aliens have more in common than meets the eye.

Elizabeth Russell uses Helene Cixous's table of binary oppositions to make a valid point about a well-rounded human personality. Cixous believes that, within a phallocentric model, women are categorised as everything the man is not, for example:

Activity / Passivity
Sun / Moon
Culture / Nature
Day / Night
Father / Mother
Head / Heart
Intelligible / Sensitive
Logos / Pathos (in Armitt, 1991:17)

Russell (in Armitt, 1991:18) explains the concept behind this table:

> The norms on the left are, according to patriarchal tradition, to be listed under male = positive = master whereas those on the right would bear the reading female = negative = mastered. In order for the one side to acquire

> meaning it necessarily has to destroy the *other* [own emphasis added]. Thus, as activity equals victory in patriarchal thought, it follows that the male is the winner and the female is the loser.

In other words, the women are always designated to the other role or quality that the man has rejected for himself. It is a bitter irony that the male needs that other "negative" quality to illuminate and show off his "positive" one in better light.

However, even though it may initially appear that by being associated with everything positive the male is the clear winner, his position is not as happy as he might imagine. Russell (in Armitt, 1991:18-19) uses Jung to explain why binary reasoning is detrimental to both sexes:

> Jung believed that a fully developed individual personality must transcend gender; it must not be endowed by either excessive masculinity or excessive femininity.... To achieve wholeness, each person has to come to terms with, and incorporate, characteristics of the opposite sex into her or his personality. This means that a man would have to listen to what Jung calls the 'inner voices' of his 'anima' which is feminine and a woman would listen to the 'inner voices' of her 'animus' which is masculine. The feminine anima or soul is represented by the moon and is erotic and mysterious, sentimental and irrational. The masculine animus is represented by the creativity of the sun and by the logical and spiritual. To become whole, the individual has to become reconciled with those aspects of his or her personality which have not been taken into account. No one can become whole by repressing the 'inner voices' in the unconscious.

Although Jung's grouping of what is masculine and feminine is stereotypical and sexist, his binary division is no longer cast in stone. Interaction between the two elements is considered mutually beneficial. This study will expand upon Jung's theories in more detail in later chapters. By bringing in Jung, Russell is able to support a valid point, namely, that polarisation and mutual exclusivity of gender roles

and characteristics not only obviously undermines the female, but also stunts the growth of the male. Thus to paraphrase Russell, he is no longer the winner in the equation while she is the loser - they both lose an essential aspect of themselves if we are to take this rigid binary structure as our model of reality.

Can the damage inflicted by this dichotomous model on a woman or girl's perception of self ever be repaired? Certain writers have noted that one of the most obvious ways to begin this task within the realm of SF literature would be to provide a positive and holistic view of women in writings aimed at young girls still forming their perceptions of themselves and the world.

Brian Attebery (1992:88) observes that although much has been written about coming of age in fantasy literature, the primary focus has been on the masculine experience. What could account for such lack of material about the feminine coming of age? Attebery (1992:88) believes that this lack again reflects "cultural biases and the prevalence of men in the ranks of authors". It appears that female perspective as a whole, whether that of adult women or young girls has been largely negated or even ignored. However, now that our society is slowly adapting to a more active female participation in many previously closed fields, including SF writing, what can be done to include a young woman's experience alongside that of her male counterpart's, not as his other but as an independent self?

Attebery examines three possible answers. Firstly, there is the suggestion that a young woman can identify with any active male protagonist instead of with the passive heroine (Attebery, 1992:94). Gwyneth Jones supports this suggestion (in Armitt, 1991:166):

> Accepting a male protagonist on the printed page does not mean accepting one's own absence. Indeed the almost total absence of female characters makes simpler the imaginative sleight of hand whereby the teenage girl substitutes *herself* for the male initiate in these stories.

Attebery (1992:94) himself is more sceptical and points out that many young female readers may not as yet be trained in "the art of reading subversively". I share Attebery's concern about this solution but for different reasons. The idea of substitution, even if it is done by a willing girl herself, still presupposes the female as the other. Her positive experience of self is mediated and based on the condition of her being able to access male experience. Although as Jones has suggested, accepting a male presence does not automatically translate into accepting female absence, the converse would also be true. One gender's presence does not mean the other's absence and women also have a right to be acknowledged as themselves directly.

Secondly, we may choose to focus upon narratives about strong female characters who take action and control both of themselves and the situation and thirdly, we can pay more attention to original stories which draw upon traditional motifs and structures but reverse and subvert gender-related expectations (Attebery, 1992:94). In my opinion, the last two solutions are complementary and can reinforce each other. Sheri S. Tepper's *The Gate to Women's Country* is an example of a novel which in part focuses on the female coming of age. It reverses traditional expectations and motifs and provides the reader with strong female role models.

The novel tells of life in a futuristic community of women. Although men and women co-operate and still have contact, they live separately: the women have built walled towns where they keep civilisation as we know it going while the men have

formed garrison camps and focus on war and defence. The two communities are sharply separated by heavy gates. Despite the fact that the fragmented narrative favours a female perspective on events, male experiences and protagonists are also developed.

The narrative pivots around Stavia and her family. She grows up as the daughter of a prominent councilwoman, Margot, and eventually becomes a doctor and a council member herself. Unlike her sister Myra, even as a young girl Stavia is contemplative, disciplined and focused. Myra, on the other hand, is the epitome of classic femininity: she is interested in men and mothering and is easily influenced by male opinion. The two sisters lives provide alternative models of experience of self, others and life in general within the same community.

Although Myra is not a particularly ambitious girl, once she meets Barten, a parody of a masculine and sexist warrior, her only wish becomes to give him a son because "it would be the prettiest baby" (Tepper, 1990:99). She immediately adopts his views even though these are at times insulting towards her own community (Tepper, 1990:107). She exists though and for him. Myra's character fulfils some important functions in the novel. She is portrayed as economically and socially independent of Barten - her society provides many opportunities and choices for its female inhabitants - yet she chooses emotional dependence on him. As baffling as that choice is, she willingly becomes one of his insignificant others. Ironically, this undermines the view of total male domination - it shows us that women can choose different paths for themselves. In a way Myra adds a realistic element to the novel. A society of women where everyone is strong, capable and independent makes for a naive utopia

that can be a pleasant wish but does not teach us anything. Myra's behaviour as the older sister also conveniently sets the scene for Stavia's different choices.

Stavia also meets a young man, Chernon. Unlike Barten, he is covertly manipulative and domineering. Stavia and Chernon's relationship is thus more complex than Myra and Barten's because of the subtle power-struggles and conscience issues that underlie it. Although he tries to take advantage of her naiveté, young Stavia resists Cheron's manipulative quest for "insider" female information (Tepper, 1990:78). She loves him but she does not give in. Instead, she chooses to leave her hometown to study medicine (Tepper, 1990:204). It is at this point in time that she first seriously subverts his expectations of her. Towards the end of the novel, the couple take a trip (Tepper, 1990:221). The romantic idyll motif is reversed when, instead of bringing them closer together, the trip divides them even further. Stavia realises Chernon's true nature and this, among other factors, allows her undertake a new and vital role as a decision maker in her society. It is perhaps ironic that although Chernon has intended to use Stavia as a source from which to extract information, in the end he becomes a tool that aids her in self-discovery. She is complete without him.

Before we venture into a discussion about alternative gender relationships, let us pause to examine a rich and skilful portrayal of feminine and masculine interaction in Octavia E. Butler's *Wild Seed.* The novel tells the story of Anyanwu and Doro, the feminine and masculine elements respectively, whose relationship is the building block of Butler's *Patternist* saga. Doro, an immortal whose essence/identity is alluded to but never explicitly explained, is a breeder and ultimate father-figure to tribes and nations. He travels the globe in search of the genetic Wild Seed, people with unusual physical or mental powers, so as to interbreed and create his own race.

It is on one of these trips that he comes across Anyanwu. Like him, she is also a breeder but in a different capacity. As a healer and a shapeshifter, she has mothered many children during her life-span of several centuries (Butler, 1988:26). Although she is not immortal in the same way as Doro, she has the ability to regenerate and heal her own body. Under false pretences, Doro persuades her to join one of his settlements.

It is debatable whether Doro recognises Anyanwu's true potential and nature. On the one hand, he understands how valuable she could be to him; the children she is to have with either himself or one of his breeders are likely to have extraordinary powers - they might even be immortal like him. On the other hand, he insists on treating her like one of his "breeding animals" (Butler, 1988:208), humiliating her and insisting on her submissiveness and obedience (Butler, 1988:27). Paradoxically, he recognises that she has too much power and thus independence but his solution is to stifle that into subservience or eliminate it by killing her (Butler, 1988:88). At best, he treats her like any other of his more gifted people - just one of the many insignificant others to his greatness and immortality. He does not recognise the fact that she could be his positive feminine other. Doro's son, Isaac, urges Anyanwu not to give up on Doro:

> I'm afraid the time will come when he [Doro] won't feel anything. If it does - there's no end to the harm he could do. I'm glad I won't live to see it. You, though, you could live to see it - or live to prevent it. You could stay with him, keep him at least as human as he is now. ... Everyone has always been temporary for him - wives, children, friends, even tribes and nations, gods and devils. Everything dies but him. And maybe you, Sun Woman, and maybe you. Make him know you're not like everyone else - make him feel it. (Butler, 1988:129)

In effect, Isaac suggests that Anywanwu's feminine power as a healer focused on survival (Butler, 1988:54) could act as a buffer for Doro's desire and need to kill and breed. Doro thinks he is complete without Anyanwu and that he does not need her outside her capacity as a breeding tool. He believes she is one of his inferior others because he has the power to kill her. To paraphrase the situation in Russell's terms, Doro sees himself as the ultimate male positive - the taker, and thus conversely, at his whim, the giver, of life. If we are to follow a binary structure, this forces Anyanwu into the negative role of the receiver of death. The binary structure according to which Doro rules is reversed at the end of the novel when Anyanwu herself decides to die; she is tired of fighting Doro (Butler, 1988:258). Doro learns the valuable lesson that power can be removed from him in a uniquely subversive manner; he cannot die with Anyanwu and he cannot force her to live (Butler, 1988:277). It is at that point that he recognises her fully as his feminine and equal other, a counterpart self. Their union and future interaction is richer and more intricately balanced after that episode. Not only does Anyanwu's life become easier, Doro also gains a valuable companion and becomes more whole. We are reminded of Ursula Le Guin's (1989b:85) comment (see introduction) that alienation of the other often leads to self-alienation:

> If you deny any affinity with another person or kind of person, if you declare it to be wholly different from yourself - as men have done to women, and class has done to class, and nation has done to nation - you may hate it or deify it; but in either case you have denied its spiritual equality and its human reality. You have made it into a thing, to which the only possible relationship is a power relationship. And thus you have fatally impoverished your own reality. You have, in fact, alienated yourself.

Though his treatment of her as a being essentially different from himself, Doro forces Anyanwu into an unequal power struggle. In Jungian terms, it is only when he recognises her otherness as powerful yet positive, that he is able to embrace it and

identify with it. Ironically, although superficially different as masculine and feminine elements, they are two of the same kind.

Wild Seed is a unique sketch of the relationship between feminine and masculine entities. The following section will focus on alternative models to the heterosexual. All the novels discussed in this section are written by female authors and depict a subversive and alternative gender reality:

> ...whatever the approach, and whatever the gender, the depiction of an alternative reality is only the first step of an essential reassessment process on the part of both author and reader; making strange what we commonly perceive to be around us, primarily in order that we might focus upon existing reality afresh, and as outsiders. (Armitt, 1991:10)

Although the realities these novels describe are often startlingly new in relation to our present, the gender models they envisage provide different perspectives on the central question of women's identity. The creation of new realities, in turn, often encounters the criticism of escapism. Ursula Le Guin refutes such accusations against SF and fantasy (see introduction). Lucie Armitt, on the other hand, believes such escapism is necessary for women:

> Women are not located at the centre of contemporary culture and society, but are almost entirely defined from the aforementioned negative perspective of 'otherness' or 'difference'. As such, the need to *escape from* a society with regard to which they already hold an ex-centric position is clearly an irrelevant one. More appropriate perhaps is the need to *escape into* - that is, to depict - an alternative reality within which centrality is possible. (Armitt, 1991:9)

The creation of new worlds or reshaping of the old one is always intricately bound to the issue of language. Armitt (1991:123) explains:

> Language is of paramount importance with regard to how we structure reality (providing a cognitive framework for compartmentalising objects and sensations into linguistic units of meaning). Indeed it has been argued that: 'reality construction is probably to be regarded as the primary function of human language', a claim which emphasises the need for women to challenge the patriarchal bases of language if we are also to challenge the patriarchal bases of society. However, trapped as we are within a patriarchal linguistic and social framework, it is very difficult for any writer to distance herself from that framework and write through and about alternative structures whilst still aiming to depict reality as it is lived and experienced. ... Because of its ability to provide the writer with this much-needed distancing from lived reality, science fiction is an obvious choice for the writer intent on such exploration.

Armitt raises some important points. Firstly, we are reminded not only of the power of language to shape our perceptions of reality but also of our power to shape language. Secondly, a rocky-path-ahead sign clearly warns us that the task of distancing ourselves from the patriarchal linguistic model is not easy but, thirdly, it gives us hope that SF literature is the right vehicle for this undertaking.

No discussion on women and language would be complete without a brief mention of female narrative, whether it in fact exists and if so, what its characteristics are. One of twentieth century's most prominent writers, James Joyce, the author of *Ulysses*, wrote the novel's last chapter entitled "Penelope" from the perspective of Leopold Bloom's wife, Molly. Joyce (1993:971-2) commented on the chapter to friends:

> It begins and ends with the female word *yes*. It turns like the huge earth ball slowly surely and evenly round and round spinning,...*Penelope* has no beginning, middle or end.

Joyce, as "Penelope" itself proceeds to illustrate, believed female narrative to be circular and affirmative. Ursula Le Guin (1989a:149) shares the view that female

narrative is often repetitive. She goes on to develop the idea of female narrative which she calls mother tongue:

> Using the father tongue, I can speak of the mother tongue only, inevitably, to distance it - to exclude it. It is the *other* [own emphasis added], inferior. It is primitive: inaccurate, unclear, coarse, limited, trivial, banal. It is repetitive, the same over and over, like the work called women's work; earthbound, housebound. It's vulgar, the vulgar tongue, common, common speech, colloquial, low, ordinary, plebeian, like the work ordinary people do, the lives common people live. The mother tongue, spoken or written, expects an answer. It is conversation, a word the root of which means 'turning together.' The mother tongue is language not as mere communication but as relation, relationship. It connects. It goes two ways, many ways, an exchange, a network. Its power is not in dividing but in binding, not in distancing but in uniting.

The question of female narrative, its existence and characteristics, will be considered in conjunction with the analyses of alternative gender relationships presented in the following section.

Le Guin believes "mother tongue" to be a common language. Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (first published in 1976), a landmark work in the field of feminist SF, focuses on a common woman. Connie is almost a parody of otherness: she is a poor, middle-aged, widowed, unemployed and uneducated Mexican woman whose daughter has been taken away from her because of one incident of physical abuse. Furthermore, Connie has a history of mental instability made up of mostly false diagnosis used to suppress her even further. She very aptly calls herself "a bag full of pain and trouble" (Piercy, 1985:41). However, she has a rare gift of telepathic receptiveness from the future. The future is not "set in stone" - present actions and decisions influence its course (Piercy, 1985:177). Connie visits two possible alternatives.

One is a utopia of race and gender equality. The two sexes, male and female, share all social responsibilities. Men and women both serve in the military (Piercy, 1985:100) and everyone has several male and/or female sexual partners. However, partners do not have children together; instead, three people of both sexes who are ready to "mother" bring up a child who is not necessarily genetically their own and has gestated outside the female womb in a "brooder". Luciente, Connie's friend from the future, explains:

> It was part of women's long revolution. When we were breaking all the old hierarchies. Finally there was that one thing we had to give up too, the only power we ever had, in return for more power for anyone. The original production: the power to give birth. Cause as long as we were biologically enchained, we'd never be equal. And males never would be humanised to be loving and tender. So we all became mothers. Every child has three. To break the nuclear bonding. (Piercy, 1985:105)

Furthermore, this system helps to eliminate racial tensions - everyone's genes are mixed so it is pointless to discriminate.

This futuristic gender and racial equality is, in turn, reflected in the novel's language. Piercy invents an excellent and innovative yet simple linguistic solution to a system that favours the masculine perspective. Everyone is referred to as "person" and the pronouns "he" and "she" are eliminated. "Per" is used to indicated the possessive form:

> Magdalena is unusual. Person does not switch jobs but is permanent head of this house of children. It is per calling. (Piercy, 1985: 136)

This blissful utopia is contrasted with the dystopia against which the utopians are fighting a war. This possible future is a grotesque parody of our current social and

gender inequality pushed to the limits. Connie meets Gildina who is a poor woman and a sex slave/prostitute to her military male dominator. She has been "cosmetically fixed for sex use" (Piercy, 1985:299) and can be broken down for organ use if she displeases her master. Gildina is a symbol of a woman who has been objectified so much that it would be a euphemism to even called her man's other.

The two futures are sharply contrasted as possible alternatives. Connie, a passive character by nature and nurture, has to take a stand and contribute towards shaping one of the two (Piercy, 1985:197). Although on the surface this appears to be a positive step because Connie is seemingly given a choice and forced finally to act, a careful reader notices that this solution is, at best, naive. In the first place, the choice is artificial. Connie is given two choices but one is blatantly preferable. To me, this is not a real or valid choice because it presupposes the solution, namely that that the person will chose the "positive", almost as a given. More importantly, by introducing the contrast between the two futures, Marge Piercy describes a universe where woman as other has been replaced by other as grotesque future. Just as a man in a binary structure needs a negative female characteristic to make his positive male one more pronounced, so does the utopia need the dystopia. The dystopia fulfils the function of the threatening other and keeps our commitment to the utopia on course. The fact that future alternatives are presented as a dichotomy is a great pity because Piercy's utopia holds some very interesting ideas and innovations in itself.

Ursula Le Guin also describes an alternative gender model in *The Left Hand of Darkness* but, unlike Marge Piercy, she chooses to focus on humanoid aliens instead of humans. The narrative in *The Left Hand of Darkness* is multi-layered and

complex, simultaneously raising interconnected questions about gender, social issues, peace and unity.

It tells the story of a male envoy from Earth who is sent to the planet of Winter to establish diplomatic relations with the native Gethenians and forms an unusual friendship with a local diplomat, Estravan. The inhabitants of Winter are physiologically unusual if we take the heterosexual male/female model as our starting point. An Earth scientist explains Gethenian sexuality:

> The sexual cycle averages 26 to 28 days. ... For 21 or 22 days the individual is *somer*, sexually inactive, latent. On about the 18th day hormonal changes are initiated by the pituitary control and on the 22nd or 23rd day the individual enters *kemmer*, estrus. In the first phase of kemmer he remains completely androgynous. Gender, and potency, are not attained in isolation. A Gethenian in first-phase kemmer, if kept alone or with others not in kemmer, remains incapable of coitus. ... When the individual finds a partner in kemmer, hormonal secretion is further stimulated until in one partner's either a male or female hormonal dominance is established. The genitals engorge or shrink accordingly, foreplay intensifies, and the partner, triggered by the change, takes on the other sexual role. (Le Guin, 1969:90)

Furthermore, marriage between individuals is simply a social custom and has no legal status (Le Guin, 1969:93). Interestingly, rape, organised war and binary oppositions are also absent from Winter:

> There is no division of humanity into strong and weak halves, protective/protected, dominant/submissive, owner/chattel, active/passive. In fact the whole tendency to dualism that pervades human thinking may be lessened, or changed, on Winter. (Le Guin, 1969:93-4)

In short, people are seen as potentials or integrals (Le Guin, 1969:94). Le Guin (1989a:10) describes her reasoning behind the novel:

> I eliminated gender, to find out what was left. Whatever was left would be, presumably, simply human. It would define the area shared by men and women alike.

She did not, however, eliminate the pronoun "he" for the ambisexual Gethenians. Initially Le Guin meant the pronoun to be generic but later accepted the criticism that the generic "he" does in fact exclude women (Le Guin, 1989a:14-5). This illustrates the validity of Armitt's observation that distancing from the patriarchal social framework is not always a linguistically easy task.

In her article "Is Gender Necessary? Redux", Le Guin consents that there are considerable problems bound to the idea of a genderless society that she should have tackled better. However, her overall aim was to experiment with concept of a unified and balanced society:

> If we were socially ambisexual, if men and women were completely and genuinely equal in their social roles, equal legally and economically, equal in freedom, in responsibility, and in self-esteem, then society would be a very different thing. What our problems might be, God knows: I only know we would have them. But it seems likely that our central problem would not be the one it is now: the problem of exploitation - exploitation of the woman, of the weak, of the earth. Our curse is alienation, the separation of yang from yin (*and the moralisation of yang as good, of yin as bad).* Instead of a search for balance and integration, there is a struggle for dominance. Divisions are insisted upon, interdependence is denied. The dualism of value that destroys us ....might give way to what seems to me, from here, a much healthier, sounder, more promising modality of integration and integrity. (Le Guin, 1989a:16)

We will return to a more thorough examination of this rich novel in chapter five.

Unlike *The Left Hand of Darkness, Ancient Light* is not primarily concerned with questions of gender. Mary Gentle's novel recounts the tense diplomatic events on the planet of Orthe as Earth's representatives attempt to unearth the fascinating but deadly secrets of an extinct technologically-advanced race.

The current Orthian inhabitants' gender is determined only at around fourteen years of age (Gentle, 1987:43). Unfortunately, we never learn more about this process. What or who determines gender tendency? Is the process similar to human puberty or more instantaneous? We only discover that all children, called ashiren, are genderless and are referred to as "ke" in the third person singular. "Kir" is used to indicate possession.

Although Gentle constructs a new universe for us, she does not elaborate upon its intricacies. The reader is reminded of Armitt's point that although SF provides fertile ground for world-weaving, it is not always easily for a female writer to break away from the linguistic and social patriarchal model. It could be argued that Gentle simply chose to focus on issues other than gender in her novel. However, the mere inclusion of the Orthian gender difference suggests otherwise. Gentle could, after all, have chosen to make the Orthians exactly like humans in terms of gender - it would not have altered her main storyline had she done so. Instead, she invents an alternative gender model but fails to explore its full social and physical implications.

Jacqueline Harpman's novel (translated from French by Ros Schwartz) *I Who Have Never Known Men* also leaves a lot of questions unanswered. Together with thirty nine other females, a young woman is kept in a cage underground that is watched by

silent armed male guards. She does not know any other life or why she is there. One day, the guards flee and the women are released. They face a barren land with no infrastructure or other live people. The narrator, simply known as a nameless "I", thus never really knows men. It is a novel marked by absence - physically of one gender and generally of any concrete answers. Perversely, just as the silent Wellsian wife is glaring in her absence, the men's subtle presence, even if it is in the women's memories, is felt. In my opinion, this novel subversively illustrates that one gender can never be truly absent from discourse - the idea of absent men is just as unsatisfying as that of previously absent or silent women. It is a solution that leaves too many central and interesting questions that define humanity unanswered.

Although both sexes are present in *The Gate to Women's Country,* their roles, beliefs and living quarters are sharply segregated. This division is physically manifested in the presence of the gates that separate the two settlements. Although men and women interact and co-operate, little real connection remains between the town women and the warriors. At first glance we might be tempted to assume that this is an extreme model of dichotomous division - a form of gender apartheid, so to speak. However, let us not forget the fact that gates open as well as close. Physically this is manifested in the giving of the sons to the warriors at the age of five. This exchange is made at the gates. At the age of fifteen these boys are faced with a choice of staying at the garrison or returning in shame to Women's Country as servitors through the same gate (Tepper, 1990: 7-24). It is significant that it is these very servitors who in truth hold a position of real power and responsibility in the community. Unbeknown to the "real" men who never come full circle at the gates, the servitors are the link that will unite men and women into one community in the future. They have telepathic powers and father all the children in Women's Country in secret. It is hoped that their telepathic

(or should that read human?) abilities will be inherited by their male children and that in time more and more boys will come back through the gate (Tepper, 1990:332-9). Eventually, there will be no need for gates because men and women will live together peacefully. This, of course, carries the interesting implication that co-existence between men and women is only possible if we breed a new and improved kind of man. The gates are thus an interesting symbol of the instability of dichotomous power structures and of the subtle fluidity of the male/female relationship.

Both Marge Piercy and Ursula Le Guin subvert the heterosexual model in their novels while Sheri S. Tepper offers some disturbing solutions to altering current power structures. Do these women writers use subversive narrative techniques to do so? The answer necessitates a return to the issue of female narrative. James Joyce believed female narrative to be repetitive and affirmative while Le Guin added colloquial and communicative to the list of the characteristics of the "mother tongue". In her study *Women and Men Speaking,* Cheris Kramerae examines women's role in and use of language. Tracing different linguistic frameworks, from "women as a muted group" to psychoanalytic and strategy models, Kramerae provides a comprehensive study of the subject. Unfortunately a close analysis of her theories cannot be undertaken at this point but, among other things, Kramerae brings our attention to the following:

> Recently many people have compared the relationship of women and men to the relationship of blacks and whites, and to that of children and adults. (Arlie Russell Hochschild [1973] calls this approach the "minority perspective" [p.256].).... Several people have made language comparisons along these lines, pointing out that women's and black's speech has been described by white males as emotional, intuitive, involving much verbal subterfuge, and employing some words not used, or used infrequently, by the dominant group. Additionally, both of these subdominant groups are said to use touch more, and ingeneral to make more extensive use of nonverbal

> communication patterns. Playing dumb, dissembling, expressing frequent approval of others are said to be strategies common especially to white women and blacks (Hochschild, p.256). Women, like children, are interrupted frequently (Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman, 1977); the descriptions of conversational interaction between adults and children also seem to apply in good part to at least stereotypical male and female conversation. (Kramerae, 1981:92-3)

Although Kramerae points out that there are several notable differences between these groups and states that she believes other linguistic comparisons and perspectives to be more successful and fruitful, it is interesting to note the implications of this view. Like children, women and black people are not regarded as fully mature members of the dominant culture - in one form or another, all three are outsiders. They may thus feel the need to justify their position by using intuition and expressing frequent approval of others through the use of more emotive language. This can be seen as a mirroring strategy - these groups merely reflect back the dominant clique's opinion about their supposedly inferior status. This form of expression is thus not necessarily the group's self-defining characteristic. In her discussion on the mother and father tongues, Le Guin draws our attention to the fact that the father tongue distances and excludes the mother tongue. In my opinion, this is the essence of the dilemma - female narrative does not include, even if it no doubt attempts to do so, but excludes women from discourse. Once again, the female form of expression is seen as other to the male.

Before we return to the issue of female narrative, let us consider the use of perspective in the given novels and ponder what its choice implies. Together with *Woman on the Edge of Time* and *Ancient Light, The Gate to Women's Country* is mostly narrated in the third person. However, shifts in perspective occur very seldom in *Ancient Light* and *Woman on the Edge of Time* and a linear narrative of events is predominant in

both novels. *The Left Hand of Darkness* and *The Gate to Women's Country*, meanwhile, facilitate different points of view. In *The Left Hand of Darkness* a predominant third-person narrative is accompanied by the envoy's diary as well as snippets of scientific reports about the Getheren sexual cycle. At times, the novel reads like a collection of different voices pieced together. According to a prominent French linguist and philosopher, Luce Irigary, facilitating diverse viewpoints in narrative is typical of feminine expression:

> ...women leave the place to 'you', in most cases masculine and to 'he'. Men on the other hand say 'I' or 'he'. (in Mortley, 1991:73)

Irigary believes that women facilitate different points of view more naturally in their narrative. While this has several negative implications - women in the supporting role, for example - it allows for a more diverse perspective. While some critics may note that telling the same story from different points of view facilitates for some repetition occurring (repetition being, according to Joyce and Le Guin, a characteristic of female narrative), I would argue that the use of different perspectives serves two important subversive functions. In the first place, it undermines the notion of the "one and only" true interpretation of an event and secondly, it blurs the boundaries between characters' positions in the novel. For example, by using the voices of both Genly Ai and Estravan in *The Left Hand of Darkness,* Le Guin allows the readers to get to know both men almost equally well. This makes it much harder for the reader to demarcate Estravan as the outsider or alien - after all, we know him too well.

Diverse perspectives are also used in *The Gate to Women's Country* where extracts from a play about the Trojan War written from a female perspective complement the dominant third-person narrative. The play is used, among other techniques, to

illustrate how men have altered the truth about mutual human history. It is the voice of previously silenced women that reminds us that there is seldom only one (male) perspective. The narrative and the play develop side-by-side until the closing scene in the play when we learn that "Hades is women's country" (Tepper, 1990:362). This acts as a catalyst for Stavia to once again reflect on her society and brings the two strands of the story together. We are left wondering - has all that much really changed for women since Archilles's time? The use of the play within the work is certainly an innovative narrative technique which enhances the novel as a whole. Furthermore, the narrative does not follow a circular or linear time sequence. Although it begins and ends in the present, it returns to the past at irregular intervals. The author refuses to follow a set pattern but aptly finds her own way.

The Left Hand of Darkness and *The Gate to Women's Country* successfully experiment with narrative techniques, especially points of view. However, it is Joanna Russ's novel *The Female Man* that truly ventures into new linguistic, not to mention cognitive, territory.

The Female Man is a story of four women. Janet comes from a planet Whileaway where men have been extinct for several centuries while Jael lives in a future where, much as in *The Gate to Women's Country,* men and women live in separate territories. However, unlike in *The Gate to Women's Country,* there is not even a pretence of co-operation between the two settlements. The male society purchases the women's male children whose future sex is determined later on in their lives according to their behaviour - they are either left to naturally become men or surgically altered into women (Russ, 1985:167-73). The divisions between strong and weak and the haves and have-nots still prevail. Jeannine comes from an altered past where the Great

Depression continues while Joanna is from a recent past sadly similar to our present situation. She struggles to define her identity in a male-dominated society.

The reader slowly, and at times painfully, discovers and begins to understand the separate strands of the narrative. This is made more difficult because Russ boldly experiments with narrative technique. Several threads of the story are woven in first, second and third-person narrative, together with reports, interviews, stories, myths and comments about society in general. At times we are not sure who the "I" in a select passage really is - one of the four women, the author or someone else. In her article on the novel, Susan Ayres (1995:23) suggests that:

> As the entire novel implies, the question of identity is intertwined with the question of gender. [Furthermore] These narrative shifts not only displace the reader, but on another level they raise the question of the identity of the subjective self. Identity, like the statue on Whileaway, 'is a constantly changing contradiction'.

Ayres (1995:22) goes on to say that:

> In *The Female Man* Joanna Russ contrasts our present-day heterosexual society with two revolutionary alternatives: a utopian world of women and a dystopian world of women warring with men. ...These worlds constitute 'worlds of possibility,' but are not linearly related so neither Whileaway nor Jael's world is '*our* future'.

Before we examine these futures, let us pause to consider the current situation that Russ critiques. Ayres (1995:23) believes that:

> The worlds Jeannine and Joanna inhibit are ruled by standards which Wittig, a materialist feminist, associates with what she calls 'the straight mind'. Wittig asserts that the straight mind 'cannot conceive of a culture, a society where heterosexuality

> would nor order not only all human relationships but also its very production of concepts and all the processes which escape consciousness, as well'.

Russ sketches alternative futures to the heterosexual model. Janet's world serves as a utopian vision which is representative of our hope even though we realise how naive it is. Jael's reality, on the other hand, can be seen as a dystopia which symbolises our fear (Ayres, 1995:28-30). However, as Ayres explains, neither is the final solution to reshaping the "straight mind" viewpoint:

> Jael's world, which merely substitutes 'Other' for 'One,' is not a viable solution to the heterosexual institutions that oppress women. Jael's world undermines heterosexual institutions though parody, just as Whileaway's lesbian society undermines heterosexual institutions by demonstrating the false nature of the categories of sex. But even the utopian Whileaway is not the final victory for women. (Ayres, 1995:32)

What, then, could be the answer? Russ claims it is language that is the ultimate weapon in the gender war. She uses the figure of Joanna to appropriate language. Joanna becomes a "man" (hence the title of the novel) to reclaim her lost identity as a self and not merely a man's other through language. Ayres (1995:26) uses universality and particularity to explain this process:

> Gender, which reduces women to the particular, can be destroyed through language: 'For each time I say "I", I recognise the world from my point of view and through abstraction I lay claim to universality'.

Thus Joanna becomes a man because "'man' is the universal, man is human" (Ayres, 1995:27) while the woman is the particular other. Furthermore, Joanna rejects the idea of feminine diction:

> You will notice that even my diction is becoming feminine, thus revealing my true nature; I am not saying 'Damn' any more, or 'Blast'; I am putting in lots of qualifiers like 'rather,' I am writing these breathless little feminine tags, she threw herself down on the bed, I have no structure (she thought), my thoughts seep out shapelessly like menstrual fluid, is all very female and deep and full of essences, it is very primitive and full of 'and's,' it is called 'run-on sentences'. (Russ, 1985:137)

Russ thus rejects, among others, Joyce's and Le Guin's notion of the female narrative which is repetitive, circular, continuous, affirmative and generally about the "you". Returning to my point about female narrative mirroring male expectations, Russ refuses to play along and designate herself as an outsider. Instead, she feels that it is high time that women appropriate language back from men:

> For years I have been saying *Let me in, Love me, Approve me, Define me, Regulate me, Validate me, Support me.* Now I say *Move over.* (Russ, 1985:140)

We notice that the first part of what the women have been saying is in the form of pleas directed at the men to acknowledge them. The women's position is mediated by the men's response. "Move over", on the other hand, is a simple command that is more concerned with its effects on the speaking "I", in this case the woman, rather than on the previously worshipped "you" (the man).

All the alternative gender relationships described in this chapter, from Marge Piercy to Joanna Russ's visions, illustrate the many faults of the "straight mind" model which ultimately relegates women to the position of otherness rather than allowing them to acknowledge their selfhood. Although illuminating, some of these visions are not a physical possibility. In other cases, as in Jael's or Gildina's realities, we would not even want them to be our future. However, reclaiming female identity through language, as Russ suggests in *The Female Man*, is a viable solution. This, as Russ

very aptly illustrates, will require much imagination and a willingness to carefully examine and undermine dichotomous models that support sexist structures. As Armitt has pointed out, SF, with its innovative and often subversive approach to various subjects, can be used to tackle this task. To conclude on a positive note, such an undertaking need not only be about hard work, it can include elements of play and fun, which, as I have suggested in the introduction, are powerful tools in undermining binary thought. In *The Female Man* Janet asks Joanna:

> 'Why not play? Nobody is going to be hurt and nobody is going to blame you; why not take advantage?'
> (Russ, 1985:32)

Chapter Three: The Next Generation - Offspring as the Other

"Oh! why does the wind blow upon me so wild? - Is it because I'm nobody's child?"
Phila Henrietta Case

In the previous chapter, Ursula Le Guin (1989a:156) is quoted as saying that we know very little about what happens in the room where women give birth. Recently, much more attention has been paid (although not always from a feminine perspective) to issues surrounding birth. The power of reproduction is finally being acknowledged. Marina Benjamin (1993:14) suggests that:

> Today, as in the nineteenth century, reproduction is a prime site for contestation over the meaning of femininity. With the development of ever more sophisticated methods of bio-technology, reproduction has assumed privileged status in the discourses of capitalism and economics.

Reproduction is a field fraught with debates and power struggles under ordinary circumstances where men impregnate women and women subsequently give birth. The dynamics become increasingly complex when the parent who gives "birth" is neither necessarily female nor human.

Although this chapter opens in the "birth room", the births are of an unusual nature in that the parent is more often a creator than a mother. In circumstances where life is begot through artificial means, such as genetic engineering, cloning or alien birth, the already fragile boundaries between self and other and creator and creation blur even more. The new creation and its creator share an uneasy relationship - the creation is in part an other, a new being with profound internal and external differences from its maker, but also, by the virtue of being an offspring, intricately bound to the creator and thus an acknowledged or unacknowledged part of self. This chapter opens with

an examination of a maker, namely, Victor in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, who does not acknowledge his creation, and ends with a parent, Lilith in Octavia Butler's *Xenogenesis* trilogy, who refuses to designate her alien child as a complete other but acknowledges him as a part of herself.

It is true that concerns about selfhood and otherness are present even in normal mother and child relationships. The child strongly identifies with and is dependent on the mother. At the same time, he or she begins to shape a sense of his or her own identity. Meanwhile the mother is torn between conflicting need to, on the one hand, protect her child and incorporate him or her into her own sense of identity and, on the other hand, to acknowledge to herself and others that motherhood is only a part of the total sum of her identity as a person. Both the child and the mother have to find a balance between "holding on" and "letting go":

> The over-all significance of this second stage of early childhood lies in the rapid gains in muscular maturation, in verbalisation, and in discrimination and the subsequent ability - and doubly felt inability - to co-ordinate a number of highly conflicting action patterns characterised by the tendencies of *"holding on"* and *"letting go"*. In this and in many other ways, the still highly dependant child begins to experience his *autonomous will.* (Erikson, 1971:107)

However, this natural process is intensified and gains new dimensions when the roles of mother and child are either replaced or complicated by the tensions arising between a creator and his creation. It is difficult, for example, for a human parent to revert to the issue of human supremacy and survival of the species when faced with his or her own non-human child. In turn, the child either sees or feels profound differences between itself and the parent. At the same time, the child is often instinctively aware of the bond it shares with the very same parent who appears to be somehow different

from itself. Both parties need to define their sense of self-identity in the light of their new-found complex relationship. During this process, parent and child are faced with a choice between either acknowledging their affinity or attempting to sever all ties.

The outcome of that decision is dependent upon whether the self perceives the newly created other as a threat. According to Jackson, the source of otherness seen as a threat can be internal or external to the self. She goes on to explain:

> In the first, the source of otherness, of threat, is in the *self.* Danger is seen to originate from the subject, though excessive knowledge, or rationality, or the mis-application of the human will. This pattern would be exemplified by *Frankenstein,* and is repeated in H.G. Wells's *The Island of Dr Moreau,* R.L. Stevenson's *Dr Jerkyll and Mr Hyde,* Edgar Allan Poe's *Ligeia,* Bulwer Lytton's *The Haunted and the Haunters,* etc. Too extreme an application of human will or thought creates a *destructive* situation, creates danger, fears, terrors, which can be countered only be correcting the 'original' sin of overreaching, of the misapplication of human knowledge or scientific procedure. (Jackson, 1991:58)

The first part of this chapter will focus on such internal threats to the self by examining *Frankenstein* and *The Island of Dr. Moreau.* Both novels feature protagonists who create other beings that prove to endanger their own sense of identity and safety.

The source of otherness can also be external to the self:

> ....fear originates in a source external to the subject: the self suffers an attack of some sort which makes it part of the other. This is the type of appropriation of the subject found in *Dracula* and tales of vampirism: it is a sequence of invasion, metamorphosis and fusion, in which external force enters the subject, changes it irreversibly and usually gives to it the power to initiate similar transformations. .... In the Dracula type of myth,... otherness is established through a fusion of self with something outside, producing a new form, an 'other' reality. (Jackson, 1991:58-9)

Although *Dracula* will not be examined, John Wyndham's *The Midwich Cuckoos* is a good example of a novel where the source of otherness is external. In this case, the women of Midwich are impregnated by an outside alien force during a blackout and quite understandably, their lives and sense of self-identity are irrevocably changed by this event.

Although Jackson differentiates between the two origins of otherness, she does not explore the possibility that both can be present in a novel simultaneously. In my opinion, all works that deal with birth or the creation of life can fall, at least in part, into the internal category. A intimate bond does exist between creator and creation or between mother and child and it is the choice of the protagonist whether to nurture or negate that bond. By attempting to marginalise the other, the protagonist tries to externalise that other from him or herself. On the other hand, even if the source of otherness is external, by acknowledging and nurturing that other, the self internalises the new being's presence into its own life.

The consequences of marginalising a self-created other can be dire. In an essay which traces the literary origins of SF, Mark R. Hillegas (in Parrinder, 1979:11) notes that in the nineteenth century the theme of creation of human life using supposedly scientific means initially came to the fore in Mary Shelley's novel, *Frankenstein.* The work has spawned both positive and negative criticism ever since it was first published in 1818 and has influenced many authors concerned with similar themes. It tells the story of a young scientist, Victor Frankenstein, whose obsession with natural philosophy leads him to create a human-like creature using a dead body and principles of galvanism. After several failed attempts to gain Victor's support and an acknowledgement of his responsibility as the creature's maker, the monster turns on his creator.

It is interesting to note that both Victor and the monster's entry into the novel are mediated; Victor is introduced to the reader by Captain Robert Walton and Victor himself gives us our first glimpse of the monster who significantly remains nameless. We are left to speculate as to why this is the case - is it to give us some distance in relation to the characters in the novel? Or is it to create more distance between Frankenstein and his creation? This, of course, leads us to consider whether there can ever be a distance between a creator and his creation. Victor certainly wishes that this could be so.

After he has created the monster, Victor is revolted, both physically and psychically and flees from any contact or responsibility (Shelley, 1994:39-43). According to Mark Jancovich (1992:30-31) this reaction reveals much about Victor as a person:

> Frankenstein only comes to regard his creation as horrifying when it acquires a subjectivity. Frankenstein's conception of life represses and denies the active, subjective processes involved in 'living'. ....Once it has life, and hence the possibility of subjectivity, he can only see it as hideous. ... These denials are based on Frankenstein's inability to acknowledge difference; he cannot accept that creation involves interaction, and that this interaction creates something which is not a mere extension of his own despotic control.

Victor Frankenstein is, in many ways, a very limited character. He is careless, thoughtless and extremely irresponsible. To crown all this, he is unbearably arrogant, self-pitying and utterly convinced of his own moral superiority. It is such character qualities that make his refusal to acknowledge the monster as an independent agent plausible. He sees his role as creator in almost God-like terms:

> Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should break though, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world. A new species would bless me as its

> creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs. (Shelley, 1994:36)

Words such as "owe", "deserve" and "bless" only serve to convince us that Victor has many illusions of grandeur. Ironically, and it should be noted that the novel is full of irony and pathos, it is the monster who sees Victor's and his own relationship as creator and creation in clearer terms:

> Remember, that I am thy creature: I ought to be thy Adam; but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed. (Shelley, 1994:77)

Thus the "divine creation" metaphor is carried through in the monster's words but it is subverted into a hellish vision.

Just as he subverts Victor's words, the monster himself is almost a subversion of Victor. Unlike his maker, the monster is unselfish, humble and naturally drawn to love and kindness (Shelley, 1994:85-91). The two are opposites and are divided by much more than just their roles as creator and creation. What one is, the other cannot be. It could be argued that these characters fall into an either/or dichotomy themselves.

There have been numerous and varied interpretations of the novel. Several critics, like Jenny Newman (in Armitt, 1991:85-91), choose to focus on Mary Shelley's personal life, her relationship with her husband, her child-bearing problems and so forth, as the key to understanding the novel's significance. Still others undertake a feminist reading. Marie Mulvey Roberts feels that in taking over midwifery, male doctors have appropriated birth from women (in Benjamin, 1993:59-73). She feels

that "*Frankenstein* can be read as means of writing woman back into her plot" (in Benjamin, 1993:25). Mark Jancovich, on the other hand, cautions us that we should not only focus on the increasingly popular feminist readings of the novel, but also acknowledge and examine Shelley's ideas about scientific activities in relation to life in general. Jancovich (1992:27-9) believes that:

> In this context, Shelley did not criticise science as an imposition of human interests upon nature, as Mellor argues, but rather she criticised its alienation from human interests and 'domestic affections'.... It is Frankenstein's pursuit of knowledge which is presented as that which is truly monstrous. Frankenstein's 'sin' is not hubris, but his refusal to define knowledge in terms of human interests and 'domestic affection'. He accepts the separation of spheres which isolates scientific activities from the domestic sphere, and which associates masculinity with the former rather than the latter. In his pursuit of knowledge, Frankenstein isolates himself. He cuts himself off from his family and friends, and reduces his activities to the pursuit of one goal: creation of life. This isolation endangers him.

Jancovich makes a very valid point that *Frankenstein* can be read a critique of compartmentalising life spheres. If we take this view a step further, the novel tries to show us that polarising life spheres (work and home), roles (creator and creation) and even characters (Victor and the monster) can have fatal results. Victor and the monster are in many ways reconcilable opposites but because Victor refuses to acknowledge the monster and thus come to terms with certain aspects of himself, both creator and creation are doomed. Like many novels discussed in this chapter, *Frankenstein* teaches us that false boundaries are difficult to successfully sustain.

It has been noted previously that Mary Shelley's novel has a bearing on the writings of many authors. According to Hillegas (in Parrinder, 1979:11) H.G. Wells's novel, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (first published in 1896), is one of the novels directly

influenced by *Frankenstein.* Like *Frankenstein, The Island of Dr. Moreau* is essentially concerned with the dire consequences of the actions of a man staunchly determined to create human life using the wonders of then modern science. Dr. Moreau, a brilliant but morally dubious medical doctor, and his assistant, Montgomery, dabble in early forms of genetic engineering on a remote and unknown island in an attempt to turn animals into humans through a series of sickeningly cruel vivisections.

Several parallels can be drawn between the characters of Victor Frankenstein and Dr. Moreau. Most importantly, perhaps, both men are portrayed as arrogant creators who view themselves as God-like figures. This deification appears primal and tribal in *The Island of Dr. Moreau.* Whereas allusions to God and Milton's *Paradise Lost* abound in *Frankenstein,* the deification of Moreau can be compared to that of a tribe worshipping an ancient god. This is further amplified by the jungle setting. The creatures all chant "the Law" led, as if in prayer, by the Sayer of the Law. All are reminded of their maker's status by these words:

> *His* is the House of Pain.
> *His* is the Hand that makes.
> *His* is the Hand that wounds.
> *His* is the Hand that heals. (Wells, 1996:43)

Moreau himself openly admits to his ambitions of "man-making" (Wells, 1996:56). However, whereas for Victor "man-making" is a once-off activity, Moreau pursues his hobby with relentless passion and vigour.

As the abovementioned quote illustrates, Dr. Moreau's power is based on the infliction and control of pain. This pain takes the forms of physical torture (the vivisections he performs on the puma are supremely cruel and inhumane), the threat

of the whip as well as psychological pressure on his creations to conform to his dubious standards of humanity (Wells, 1996:44). We feel very sorry for Moreau's creations because they are in such agonising pain. Likewise, Frankenstein's monster suffers the pain of alienation and loneliness (Shelley, 1994:113) and we sympathise deeply with him too. The pain portrayed in *Frankenstein* is internal and thus more subtle while in *The Island of Dr. Moreau* it is disturbingly overt. In both cases, it awakens the readers' empathy for the suffering other and blurs the depiction of the other as evil and different. However, as readers, we are not encouraged by the narrative to linger and consider this too deeply. Instead, the feelings of horror and terror are carefully cultivated.

Frankenstein's monster pursues those closest to his maker, which on a subconscious level taps into many readers secret fears of unjust persecution and evokes feelings of terror. Similarly, the episode in *The Island of Dr. Moreau* where the "innocent bystander" narrator is pursued through the jungle by Leopard Man (Wells, 1996:30-4) makes us shudder in fear and revulsion. Both novels rely on awakening our primal fears. It is such elements of horror and terror that make the tale easier to manipulate - the readers are simply terrified into accepting that both the overly scientifically ambitious creator and his wretched creations will wreak too much havoc on Earth if left to their own devices. Both have to be destroyed.

The Island of Dr. Moreau, like *Frankenstein,* thus offers an overly simplistic solution to dealing with self-created forms of otherness. In both novels, the deaths of the creator and his creation(s) are not only a form of moralistic punishment but also of release for the tortured creation and a welcome escape for the creator. This, of course, also means that all parties are released from lasting responsibility for their actions.

Personifications of otherness have been safely destroyed or neutralised - Frankenstein's monster and the more vicious of Dr. Moreau's creations die while the more docile ones are left to revert back to their animal origins - while the self responsible for their creation is safely eliminated. Only the narrators remain to tell the cautionary tale of woe. In my opinion, the narrators represent the human norm in all its mediocre glory while the creator and the creation are meticulously sketched as its dire deviations. The creator is portrayed as an insufferably arrogant figure with delusions of grandeur who, by attempting to break above the norm and "play God", destroys himself and those closest to him while failing in his misdirected quest. The pitiful creations are firmly placed below the human norm - they are personified caricatures of an excessive hubris. Thus both the creator and the created are an other to the narrator - dangerous creatures that a reasonable person needs to distance himself from. This propagation of mediocrity is disturbing as it ignores the possibility that striving, be it to push the boundaries of science or understand another life-form, can have positive results. Although this simplistic turn of events may leave us with an uneasy feeling, both novels pave the way for future explorations of the topic.

One such later novel that pursues the topic of giving birth to otherness is John Wyndham's *The Midwich Cuckoos.* The work was first published in 1957 which makes it an early hard SF novel. The image of birth in both *Frankenstein* and *The Island of Dr. Moreau* is a figure of speech used to personify the creation of human life through artificial means. The births referred to in *The Midwich Cuckoos* are literal. The small, quiet community of Midwich is struck by a mysterious black-out for a day. Because nothing explicitly alarming happens to the village inhabitants during this time, it is a shock when a surprisingly large number of the women, partnered or not, discover they are pregnant. The children are all born around the same time, look and

behave almost identically and can exert a sinister pressure to bend their mothers to their will. It gradually becomes apparent that the Midwich women have been chosen as hosts to mother an alien race now determined to take over our world. The source of otherness, as Jackson has previously explained, is external to the self in this instance.

Wyndham's choice of setting for the novel is carefully planned. The small and out-of-the-way community is structurally necessary for the continuation of the plot because the aliens need a quiet and non-threatening place to make their initial appearance. Furthermore, it is also an interesting thought-experiment on Wyndham's part. How would such a small and close-knit community as Midwich respond to difference and otherness? Would they accept it and try and carry on as normal for fear of scandal which is, after all, a common fear in small towns? Or would they reject any form of otherness as external to their little niche and thus fight for the restoration of the non-threatening status quo?

Strangely enough, at first it appears that the community will try to accept and deal with the crisis as best as they can. Granted, at that point in the narrative, they do not understand the full implications of what has just happened. Only after a small circle of men learns the truth, is one man "brave" and "noble" enough to obliterate this otherness from the community.

The ending, as well as large parts of the novel, blatantly ignores the women's perspective on the events. Angela, the wife of one of the central characters, is grudgingly permitted a voice. She bursts out that men do not understand how it feels to be invaded from within:

> It's all very well for a man. He doesn't have to go through this sort of thing, and he knows he will never have to. How *can* he understand? He may *mean* as well as a saint, but he's always on the outside. He can never *know* what's it's like, even in a normal way - so what sort of an idea can he have of *this?* - Of how it feels to lie awake at night with the humiliating knowledge that one is simply being used? - As if one were not a person at all, but just a kind of mechanism, a sort of incubator.... And then go on wondering, hour after hour, night after night, *what* - just *what* it may be that one is being forced to incubate. (Wyndham, 1979:87)

Sadly, the interesting issues that Angela raises are quickly dismissed by her husband's remark, "There's so damned little one can do" (Wyndham, 1979:87) before he comfortably settles in for yet another lengthy scientific dialogue with another man. We are reminded of Marie Mulvey Roberts's point about men, especially male doctors, trying to appropriate the birth process from women, in particular female midwives:

> From the seventeenth century onward, the shift from female midwifery as folk practice to obstetrics as medial science succeeded in pushing women out to the margin of a profession that they had always dominated. Generations of women's accumulated experience was discredited as perpetuating ignorant and unscientific practices, even though in many quarters parturition continued to be regarded as a natural rather than morbid process. (in Benjamin, 1993:61)

Could similar appropriation in non-medical terms be taking place in *The Midwich Cuckoos*? My answer would be yes. Not only does the male doctor use Angela to tell the women the truth and calm them down (Wyndham, 1979:67-8), but there is an appalling overall lack of a maternal perspective on these events. Most significantly perhaps, the narrator of the novel is a childless male. In a way, the women's bodies are not only appropriated by the aliens but also by their own men.

This utter refusal to acknowledge a female perspective, coupled with Wyndham's prevalent sexism (also see chapter two), prevents him from exploring the mother and alien child bond with any depth or pretence of understanding. We are left to ponder whether a female perspective on these events would have allowed more room for exploration of otherness in terms of the mother and child bond. The episode between one elderly mother, aptly named Miss Lamb, and an army Colonel, Bernard Westcott, exemplifies this absence in the novel. After a bloody clash between the Midwich villagers and the Children, as the youngsters are commonly known, she comes to him to ask what is to happen to the Children:

> 'It's about the Children, Colonel. What is going to be done?' He told her, honestly enough, that no decision had yet been made. She listened, her eyes intently on his face, her gloved hands clasped together.
> 'It won't be anything severe, will it?' she asked. 'Oh, I know last night was dreadful, but it wasn't their fault. They don't really understand yet. They're so very young you see. I know they look twice their age, but even that's not old, is it? They didn't really mean the harm they did. They were frightened.' ... She looked up into his face, her hands pressed anxiously together, her eyes pleading, with tears not far behind them. Bernard looked back at her unhappily, marvelling at the devotion that was able to regard six deaths and a number of serious injuries as a kind of youthful peccadillo. He could almost see in her mind the adored slight figure with golden eyes which filled all her view. She would never blame, never cease to adore, never understand... There had been just one wonderful, miraculous thing in all her life... His heart ached for Miss Lamb.... (Wyndham, 1979:193-4)

While Miss Lamb is portrayed as an adoring, mindlessly devoted "mummy" who just does not know any better, a generous interpretation of Colonel's Westcott's behaviour would be to say that he is patronising. No real exchange of views or emotions occurs between the characters. Both figures are used to propagate and maintain a sexist status quo while the author converts the issue of alien birth to one of species survival

and thus the classic "us versus them" dichotomy where there are only clear-cut winners and losers.

It seems then that although the novel's initial idea of aliens using human host mothers shows considerable promise, it is never explored in depth. The issue is turned into one of species warfare and the Children's status as the other is firmly established before they are happily destroyed by yet another of Wyndham's proactive, interchangeable, male heroes. Even though they have cohabited in the host's mothers' bodies, they are never seriously allowed to come close to and interact meaningfully with the human sense of self. Despite initial appearances and some token lip-service, the boundary between the alien other and the human self is never crossed. Just as in *Frankenstein* and *The Island of Dr. Moreau,* difference and otherness are safely and literally blasted away.

It could be argued that Wyndham chooses to tackle the broad theme of difference and otherness again in *The Chrysalids* (first published in 1955). Here he describes a futuristic community which, after what has presumably been a nuclear or atomic disaster, is forced back a few centuries in technological and cultural progress and reverts to a condition of medieval religious frenzy. This takes the form of fanatical commitment to the idea that man should be God's "true image". Thus anyone who slightly differs from the accepted human norm, which in an age of recovery from nuclear or atomic war is not difficult to find, is branded the spawn of the devil and therefore not human. It is not only people that have to conform to the glorified norm - harsh rules apply to animal and plant life as well.

Again, Wyndham paints a picture of a small, closed community. However, unlike in *The Midwich Cuckoos,* these people do not tolerate any threat to the status quo. Thus when a small group of telepathists is discovered, they are forced to flee with the "norms" in hot pursuit.

This is the kind of society where difference is, at best, ostracised and, at worst, punished as the government inspector, not to mention over-zealous locals, scrutinise everything and everyone for signs of a "Deviation". Wyndham sets the scene for further unfolding of the narrative skilfully when he introduces a childhood friendship between David, the narrator, and a six-toed girl, Sophie, in the opening pages of the novel. Both children are in some way abnormal - Sophie physically and David, a telepathist, mentally. When Sophie's "Deviation" is discovered, her family flee in fear for her safety (Wyndham, 1985:56). Through this illustration of how society treats physical difference, we are subtly prepared for the community's reaction to internal difference. One of the telepathists, Michael, aptly explains why their kind is seen as such a threat:

> They're taking this very seriously indeed. They're badly alarmed over us. Usually if a Deviation gets clear of a district they let him go. Nobody can settle anywhere without proofs of identity, or a very thorough examination by the local inspector, so he's pretty well bound to end up in the Fringes, anyway. But what's got them so agitated about us is that nothing shows. We've been living among them for nearly twenty years and they didn't suspect it. We could pass for normal anywhere. (Wyndham, 1985:131)

It has already been mentioned that the source of otherness can be external or internal. However, this novel brings our attention to the fact that manifestations of difference can also be internal or external. While external difference may be severely ostracised and criticised, internal difference, as Michael notes, is much more threatening to those

who fear and prosecute it simply because it is so difficult to discover. All forms of internal difference are so alarming precisely because the distinction and boundary between the self and lurking other is blurred.

The Chrysalids describes a society intent on hunting down all forms of deviance and otherness. Greg Bear's short story, "Sisters", focuses on the acceptance of difference. We bear witness to a change of approach. The most obvious reason for this change would be the fact that "Sisters" is a contemporary story. Although it is difficult to pinpoint a specific date, in the late 1950's and 1960's a number of authors began to break away from the hard SF tradition. Influenced by the cultural innovations of the time, they began to view all experience as "science-fictional" (Parrinder, 1980:17). They shifted their focus from hard facts of technological development and began incorporating elements of human sciences into their writing. SF now not only described visions of new technology and space-travel but also the dangers and possibilities of such developments for humans (Parrinder, 1980:15). This new trend became known as soft or speculative SF or New Wave writing. Some of the loose characteristics of this form of SF include placing an increasing emphasis on personal relationships and feelings and fiction that is critical of our society (Bainbridge, 1986:91-5). In "Sisters" we notice a greater willingness to explore the protagonist's relationships with others and a more thorough understanding of her inner battles and emotions.

While in *The Chysalids* the new breed of people, the telepathists, evolve naturally, there is nothing unplanned or unintentional about the children in Greg Bear's short story. Genetic engineering has made it possible for parents to enhance their children's physical and mental qualities but the choice of whether to tamper with nature or not is

left to the parents. When the heroine of the story, an alienated teenager, Letitia, bitterly questions her mother's choice, Jane explains:

> When I was pregnant with you, I was very afraid. I worried we'd made the wrong decision, going against what everybody else seemed to think and what everybody was advising or being advised. But I carried you and I felt you move ... and I knew you were ours, and ours alone, and that we were responsible for you body and soul. I was your mother, not the doctors. (Bear, 1997:238-9)

Unlike Angela in *The Midwich Cuckoos,* Jane can call her pregnancy her own. A woman's desire to control giving birth from her own body is apparent in both cases. Jane is given a choice, Angela is forced to incubate another life-form against her will. Perhaps that is part of the reason why Jane gratefully embraces her different daughter while Angela sees her child as an unwelcome other.

Just as Angela battles to accept her forced pregnancy, Letitia struggles to accept her own form of otherness. Adolescence is a time fraught with anxieties and much soul-searching under ordinary circumstances. Our conception of our identity undergoes serious self-scrutiny:

> They [adolescents] are sometimes morbidly, often curiously, preoccupied with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are, and with the question of how to connect the roles and skills cultivated earlier with the ideal prototypes of the day. (Erikson, 1971:128)

Letitia personifies this angst of the teenage years: she is insecure, feels ugly and different (Bear, 1997:240). The only difference lies in the fact that it is not all in her imagination - she is one of the few genetically unaltered teens in her school. She is an

imperfect "freak" in a nightmarishly perfect world. She feels alienated and seems to resign herself to the role of otherness.

But just how perfect are the genetically altered adolescents, otherwise known as PPCs? Just as Letitia slowly and painfully crawls out of her shell and begins to make contact with others at school, the PPCs begin having seizures ("blitzing") and dying (Bear, 1997:250-64). The situation reverses itself - now the PPCs are the other while Letitia is safe in her natural state.

The tragedy of her new-found friends' deaths has a profound effect on Letitia: "The young Letitia was gone. She could not live on a battlefield and remain a child." (Bear, 1997:257) She finally comes to understand the bond she feels towards her fellow humans, altered or not:

> It seemed very long ago, she had dreamed what she
> felt now, this unspecified love, not for family, not for herself.
> Love for something she could not have known back then; love
> for children not her own, yet hers none the less. Brothers.
> Sisters
> Family. (Bear, 1997:266)

Letitia learns to integrate her sense of uniqueness as a person with her universality as a member of a common human race. Her coming-of-age process starts with her self-induced notion that she is an other, is reversed when the PPCs are the other and comes to a close when she realises that there is no other - they are all part of a larger human family.

Questions concerning identity and uniqueness take a new turn when the topic under discussion is that of cloning. As in the case of genetic engineering, the natural

process of reproduction is tampered with. However, in contrast with the genetically altered, there are always two entities directly affected by cloning - the new clone and the individual being cloned. Except for the difficulties and challenges the clones face from the outside world, they are also locked in a unique and often difficult relationship with their parent or the individual being cloned who is physically much like themselves yet psychically different.

Although many people have a sound idea of what cloning is, the use of the term is not as uniform as many believe it to be. According to Susan Squier (in Benjamin, 1993:107):

> As a term for a scientific technique, *cloning* is unspecific: it may refer to techniques that have already been carried out successfully in animals - such as the division of an embryo at the two-cell stage to produce two identical embryos, or the process of nucleus substitution (the removal of the nucleus from an unfertilised ovum, and its replacement with the nucleus from another cell). Or it may refer to techniques of asexual reproduction such as parthenogenesis, the mechanical manipulation of an unfertilised ovum to produce cell division. ... However, in the popular imagination the term *cloning* usually calls up the notion of coping, or replicating, a person through the implantation of an embryo, 'copied' from a single cell, into a gestating woman.

Squier goes on to explain the implications of the scientific differences between male and female representations of the practice, using Fay Weldon's novel, *The Cloning of Joanna May,* as an example:

> ...Weldon's novel figures the cloning as parthenogenesis - the asexual reproduction of an unfertilised ovum - rather than the insertion of the nucleus from a body cell into an enucleated egg, figured by Rorvik and Levin [male authors]. I want to emphasise the symbolic resonance of that choice: a model based on gutting of an ovum is replaced by one

> in which the ovum is self-sufficient source of life. The gap between these two definitions of cloning figures an ideological gap as well - between a masculinist and a feminist model for the constructionof a gendered identity.
> (in Benjamin, 1993:108)

Two novels, Ira Levin's *The Boys from Brazil* and Fay Weldon's *The Cloning of Joanna May,* written from the masculine and feminine perspectives respectively, will be used to illustrate Squier's point about differing views on cloning.

Granted, Levin's *The Boys from Brazil* (first published in 1976) is not, strictly speaking, a science fiction novel. Rather, it unfolds like thriller/suspense and incorporates elements of SF along the way. It is concerned with the story of Yakov Liebermann, a Jewish patriot who, in his time, has hunted down many Nazi war criminals. Now in his sixties, Liebermann discovers an international undercover Nazi operation. As he searches for more and more clues, he unravels the terrible truth: Dr. Mengele, the Angel of Death from Auschwitz, and a team of Nazi die-hards have cloned Adolf Hitler - ninety-four times. It is the early seventies and the boys are already between thirteen and fourteen years old.

Rationally speaking, is there much reason to worry? Before he uncovers the truth, Liebermann ironically comments:

> 'Two factors are necessary for the resurgence of Nazism,' he recited quickly, 'a worsening of social conditions till they approximate those of the early thirties and the emergence of a Hitler-like leader. Should both these factors come into being, neo-Nazi groups around the would of course become a focus of danger, but at the present time, no, I am not particularly alarmed.' (Levin, 1976:63)

Thus a variant of the nature versus nurture debate comes to the fore. Does identical DNA mean that two people are the same? Of course not. They may have similar predispositions, if even that, but their broad environment still plays a very large role in their identity formation. We are, therefore, prepared for the fact that a Hitler clone and Hitler himself may share an undisputed genetic relationship but one is not the other:

> There are ninety-four boys with the *same genetic inheritance as Hitler*. They could turn out very differently. Most of them probably will. (Levin, 1976:179)

However, the mere possibility of a boy that may develop Hitler's character traits is unthinkable and sends shivers down the readers' spines. Liebermann battles with his conscience as he considers whether the possible threat that the boys' existence presents should be obliterated. However, he cannot, in good faith, convince himself to kill the still innocent boys. While the evil Dr. Mengele is eliminated, the threat of what any of the boys may turn into lingers. It is that threat that, much like the horrifying dystopia in Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (see chapter two), serves as the feared other in the novel. Its mere presence warns us of the possible misuses of the cloning practice.

Jean Baudrillard shares this almost hell-like vision concerning the possibilities of cloning. He compares the practice, in the first place, to cancer:

> It means that the individual is now nothing but a cancerous metastasis of his basic formula. ... Cancer implies an infinite proliferation of a basic cell in complete disregard of the laws governing the organism as a whole. Similarly, in cloning, all obstacles to the extension of the reign of the Same are removed; nothing inhibits the proliferation of a single matrix. Formerly sexual reproduction constituted a barrier, but now at last it has become possible to isolate the genetic matrix of identity; consequently it will be possible to eliminate all the differences

> that have hitherto made individuals charming in their unpredictability. (Baudrillard, 1993:119-20)

and, in the second, to incest:

> We no longer practice incest, but we have generalised it in all its derivative forms. The difference is that our version of incest is no longer sexual and familial, but rather scissiparous and protozoan. This is how we have got round the prohibition: by subdividing the Same, through a copulation between One and the Same unmediated by the Other. (Baudrillard, 1993:121)

Baudrillard perhaps goes too far in stating that cloning eliminates all difference and otherness. He is right, however, in being concerned about the self if there is to be no other. The reader is reminded of his previous statement (see chapter one): "Without the Other as mirror, as reflecting surface, consciousness of self is threatened with irradiation in the void." (Baudrillard, 1993:122)

Curiously, a popular author and a prominent philosopher, both male, share a morbid vision concerning the possibilities of cloning while a female author, Fay Weldon, subversively uses the practice to empower her heroine, Joanna, in *The Cloning of Joanna May* (first published in 1989). Joanna's husband, Carl, clones her four times without her knowledge or consent in order to further exert his power and control over her.

Although Joanna's initial reaction when she finds out that, as a childless sixty year-old she now has four clones half her age, is one of shock and dismay, she hides it well and refuses to give Carl the satisfaction of having destroyed her:

> And then Joanna May just laughed and said do what you like but you can't catch me, you'll never catch me, I am myself.

> Nail me and alter me, fix me and distort me, I'll still have windows on the world to make of it what I decide. I'll be myself. Multiply me and multiply my soul: divide me, split me; you just make more of me, not less. (Weldon, 1989:110)

At that point in time, Joanna does not fully realise how right she is. Her life as a childless, divorced, unemployed rich old lady has very few positive aspects. However, after she meets her clones, denies being their mother and embraces being their equal (Weldon, 1989:249), she finds herself involved in four diverse lives. This rich interaction helps her discover long-repressed aspects of herself:

> When I acknowledged my sisters, my twins, my clones, my children, when I stood out against Carl May, I found myself: pop! I was out. He thought he could diminish me: he couldn't: he made me. (Weldon, 1989:246)

Again, we are faced with the issue of whether cloning diminishes individuality. Unlike Baudrillard, Weldon believes it can add to the well of positive self-identity of the cloned individual. By acknowledging her others, Joanna finally finds herself. The process is not easy - Joanna has to face her fear of getting old and her rage over the fact that the clones exist in the first place (Weldon, 1989:246). But, as Erikson (1971:300) very aptly notes, "Identity-consciousness is, of course, overcome only by a sense of identity won in action." This certainly applies to Joanna. By facing up to her fears and exhilaration and exploring the full spectrum of her feelings about her clones, she wins her own identity back from Carl's grasp. She is no longer his passive vessel, but takes control of her life.

And what about her clones? Their lives are also profoundly affected by their new relationship with each other and Joanna - they share the role of mothering each other's children and the newly cloned child Carl (Weldon, 1989:264-5). Their relationships

with men also undergo a change in the light of their new self-discovery and several, like Gina, are now free to pursue new dreams and careers (Weldon, 1989:265). The women lead separate but intertwined lives - their identities have not been submerged in each other although they share a unique bond. Just like Letitia in "Sisters", all the women learn that they need not be particular in order to be selves with separate but interdependent identities.

Like *The Cloning of Joanna May,* Octavia E. Butler's *Xenogenesis* trilogy was first published in the late 1980's. This makes these novels contemporary. We will notice that attitudes towards otherness and difference are more open and tolerant than in some of the previously discussed works - the authors (and thus their protagonists) are at last willing to explore difference and not slam the door in its face. Unlike earlier novels such as *The Midwich Cuckoos,* the benefits of otherness and difference for the self as well as society are considered.

The *Xenogensis* trilogy begins with *Dawn* (first published in 1987). A young woman, Lilith, wakes up to a new world - humans have nearly managed to destroy Earth and the majority of her people in a senseless nuclear/atomic war. The planet is uninhabitable but the remaining humans have been rescued by the Oankali, an extra-terrestrial life-form that trades in DNA. The aliens' fascination with our contradictory human nature, namely a tendency towards violence and hierarchical behaviour in an intelligent race, leads to the start of a long series of gene mixing and genetic trade between the two species.

Perhaps one of the unique features that binds the different volumes of the trilogy together is that each novel's protagonist is in some way a progenitor and, in being the

first being in a new variation of a species, an outsider. Outsiders, as Lucie Armitt has remarked, provide a fresh take on reality and each of the protagonists prompts the readers to face something new about themselves.

In *Dawn,* a young woman, Lilith, is chosen to explain the new situation to the other humans who understandably need a lot of persuasion to believe, let alone accept, the mere fact that they are in space and have been asked to breed with aliens. Lilith's role in the proceedings is very difficult - she is forced into being an outsider among her own people who are very wary of her role in all this and call her a Judas (Butler, 1988:265). At the same time, she is an outsider to the Oankali people and their ways in that she is a new-found, and thus not yet well understood, member of another species. In a way, Lilith is the first bridge between the humans and the Oankali but that role does not make her own life any easier.

Nor does Akin, the protagonist of the second volume, *Adulthood Rites* (first published in 1988) have an easy destiny to fulfil. He is the first male construct (in other words, he has both human and Oankali genes) born to a human mother, namely Lilith. Like his mother before him, he tries to bring humans and Oankali closer together, towards a deeper acceptance and understanding of each other.

Akin's much younger brother, Jodahs, is the protagonist of the third volume, *Imago* (first published in 1989). Again Lilith's son, he is the first human ooloi (the third Oankali sex) . In being an ooloi, Jodahs is a natural genetic engineer and thus able to wreak havoc or create new beauty in his environment. Like his brother, he is a true alien-human child - a mixture in which the previously divided self and other are one - and that makes them both, at least initially, outsiders in their communities.

The choice of three outsiders as protagonists is very telling. As the reader gets to know the respective protagonists better, he or she is less likely to view them as foreign or other and more inclined to see them as selves being treated as others by society. This, in turn, helps the reader to acknowledge the protagonists' differences as a part of their identities and allows Butler to push the boundaries readers might set in their minds until these are broken down.

Before we can discuss broad representations of otherness in the trilogy, let us briefly look at Oankali as a species and ways in which they are different to humans. The physical differences are not that pronounced. The Oankali have many tentacles and two extra sensory arms which hide the sexual organs. It is these that have earned them vulgar nicknames such as "worms" (Butler, 1989:71) and "four arms" (Butler, 1990:203) from the human resisters. The Oankali have three sexes: male, female and neuter. The latter, called an ooloi, is able to genetically manipulate materials. Coupling is done in threes and this, in itself, breaks the male/female dichotomy which forms such a cornerstone of Western thinking. The Oankali female has no birth canal as each child chooses different parts of the female body to emerge from and there is no pain during birth (Butler, 1989:83). Both Akin and Jodahs have as parents two Oankali, two human and one ooloi.

It is with these select few characteristics in mind that we need to examine the characters and their relationships in the trilogy. As one can easily imagine, the humans do not initially take to the Oankali. Much hate, anger and xenophobia abounds. With the hindsight of experience, Lilith explains to young Akin:

> 'Human beings fear difference,' Lilith had told him once. 'Oankali crave difference. Humans persecute their different ones, yet they need them to give themselves definition and status. Oankali seek difference and collect it. They need it to

> keep themselves from stagnation and overspecialisation. If you don't understand this, you will. You'll probably find both tendencies surfacing in your own behaviour.' And she had put her hand on his hair. 'When you feel a conflict, try to go the Oankali way. Embrace difference.' (Butler, 1989:80)

Because both species, whether the humans acknowledge it or not, cannot simply walk away from each other, the situation becomes that much more complex. Both need the other in order for the self not only to survive, but to grow and develop. Humans in particular, find it difficult to accept that fact.

As the discussion on the *Chrysalids* indicates, there are external and internal types of difference. Nikanj points out to Lilith:

> 'Trade means change. Bodies change. Ways of living must change. Did you think your children would only *look* different?' (Butler, 1989:11)

As has been previously mentioned, internal difference can be more threatening than the most grotesque and fearsome external characteristic. We are forced to deal with external differences as soon as they become apparent. Granted, the process can be very long and painful but at least we know what we are dealing with. Internal differences can be overt or subtle and can creep up unannounced. Perhaps, as a species, we should ask ourselves if it is difference or the unknown that we fear more? Or is the line between the two not very clear?

Akin, for example, is born looking like a human child, except for his grey tongue (Butler, 1989:59). He will, however, change at metamorphosis. Internally, he is very different to the human young. His mental development is more rapid - he can talk fluently at nine months (Butler, 1989:24). He is also able to store outside genetic

information in his body and can heal others and himself. All these characteristics are useful when Akin is kidnapped by human resisters. Erikson (1971:99) remarks:

> There is, then, some intrinsic wisdom, some unconscious planning, and much superstition in the seemingly arbitrary varieties of child training. But there is also a logic - however instinctive and prescientific - in the assumption that what is 'good for the child,' what *may* happen to him, depends on what he is supposed to become and where.

This is certainly true in Akin's case. Because of his kidnapping, he is able to enter a humans-only settlement and learn more about them and the human part of himself. Like his mother before him, he is a bridge between the two species but whereas his mother helped the Oankali through her work with the humans, Akin helps the human resisters by putting their case before the Oankali. This is a lengthy and extremely difficult process for him but, like Joanna, Akin finally wins his identity through his actions.

It can be argued that Lilith and Akin both build a bridge between the two species from opposite sides. These have the potential to meet in the middle through the figure of Jodahs, the protagonist of *Imago*. To recap, Jodahs is a human ooloi with the potential to genetically destroy or mould his surroundings. But is the world ready for such a child?

Jodahs's relationship with his human mother Lilith is put to the test when she is faced with the choice of whether to tell two humans the full effects of staying with her son during his metamorphosis. If they leave, his development will suffer, yet if they stay, they will be unable to leave again and will thus become his mates (Butler, 1990:146-50). Once again, Lilith is caught in the middle - her loyalties are divided between her

people and her own alien child. She chooses silence, betraying the humans for her child whom she cannot see as a complete other. Nikanj's words once again ring true, "And I think you will go on loving them even when they [the children] change" (Butler, 1989:5). Butler portrays the mother of an alien child's dilemma with skill and compassion. In contrast to *The Midwich Cuckoos* the woman's perspective is incorporated into the narrative of events.

Lilith's choice has a great bearing on Jodahs's life. He is able to grow into fulfilling a positive role as creator and the first part-human genetic engineer. Perhaps significantly, *Imago* is the first novel in the trilogy that is written from a first-person perspective, namely that of Jodahs's. Does his new-found power make him arrogant? Not at all. *Imago* ends in hope:

> I chose a spot near the river. There I prepared the seed to go in the ground. I gave it a thick, nutritious coating, then brought it out of my body through my right sensory hand. I planted it deep in the rich soil of the riverbank. Seconds after I had expelled it, I felt the tiny positioning movements of independent life. (Butler, 1990:220)

We are thus faced with a genetic engineer who acknowledges not only the autonomy of his creation, but also his responsibility for it. We have come full circle from Victor Frankenstein and his utter refusal to really see his creation.

In the course of this chapter, we have witnessed how both Frankenstein and Dr. Moreau not only reject but also refuse to acknowledge their self-created forms of otherness. Both men shun their responsibility towards their creations and in part, to themselves, with tragic results. No real character growth occurs during the course of these novels and all forms of otherness are obliterated. Although *The Midwich*

Cuckoos appears to pivot around the interesting idea of humans as host mothers to alien children, it sadly reverts to the battle of species survival. In the later stories and novels such as "Sisters" and *The Cloning of Joanna May* we bear witness to characters that struggle with their identity and face issues of otherness and difference. By acknowledging diverse parts of themselves, they are able to embrace their identity in its full spectrum. However, it is the *Xenogenesis* trilogy that slowly and painfully breaks down the boundaries between our ideas of self and otherness and shows us that these distinctions may not be valid in the startlingly new circumstances of two species merging. Although it may be shaky, protagonists in this trilogy succeed in building a bridge between the self and the other.

Chapter Four: First Contact - Alien as the Other

I will show you something different from either
Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
I will show you fear in a handful of dust.

T.S. Eliot

As the previous chapters have tried to illustrate, the proverbial other is not a fixed entity. Rather, it is a construct we use to denote something or someone that we perceive to be outside the realm of the given and accepted self. Our relationship towards forms of otherness thus depends on our attitudes and points of reference - what is other can shift and change as perceptions metamorphosise. To paraphrase, otherness can be seen in terms of its difference, real or imagined, from the self.

And what indeed can be more different from the concept of a general human self (if such a thing does exist) than an alien being from "outer space"? This chapter will focus on the alien, the hero, or rather the villain, of so much science fiction. Various portrayals of aliens, together with some theories as to why they are depicted as they are, will be examined.

It is important to point out that, unless otherwise indicated, most of the novels to be discussed in this chapter can be broadly classified as what has been termed hard SF. As has previously been mentioned (Parrinder, 1980:14-15), hard SF is based on a realistic premise and speculates about the future using selected hard facts. In his study of the topic, William Sims Bainbridge (1986:53-84) identifies more specific characteristics of hard SF writing. These include "stories about new technologies", "stories which take current knowledge from one of the sciences and logically extrapolate what might be the next step taken in that science" as well as "stories in

which there is a rational explanation for everything" (Bainbridge, 1986:67). Bainbridge (1986:67) also notes that such novels often feature a hero who is clever and intelligent but, at the same time, cool and unemotional. Such protagonists are presented as undeniably positive figures, often at the expense of designating other characters in the novel as inherently negative. Like the phallocentric dichotomy discussed in chapter two, this mode of character representation is sharply polarised.

The concept of Cartesian Anxiety has been briefly linked to polarised thinking in chapter one. To recap, philosophical thinker Richard Bernstein coined the term Cartesian Anxiety to denote a way of structuring a polar argument. In such an argument, only two solutions are presented as valid. Furthermore, one side is depicted as utterly positive and inherently "right" whereas the other side is painted as completely negative and "wrong". In order to support one side, we have to reject the other completely because the two are painted as being irreconcilable. It has been suggested earlier on in this thesis (see introduction), that such an either/or argument presents us with a false and biased choice. Bernstein (1983:19) believes that the tendency towards dichotomous thinking is at the root of many modern debates and issues:

> It would be a mistake to think that the Cartesian Anxiety is primarily a religious, metaphysical, epistemological or moral anxiety. These are only several of the many faces it may assume. In Heideggerian language, it is 'ontological' rather than 'ontic', for it seems to lie at the very centre of our being in the world.

Bernstein chooses to focus on issues surrounding objectivism and relativism in terms of Cartesian Anxiety. However, his insight about Cartesian Anxiety being a way of thinking can be applied to other dichotomies such as that of the self and the other. Most of the texts to be examined in this chapter depict a human protagonist who is

fighting a battle against an alien other. Such narratives present the reader with a scenario where *either* a protagonist who represents a human self *or* an alien who is the threatening other wins and survives. No reconciliation between the two sides is suggested as possible in these novels.

Many of H.G. Wells's novels sketch the abovementioned scenario for the reader. Hailed, together with Jules Verne, as the "father of modern science fiction", Wells continues to be popular among SF readers a century after most of his novels were first published. Parrinder (1980:10-11) offers a theory concerning Wells's popularity:

> Wells, who began publishing in the mid-1890s, is the pivotal figure in the evolution of the scientific romance into modern science fiction. His example has done as much to shape SF as any other single literary influence. This is partly because of his mastery of a range of representative themes (time travel, the alien invasion, biological mutation, the future city, anti-utopia) and partly because his stories embody a new generic combination, which proved attractive to both 'literary' and to scientifically-minded readers.

Based on the above, I would argue that H.G. Wells, with his emphasis on the story as well as science, is not only the father of modern SF but more specifically, the progenitor of the trend towards hard SF.

One of the author's most famous works, *The War of the Worlds* (first published in 1898), is a characteristic example of an early SF novel. This book recounts the experiences of a man, and to a lesser extent, his brother, when aliens from Mars invade Earth in the late nineteenth century. Any misconceptions that the Martians might be friendly are quickly refuted when the aliens steadily move through the English countryside, destroying humans and the landscape (but not completely, after all, they want to make this planet their new home). Several attempts are made to stop

this invasion but alien technology is far superior to that on Earth. Just when the situation seems hopeless, the Martians, who do not have the natural biological defences acquired by humans, die of the common flu virus.

Although the story appears to pivot around them, the aliens assume the role of a menacing "bogeyman" rather than an equal "duelling partner". The narrator does not spare us any details in his lengthy and curiously dispassionate descriptions of the aliens which sometimes take up an entire chapter, for example, "What we saw from the ruined house". This thorough account indicates what the Martians look like:

> They were, I now saw, the most unearthly creatures it is possible to conceive. They were huge round bodies - or, rather, heads - about four feet in diameter, each body having in front of it a face. This face had no nostrils - indeed, the Martians do not seem to have had any sense of smell, but it had a pair of very large dark-coloured eyes, and just beneath this a kind of fleshy beak. In the back of this head or body - I scarcely know how to speak of it - was the single tight tympanic surface, since known to be anatomically an ear, though it must have been almost useless in our denser air. In a group round the mouth were sixteen slender, almost whip-like tentacle, arranged in two bunches of eight each.
> (Wells, 1997:99)

This is, to say the least, not a flattering description. The Martians' alien status is emphasised by phrases such as "most unearthly creatures" and "I scarcely know how to speak of it". This sketch unfolds into an account of what the scientists find when they eventually dissect a dead Martian. The reader is reminded that such "scientific explanations" are common in hard SF.

> The internal anatomy, I may remark here, as dissection has since shown, was almost equally simple. The greater part of the structure was the brain, sending enormous nerves to the eyes, ear, and tactile tentacles. Besides this were the bulky lungs, into which the mouth opened, and the heart and

> its vessels. ... And this was the sum of the Martian organs. Strange as it may seem to a human being, all the complex apparatus of digestion, which makes up the bulk of our bodies, did not exist in the Martians. They were heads - merely heads. (Wells, 1997:100)

Wells carefully draws the readers' attention to the creatures' large brains in preparation for the information that the Martians are ruled by rational thought and not merely whimsical emotions (at that point one wonders whether this is a criticism directed at the human race) and are devoid of sexual desire (Wells, 1997:100-1). This nightmarish, grotesquely robotic vision is completed by the fact that the aliens feed on human and animal blood (Wells, 1997:100).

Wells's choice of the aliens' characteristics carries several interesting implications. Firstly, although the Martians are depicted as grotesquely different from human beings, the author takes great care to emphasise that, like us, they are thinking beings. The inclusion of this characteristic goes a small way towards explaining the narrator's horrified fascination with the creatures and emphasises the fact that humanity is facing a serious opponent.

Secondly, although it appears that a parallel can be drawn between the Martians' way of feeding and vampirism, this comparison is less apt upon closer inspection. Jancovich (1992:49) points out the sexual nature of the act of vampirism:

> The description of the act of vampirism is linked to sexual activity by the specific types of physical intimacy involved. As often noted, the vampire's bite - or kiss as it is often described - suggests a whole series of oral sex acts such as fellatio and cunnilingus. Vampirism is also linked to sexual activity by the types of excitement which it evokes in the vampire and its victims.

While there is an undeniable sexual element in the act of classic vampirism, all erotic undertones are neatly removed from the Martians' way of feeding. The reader is reminded that the aliens are devoid of any sexual desire. While a vampire feeds, it forms a unique, even if short-lived, relationship with its victim. The same cannot be said for the Martian which objectifies its victim as a mere food source. This allows Wells to further distance the Martians from any link with humanity. The removal of the sexual element greatly amplifies the image of vulgar devouring and succeeds in its intention of making the reader shudder with revulsion.

Based on the above description, it can be argued that the Martians are depicted as humanity's complete and utter antithesis - an irreconcilable other. Some critics, like John Huntington (in Parrinder, 1979:42) disagree with this polarisation and draw parallels between the behaviour of the two races:

> While the cruelty and the repulsive appearance of the Martians are sources of antipathy and terror early in the novel, their very amorality becomes a source of identity with humanity when it is pointed out by the narrator that the Martians are merely doing to humans what humans have done to other species and races.

This interpretation makes a valid point concerning the projection of otherness, namely, that alien others are often shadows of human ones. This possibility will be expanded upon in detail later on in this chapter, however, I believe that in this specific instance the interpretation of the extent to which the species can be identified with each other is overly generous. While it may initially appear that Wells is venturing into a critique of colonisation, the reader should note that, when the narrator speaks of the other human races in the passage Huntington refers to, he uses the word "inferior" (Wells, 1997:3):

> And before we judge of them too harshly we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought, not only upon animals, such as the vanished bison and the dodo, but upon its own inferior races.

This undermines any apparently liberal stance. At best, this passage briefly touches upon issues surrounding colonisation and the guilt, if any, that the coloniser may feel concerning the destruction of the native population. The theme of colonising the other is prevalent in much SF literature and will be dealt with shortly. The narrator of *The War of the Worlds,* however, does not linger upon this issue but quickly moves onto long and thorough descriptions of the battle for supremacy. The topic is thus mentioned but never explored.

It should also be noted that there is no dialogue between the two species in the novel. The only form of interaction between the Martians and ourselves is a bloodbath. No real dialogue ever occurs - as far as we know, the aliens, despite their large brains, can only wail "ulla, ulla". I thus tend towards Darko Suvin's (1988:78) interpretation of the Wellsian Martians:

> The Martians from *The War of the Worlds* are described in Goebbelsian terms of repugnantly slimy and horrible 'racial' alienness and given the sole function of bloodthirsty predators (a function that fuses genocidal fire-power - itself described as an echo of the treatment meted out by the imperialist powers to colonised people - with the bloodsucking vampirism of horror fantasies). This allows the reader to observe them only from the outside, as a terrifying object-lesson of the Social-Darwinist 'survival of the fittest'.

Needless to say, the writings of H.G. Wells have influenced many later authors such as John Wyndham. Similarities between Wells's Martians and Wyndham's triffids (from *The Day of the Triffids)* and Children (from *The Midwich Cuckoos)* are immediately evident.

As the reader will remember from chapter two, *The Day of the Triffids* tells the story of the end of the world as we know it. After a spectacular world-wide phenomenon of shooting meteorites which is watched by the vast majority of the population, all the spectators go blind. Havoc ensues and the reader slowly witnesses the breakdown of civilisation as gangs are formed and the search for food becomes more and more primal. A small number of people, including the narrator, who, for whatever reason do not witness the shooting stars, survive with their sight intact. The novel describes the life of Bill and his new-found girlfriend, Josella, as they try to build a fresh life and join various survivor communities in an attempt to build civilisation again.

However, amidst all this chaos, a new and unexpected, by all but our able hero, threat to humanity appears in the shape of the triffids, intelligent, walking, plant-like life-forms which, after their initial mysterious appearance on Earth, have been growing from strength to strength as a result of humans' biological intervention. The triffids take advantage of humanity's new blind status and compete for the Earth.

The triffids' entrance into the novel is rather curious. Unlike the Martians, they do not fall out of the sky one day and try to take over the world. Their appearance is treated with interest just as any other biological novelty would be but, as no immediate threat is detected, the interest fades away. It would be fair to say that although human biologists probably bred the plants through a series of misguided experiments, the danger creeps up on humanity. The idea of humans unintentionally creating a monster, while unaware of the consequences of their actions, can be loosely linked to a large-scale Frankenstein effort.

Like the Martians, triffids can feed off human flesh (Wyndham, 1980:42). Once again, this eating of humanity is emblematic of the ultimate threat. People have not found a way to communicate with them successfully either. They are depicted as terrors and silenced to prevent any defence. The narrator's dislike of them mounts when he discovers that they are blooming because of humanity's loss of sight:

> I saw them now with a disgust that they had never roused in me before. Horrible alien things which some of us somehow created and which the rest of us in our careless greed had cultured all over the world. One could not even blame nature for them. Somehow they had been bred - just as we bred ourselves beautiful flowers, or grotesque parodies of dogs.... I began to loathe them now for more than their carrion-eating habits - they, more than anything else, seemed able to profit and flourish on our disaster... (Wyndham, 1980:197)

He denotes them as horrible aliens once it becomes clear to him that in its blind state, humanity cannot successfully coexist with, or rather dominate, the triffids. It thus becomes a matter of killing the triffid before it kills you.

A similar dichotomy, this time between the human race and a form of parasitic alien life that invades the earth by being born to human host mothers (hence they are referred to as the Children), resurfaces in yet another John Wyndham novel, *The Midwich Cuckoos* (for a sketch of the storyline see the previous chapter). One of the book's central characters, predictably a male scholar, Zellaby, summarises the situation as follows:

> The situation *vis-à-vis* the Children would seem to be that *we* have not grasped that they represent a danger to our species, while *they* are in no doubt that we are a danger to theirs. And they intend to survive. We might do well to remind ourselves

> what that intention implies. We can watch it any day in a garden; it is a fight that goes perpetually, bitterly, lawlessly, without a trace of mercy or compassion...
> (Wyndham, 1979:185)

Once again, we see that, in order to assert itself, humanity needs to negate and destroy the other. By reverting the issue of the Children's presence on earth to one of humanity's survival, Wyndham takes the focus away from the aliens as fellow beings in the universe and immediately labels them as a great threat. Furthermore, the humans are thus conveniently freed from needing to feel any guilt for destroying the Children since it was our "biological obligation" (Wyndham, 1979:197) to annihilate them.

The sentiment of a "biological obligation" is echoed in Jack Finney's *Invasion of the Bodysnatchers*. The novel chronicles the adventures of Dr. Miles Bennell and, to a lesser extent his girlfriend, Becky, as the two realise that their small community is under attack by an alien life-form that has drifted as seed pods through space to planet Earth and now plans to takes over humans. The pods can manufacture a perfect "carbon-copy" of a given human, including scars and memories and this is substituted for the original. If everything goes according to their plan, slowly but surely all humanity will fall under the control of this extra-terrestrial parasite.

Mark Jancovich points out that the novel and the subsequent film can be read as expressing a deep concern "with a creeping conformity spreading through America" (Jancovich, 1992:66) as well as a critique of the breakdown of community life (Jancovich, 1992:67). Granted, these are valid interpretations. However, for the purposes of this study, we will focus on the underlying inter-species' war in the novel.

As has been previously mentioned, the alien pods are parasitic. A reputable scientist, so often present in some form or another in hard SF, explains:

> But they are the perfect parasite, capable of far more than clinging to the host. They are completely evolved life; they have the ability to reform and reconstitute themselves into perfect duplication, cell for living cell, of any life form they may encounter in whatever conditions that life has suited itself for. (Finney, 1978:136)

Under the influence of this parasite, human beings become devoid of any emotion or sexual desire. In a cruel twist, this is rather like being turned into Wellsian Martians, the very beings that humans fear and despise. Thus the fight in the novel becomes that of resisting otherness within a well-defined self. The book taps into the fear of being controlled or possessed and losing a proper sense of self-identity. It is not surprising that Miles and Becky, along with several others, resist this fate which they see to be worse than death. Once again, the issue of species survival comes to the fore. Ursula Le Guin (1989b:84) quips that the sentiment "the only good alien is a dead alien", runs deep in hard SF. Budlong expresses this "biological obligation" to kill and survive as being "the function of all life, everywhere - to survive" (Finney, 1978:135).

The threat of the other in *Invasion of the Bodysnatchers* is, as in *The War of the Worlds,* based on what will happens to "us" if "they" win. The fate of being physically sucked dry and consumed by the Martians or the triffids is replaced by a different threat of being allowed to live as controlled and powerless tools of the other. The hatred of the other is thus closely tied to the fear for the self and one's own niche in life.

All of the novels discussed share a similar portrayal of the alien as a form of evil. Rosemary Jackson (1991:52) explains the connection between otherness and evil:

> The concept of evil, which is usually attached to the other, is relative, transforming with shifts in cultural fears and values. Any social structure tends to exclude as 'evil' anything radically different from itself or which threatens it with destruction, and this conceptualisation, this naming of difference as evil, is a significant ideological gesture.

Jancovich (1992:72) agrees:

> ...definitions of the monstrous are always social; the monster being that which threatens a particular social order.

Thus the alien, as something/one new and undeniably foreign, poses a possible threat to the human status quo. Fear of the alien is usually relative to the fear and insecurity humans may feel about their place in the universe. Parrinder (1979:149) even ponders the curious linguistic connection between the English words "alien" and "alienation" and their meanings:

> By an interesting coincidence, the English word 'alien', in the special sense appropriated to it by science-fiction writers and readers, shares that same stem as one of the most fashionable twentieth-century metaphysical concepts, that of 'alienation'. The excitement and fear aroused by the prospect of encountering truly alien beings are not unlike the feelings associated with 'alienated individuals', such as the nihilists, terrorists and 'motiveless' murderers first described by Turgenev, Dostoevsky and Conrad. Nihilism involves the repudiation of common human emotions of mercy, compassion and goodwill towards others. Similarly, it seems likely that extra-terrestrial intelligences would look upon Earth, at best, in a coldly rational manner, without reverence for or even any conception of our inbuilt prejudices in favour of humanity. At worst, like Swift's King of Brobdingnag, the extra-terrestrials might very well conclude that men were a race of 'little odious vermin' to be ruthlessly stamped out.

We notice a strong focus on fear surfacing in both such novels and critical discussions of them. It has already been suggested that fear of the alien is closely associated with fear for the well-being of the self. This, of course, implies that the aliens are displaced versions of human others. Although this thesis favours this interpretation, there are numerous other views concerning what precisely the alien monster and our fear of it may represent that need to be taken into account as well.

Jancovich (1992:62) chooses to interpret such fears politically - he suggests that many SF horror movies that emerged from the 1950's onwards and feature alien invasion can be seen as anti-Communist statements. Brian W. Aldiss (1996:3) points out that "in our century, mirroring an escalation in global destruction and threatened destruction, they [the alien figures] have become generally unpleasant".

Several other critics, including Ursula Le Guin, draw parallels between the treatment of the alien and colonisation (Le Guin, 1989a:80-99). Because this is a very popular interpretation which raises numerous valid points, it will be explored in greater depth than the political and environmental parallels mentioned in the previous paragraph. Ursula Le Guin's *The Word for World is Forest* will be used as an example of a novel that is concerned with the colonising nature of space exploration and thus, by default, much science fiction. It is also significant to note that the novel was written during the Vietnam War and first published in 1972. Bainbridge (1986:109) notes that various New Wave, also known as soft SF, writers of the 1960's and 1970's expressed strong objections to the war.

Both the simplicity of the storyline and the manner in which Le Guin weaves it, are well thought out. The native inhabitants of Athshe, little green humanoids, live

peacefully among themselves in the vast forests of the planet, weaving and shaping their dreams in order to learn from them. They consider the forest to be the world. Their ordered and tranquil existence is shattered when humans decide to colonise this world and set about systematically destroying its natural resources in the name of progress. They "voluntarily enslave" the natives, whom they take to calling "the creechies", and treat them without any understanding or compassion. After a tragic incident, the creechies revolt. The novel traces the build-up to the progression of this conflict.

Broadly speaking, the underlying conflict in the novel is between two cultures and ways of thinking and everything each represents. Although *The Word for World is Forest* is a rich and multi-layered novel, this thesis will focus primarily on the theme of colonisation and will, unfortunately, not be able to delve too deeply into Le Guin's exploration of other themes such as the exploitation of natural resources, war or the role of dreams.

In general, the principle behind colonisation is one of assimilating the native culture into the stronger and more powerful conquering one. The loss and destruction of the native culture is usually justified by the conquerors in the name of progress. Joseph Conrad's novella, *Heart of Darkness,* is, among other things, an exploration and a critique of colonialism. In it Conrad (1990:140) notes that:

> They were conquerors, and for that you want only brute force - nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others. They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was to be got. It was just robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale, and men going at it blind - as is very proper for those who tackle darkness. The conquest of earth, which mostly means the taking away from those who have a different complexion or

> slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only.

The sentiments in that extract refer to the colonisation of Africa but they can be applied to *The Word for World is Forest* where Captain Davidson, the novel's antagonist, feels that: "Primitive races always have to give way to civilised ones. Or be assimilated" (Le Guin, 1991:182) It appears that although humans may have developed sufficient technology to explore space, old colonial attitudes have not evolved but have merely been extended to other life forms.

The clash between the abovementioned human, Captain Davidson, and the native Selver is used to introduce a personal element into the story to which the reader can relate more easily than to a dry outline of the situation. In this way, Davidson and Selver epitomise not only two individuals involved in a personal battle, but those elements of their respective cultures which are in conflict.

Sadly, Captain Don Davidson is almost a caricature of a classic coloniser. The novel opens with a restricted third-person narrative, favouring Davidson's view of events. This allows the reader to truly understand his point of view. We learn that Davidson is deeply chauvinistic and sees women merely as "breeding females" (Le Guin, 1991:173). If he sees females of his own species as objects to be used for his own purposes, the reader shudders to think of the level of contempt and loathing he reserves for members of other species. We are thus not in the least surprised when Davidson asserts that the creechies are lazy, dumb, treacherous and do not feel pain in the same way humans do (Le Guin, 1991:180). Put simply, the Captain does not even see them as fellow men and thus feels free to abuse, beat, rape and murder them. He does feel deeply patriotic towards what he perceives to be his own kind, as his

conversation with Kees illustrates (Le Guin, 1991:176). He sees himself as a leader and conqueror of worlds. This anthropocentric attitude is summed up by the words: "Can't keep us down, we're Men." (Le Guin, 1991:174) Considering his character, it is not in the least surprising that he sees Athshe, or New Tahiti (a clever choice of name on Le Guin's part), as an enemy to be subdued by force:

> Get enough humans here, build machines and robots, make farms and cities, and nobody would need the creechies any more. And a good thing too. For this world, New Tahiti, was literally made for men. Cleaned up and cleaned out, the dark forests cut down for open fields of grain, the primeval murk and savagery and ignorance wiped out, it would be a paradise, a real Eden. (Le Guin, 1991:175)

We notice a correlation between Davidson's view and Helen Cixous's theory about the phallocentric model (see chapter two). Just as in Cixous's dichotomous model women are categorised as everything "negative" in relation to the "positive" masculine presence, so Davidson sees his own perverse idea of a progressive man as positive and associates it with perpetual light while binding the alien to negativity and darkness.

The coloured view of events presented in chapter one also sets the scene and introduces the reader to what Selver is reacting against. Chapter two opens with a description of the natural surroundings (Le Guin, 1991:191) and we immediately notice a change of tone. We are now being presented with Selver's view of events, which is understandably different from Davidson's. In his conversation with Coro, Selver describes the human invasion, their destruction of the native's world, the forest, the creechie enslavement and their harsh cruelty (Le Guin, 1991:194-5). This change of narrative voice forces the reader to evaluate and view the situation from various angles. We both cringe and sympathise with Selver when he confides: "But

all the time I watched the trees fall and saw the world cut open and left to rot." (Le Guin, 1991:195)

It would appear that the two men, and by implication, their respective cultures, are irreconcilable opposites. Hope comes in the figure of Lyubov, a human scientist studying the natives and a friend of Selver. Understandably despised by Davidson for his humane attitude, it is Lyubov who acts as a buffer between Davidson and Selver, the coloniser and the colonised. He tries to intervene and save Selver's world after learning more about its ways from his new friend. He is also the only human in the novel who experiences guilt because humans have wrought destruction:

> They would start over: the natives without that painful, unanswerable wonder as to why the 'yumens' [humans] treated men like animals; and he without the burden of explanation and the gnawing of irremediable guilt.
> (Le Guin, 1991:241)

Lyubov thus performs the function of a bridge between the coloniser and the colonised. He gives us hope that not every encounter between humans and some form of an other, whether they may be human or alien, needs to be marked with blood and suffering and has to automatically revert to a colonial power struggle.

In my opinion, one of the strongest criticisms that can be directed at the novel is the fact that Davidson is, so to speak, neutralised at the end - he is isolated. Granted, the evil lessons, namely, how to kill, he has taught the creechies do linger but the humans leave the planet and its inhabitants in peace. A wishful solution to the problem is presented but, not a very realistic one, considering humanity's colonial history and the rest of the novel.

Both political and colonial interpretations of the alien and human relationship work on the premise that the fear of an alien has an external locus, always representing something outside of ourselves. For the remainder of this chapter, I would like to explore a more inward explanation for such fears, namely that our terrified reaction may symbolise a fear of a part of ourselves that we try to repress and oppress. Aldiss (1996:8) phrases the ideas that the horrific aliens are projections of our own minds in another way:

> And it is here that the legion of monsters comes in. They are a sort of ghostly inheritance. They emerge from the primordial fogs of evolutionary time, when things-not-quite-human went in fear - fear of being eaten, of witchcraft, of death in many cunning forms. ...Aliens, far from being some extraordinary feat of invention cooked up by avant-garde writers, have come up through the floorboards of the distant past - to run amok in our stories. We project what is interior on the blackboard of interstellar space.

In her speech entitled "The Child and the Shadow", Ursula Le Guin recollects a Hans Christian Andersen story about a kind but shy man and his shadow. One day the man catches a glimpse of a beautiful woman in the house opposite to his. Although he yearns to go and introduce himself to her, he is too shy and his courage fails him. He jokingly tells his shadow to go in his place and to his surprise the shadow does so. When the two meet again years later, neither the man nor his old shadow have become successful. However, because the shadow is strong and manipulative, he comes to dominate the man and the two go travelling together. When they meet a princess, the shadow manages to convince her that he is the man and the man really his shadow that, after being allowed to walk freely, now has delusions of being a real man. Although the man protests, it is too late - while the shadow and the princess marry, the man is executed (Le Guin, 1989b:49-50). Le Guin ponders the meaning of this strange and cruel story. She believes that, if it is literally translated, it loses much of

its meaning because it speaks in the language of the unconscious (Le Guin, 1989b:51). Instead, she brings in Carl Jung's theories about the human personality. She explains:

> The shadow is on the other side of our psyche, the dark brother of the conscious mind. ...the shadow stands on the threshold. We can let it bar the way to the creative depths of the unconscious, or we can let it lead us to them. For the shadow is not simply evil. It is inferior, primitive, awkward, animallike, childlike, powerful, vital, spontaneous. It's not weak and decent, like the learned young man from the North; it's dark and hairy and unseemly, but, without it, the person is nothing.... If I deny my own profound relationship with evil I deny my own reality. (Le Guin, 1989b:53-4)

Put simply, the man must harness his shadow if he is to whole and happy but the process of acknowledging and learning to co-operate with the shadow side is difficult and frightening though necessary and liberating.

To return to the realm of SF, the alien may be taken to symbolise our shadow side:

> ...the damaging idea of aliens as a) external to us and b) almost invariably hostile has greatly prevailed. This tendency implies an inability to come to terms with the Shadow side of our human natures: and in consequence an unwillingness to mature. (Aldiss, 1996:8)

The interpretation of the alien as the shadow can also be supported by looking at the broader context of hard SF and, in particular, its heroes. If we recall William Sims Bainbridge's analysis of the characteristics of hard SF, we notice that most of the novels discussed thus far in this chapter show several of these traits. Wells, Wyndham and Finney all base their novels on scientific seeming hypotheses, be it that Mars has become inhabitable to many life forms or that our evolutionary human advantage is the sense of sight, and then take these one step further: Martians now need a new home or humanity's blindness can give another life form an advantage.

Despite Miles's tentative disclaimers in the introduction to *Invasion of the Bodysnatchers*, all the novels also provide a rational explanation for almost everything. This is usually done through the learned narrator explaining and hypothesising about the given events, for example, the Wellsian narrator describing the aliens' anatomy, or in the format of a conversation between two or more men of science or power (Dr. Bennell and Dr. Budlong discussing the pods or the conversations between Zellaby, the narrator and Colonel Bernard towards the end of *The Midwich Cuckoos*). All this creates a framework of rigid rationalism.

The novels' protagonists are almost interchangeable. Miles, Bill, the Wellsian narrator and Zellaby are all men of science - this presumably adds to their aura of respectability and authority. They are all surprisingly resourceful and manage to turn most situations, even alien invasions, to their advantage. As Bainbridge suggests about hard SF heroes, these men are clever and intelligent but at the same time remain cool and collected in the face of danger. They rely on logic and "think on their feet". They are thus the epitome of masculine courage and rationality and this, in turn, makes them very one-dimensional. As has been previously mentioned, they are almost interchangeable - Bill, Miles and Zellaby tend to blur into one ideal and very little room for the depiction of their individuality remains. To return to the concept of Cartesian Anxiety, the protagonists represent the positive side of the equation while the alien figures stand for everything bad, irrational and murky that lurks beneath the surface, ready to pounce and destroy the positive. The choice between the clear-cut "good" and "bad" guys is not a choice at all - we know that the "positive" side will do anything and everything in order not to admit the "negative" into its blessed realm. However, this choice of Cartesianism is a false one for admitting, acknowledging and harnessing the perceived negative need not mean immediate annihilation of the

positively viewed self. Instead, as Aldiss has suggested, such successful confrontation only leads to the growth of the self. This is why characters like Bill or Miles never fully mature while other figures in later novels do.

One such character, Ender, for instance, begins his journey as a naive and xenophobic boy, manipulated by his elders but, in facing and engaging in dialogue with his shadow side, matures into a legend of peace and understanding.

Orson Scott Card's *Ender* saga begun in 1985 with the publication of *Ender's Game*, continued the following year with *Speaker for the Dead* and then in 1991 became a trilogy with the publication of *Xenocide*. In 1996 the trilogy became a tetralogy with the arrival of the much-awaited *Children of the Mind*. Recently, the *Ender* saga has been supplemented by a *Shadow* series, for example, *Ender's Shadow* and *Shadow of the Hegemon*. In this chapter we will focus on *Ender's Game*.

Because they were first published in the 1980's and 1990's, the *Ender* novels can be considered as contemporary and thus display many characteristic features of soft SF mode of writing. Those will be briefly touched upon during the discussion of these novels.

Unlike *Speaker for the Dead* and *Xenocide* (to be discussed in the next chapter), *Ender's Game* is the story of one character, namely Ender, and chronicles the build-up to one single event, a battle. In a futuristic time, strict population control only allows parents to have two children. Ender's parents, however, have been asked to have a so-called Third. Their previous two children, Peter and Valentine, although tremendously talented, have failed the long test which is undertaken in order to find

children with the right potential to enter the Battle School. The world is believed to be under threat of invasion from the buggers, an insect-like, intelligent alien race which has previously attacked earth when only the leadership of a brilliant military strategist saved earth from total destruction. The Battle School is now searching for another possible commander to train, a child who can be moulded into a ruthless killing machine. The young Ender - short for Andrew - Wiggin is seen as a definite possibility and, because time is running out, the last hope. He is thus taken away from his family and begins his training at the Battle School. This training will culminate in fighting a real war.

A brief note on the term for the enemy, the "buggers", is also in order. The name carries homosexual connotations and is used in a derogatory fashion. In the male dominated world of the military where the ideal of macho man rules supreme (the reality may be all together different), homosexuality, much like the enemy, is considered to be something murky and to be avoided at all costs. The reader is also reminded that the aliens in Card's novel physically resemble insect-like creatures. In colloquial use we have chosen the word "bug" to denote an irritating insect that refuses to leave its human victim alone and thus deserves to be squashed. However, the term buggers sounds more like a school-boy taunt or insult. Card may be using the term to indicate the immaturity of the those hurling the insult rather than to comment on the beings for whom the insult is intended.

True to the softer SF tradition, the development of Ender's character plays a central part in the series. Broadly speaking, his combination of razor-sharp intelligence, malleability and empathy makes Ender a walking contradiction - his empathy can be

manipulated but his intelligence makes it difficult to lie successfully to him. Thus, if he is to be deceived, it has to be done very manipulatively and skilfully.

The opening chapters of the novel introduce the important connection between the three Wiggin children. Whereas Valentine is gentle and almost too loving and is adored by and shares a strong bond with Ender, Peter is brilliant but all-too-vicious (Card, 1999a:9-15). Although siblings, the two children are representations of opposite extremes. Yet it would be unfair and deceptive to label Valentine as "good" and Peter as "bad" - it is not that simple. Our hero is caught in an uncomfortable middle. Initially it appears that the novel can be read in Freudian terms with Peter as the id (all uncontrollable and primitive subconscious behaviour), Valentine as the superego (the source of moral and ethical behaviour) and Ender as the ego in the middle forced to reconcile the two conflicting forces in everyday life (Jordaan, 1992:32). However, unlike the id, there is nothing primitive and uncontrollable about Peter; his behaviour and choices are shrewdly calculated. It would perhaps be more accurate to suppose that Peter represents Ender's shadow side: scary, dark but utterly necessary. In order to become both complete and self-confident, Ender needs to acknowledge and harness elements of Peter within himself. The Stilson episode at the beginning of the novel illustrates that he still has a long way to go. Ender uses excessive violence against Stilson because he does not want episodes of the same cruel teasing to be repeated (Card, 1999a:7-8). Afterwards, he is terrified by what he has done:

> Ender leaned his head against the wall of the corridor and cried until the bus came. I am just like Peter. Take my monitor away, and I am just like Peter. (Card, 1999a:8)

Because of his fear, he has not learned to harness and control his shadow side

Ender's early attitude towards the buggers is, like his character, a little contradictory. In Battle School, he decides to watch the videos from the previous invasion. Because of human government propaganda, he sincerely hates the buggers but is forced to concede their fighting merits:

> So it was from the buggers, not the humans, that Ender learned strategy. He felt ashamed and afraid of learning from them, since they were the most terrible enemy, ugly and murderous and loathsome. But they were also very good at what they did. To a point. (Card, 1999a:188)

Thus even before he fights them, Ender already learns from and identifies with the buggers. That, in essence, is the core of Ender's paradox; he cannot simply hate and destroy any of his perceived enemies. Instead, he has to learn to understand and love them before destroying them. Ender explains this self-revelation to Valentine:

> '...In the moment when I truly understand my enemy, understand him well enough to defeat him, then in that very moment I also love him. I think it's impossible to really understand somebody, what they want, what they believe, and not to love them the way they love themselves. And then, in that very moment when I love them -'
> 'You beat them.' For a moment she was not afraid of his understanding.
> 'No, you don't understand. I *destroy* them. I make it impossible for them to ever hurt me again. I grind them and grind them until they don't *exist*.' (Card, 1999a:238)

This shows us that he has not acknowledged and understood his shadow side and feels that it controls him, not vice versa. We will witness how his attitude is subverted later on.

It is significant to note that from the outset Ender does not have all the facts concerning the bugger invasion and his planned role in it. It is only when he leaves Battle School for the Command one that Ender learns that the next bugger invasion is

an offensive not a defensive campaign on the part of the humans. The human fleet is, in fact, on its way to the bugger home world. What the School authorities purposefully lie about is when this invasion, which Ender is supposed to lead, will take place. Thus Ender, believing that he is only training and passing his final exams at a terminal simulating battles, is in fact controlling the Third invasion. In one brilliant strategic, if highly morally dubious, move, Ender blows up the bugger home planet (Card, 1999a:296).

This turn of events brings us to Ender's multilayered function as a tool in the novel. Because he is malleable, he is manipulated into believing that he is playing a game, not fighting a real war. What are the authorities afraid of when they lie to him? They fear that his empathy will grow into compassion and the whole "us versus them" schemata will crumble if Ender comes to understand that the buggers are not a complete other. Ender is capable of loving and destroying at the same time. The fact that others have made the decision for him, puts Ender in an interesting position. Because he is so intelligent, he feels the burden of guilt and responsibility; a character who would squarely put the blame on someone else's shoulders would be very flat. At the same time, precisely because he sees his part in the disaster, a window is left open for the possibility of redemption.

The idea of war as a game is a very old and popular one, often featuring in novels and poems like Sir Henry Newbolt's Vitai Lampada (in Stallworthy, 1993:146). This sentiment is implicit in *The War of the Worlds* when the narrator contemplates the Martians' "adventure" (Wells, 1997:143). By making the idea of war as a game explicit, Card brings it to the fore and encourages us to examine it. It is noteworthy

that, according to Bainbridge, such elements of social consciousness are characteristic of soft SF writing.

If the authorities utilised Ender's abilities and character, what stops the buggers from doing the same? Their leader, the hive queen, gains access to Ender's mind through a fantasy game he plays at the Battle School. Although he does not realise it at the time, Ender slowly begins to face his shadow side by playing this game. He surprises himself when he kisses a snake:

> This time he caught it in his hands, knelt before it, and gently, so gently, brought the snake's gaping mouth to his lips.
> And kissed.
> He had not meant to do that. He had meant to let the snake bite him on the mouth. Or perhaps he had meant to eat the snake alive, as Peter in the mirror had done, with his bloody chin and the snake's tail dangling from his lips. But he kissed it instead. And the snake in his hands thickened and bent into another shape. A human shape. It was Valentine, and she kissed him again. (Card, 1999a:152)

This is the turning point for Ender. By embracing the snake, he begins to acknowledge his shadow side and commences the process of dethroning "Peter the Monster" in his mind. This act also enables him to connect more with Valentine and the positive side of himself. However, facing one's shadow is a process and not a once-off encounter. Ender still fights the buggers, illustrating to us that his process of discovery is far from over.

But it has irreversibly begun. The hive queen uses the fantasy game to pass a message to Ender after he has destroyed her homeworld. When Ender finds her cocoon, the two races meet and talk for the first time (Card, 1999a:320). With real dialogue, comes understanding that the buggers are not the other - their initial invasion came

before they realised humans were not the other but a fellow intelligent species (Card, 1999a:320-1). Like Ender, they too are sorry for a bloody mistake made in ignorance.

This realisation enables Ender to take the hive queen and promise to look for a new home world for her. His past ignorance of the truth prompts him to become a Speaker for the Dead, telling the stories of the dead, stripped of one-sided propaganda. He begins by setting the record straight about the bugger misunderstanding and moves on to writing Peter's story (Card, 1999a:323). Ender carries the hive queen with him in secret. She becomes a symbol of his guilt and burden but also of new life and the power of understanding.

Thus Ender, unlike the previous protagonists of the novels discussed in this chapter, opens himself up to a dialogue with the alien other and begins to grow and mature as a result. Certainly, his chosen path is much more difficult than that say of Miles or Bill because it involves very painful and at times ugly self-discoveries. In the long run, however, it is much more fulfilling as we will witness in the second and third volumes of the *Ender* saga which will be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter Five: Recognition and Acceptance - Incorporating the Other

Each of us is all the sums he has not counted.
T. Wolfe

Several authors, such as Wolfe and Jung, have suggested that the totality of who we are as human beings is not always fully visible even to ourselves. Furthermore, these parts that we have "not counted" have a deep and profound influence on our identities and it is through them that we catch a more truthful, even if painful, glimpse of who we are. Most of the protagonists in the novels to be discussed in this chapter face their, and encourage us to face our, previously uncounted parts. This sends them, and us as the readers, on a difficult but exciting process of self-discovery.

Le Guin has already introduced the Jungian shadow to us as "the dark brother of the conscious mind" (see previous chapter). Because this is not a psychology thesis, a thorough appraisal of this complex psychologist's theories is unfortunately not possible. However, a necessarily simplistic summary of his ideas must be attempted .

Dr. Violet S. de Laszlo introduces Jung's essay collection, *Psyche and Symbol*, by pointing out that Jung speaks of:

> the human condition of doubt and distress, of the search for meaning, of the joyful recognition of universal human sentiment and of the contemporaneous formulation of abiding truths. (in Jung, 1958:ix)

For Jung, the conscious part of the human psyche, called the ego, is only the tip of the iceberg. De Laszlo explains:

> For Jung, the *self* connotes the totality of the psyche, embracing both consciousness and the unconscious and including the individual's rootedness in the matrix of the collective unconscious. (in Jung, 1958:xxxii)

Furthermore, as Le Guin (1989b:52) points out, this self is

> transcendent, much larger than the ego; it is not a private possession, but collective - that is, we share it with all other human beings, *and perhaps with all being.* (own italics)

Seen this way it is understandable that the ego would want to move towards something greater than itself:

> The ego, the little private individual consciousness, knows this, and it knows that if it's not to be trapped in the hopeless silence of autism it must identify with something outside itself, beyond itself, larger than itself. If it's weak, or it's offered nothing better, what it does is identify with the 'collective consciousness'. That is Jung's term for a kind of lowest common denominator of all the little egos added together, the mass mind, which consists of such things as cults, creeds, fads, fashions, status-seeking, conventions, received beliefs, advertising, popcult, all the isms, all the ideologies, all the hollow forms of communication and 'togetherness' that lack real communication or real sharing. The ego, accepting these empty forms, becomes a member of the 'lonely crowd'. To avoid this, to attain real community, it must turn inward, away from the crowd to the source: it must identify with *its own* deeper regions, the great unexplored regions of the Self. These regions of the psyche Jung calls the 'collective unconscious', and it is in them, where we all meet, that he sees the source of true community; of felt religion, of art, grace, spontaneity, and love. (Le Guin, 1989b:52-3)

In his essay entitled "The Shadow", Jung explains:

> Whereas the contents of the *personal unconscious* are acquired during the individual's lifetime, the contents of the *collective unconscious* are invariably archetypes that were present from the beginning. (Jung, 1958:6)

The shadow, together with the anima and the animus, the feminine and the masculine forces respectively housed within each person, are the most influential of these archetypes. The question now arises, how does one embrace this shadow?

> The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognising the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge, and it therefore, as a rule, meets with considerable resistance. (Jung, 1958:7)

Indeed, but such confrontation is necessary if our individual egos are to grow and develop and, by doing so, become selves. This chapter explores such confrontations with the shadow in selected SF, and to a lesser extent, fantasy novels and traces the progress of the characters in question towards personal realisation.

Confronting the shadow is a very explicit motif in the first part of Ursula Le Guin's *Earthsea* trilogy, namely, *A Wizard of Earthsea.* This is perhaps the first work discussed in this thesis that can be labelled as pure fantasy and that does not contain elements of SF. It appears here because Le Guin has been discussed elsewhere and this is the work in which she deals most explicitly with the Jungian shadow. As the use of her ideas and quotes in this thesis has indicated, Le Guin is very aware of Jung's theories and works them into her novels. For example, her interpretation of the Andersen story about the young man and his shadow cautions us about the ill effects of repressing or avoiding that "dark brother" of our conscious minds.

A Wizard of Earthsea tells the story of a young boy's coming of age. Ged shows unusual powers and enters a school for wizards. It is there that, in his youthful

arrogance, he unleashes an extremely powerful shadow-like force in answer to a schoolboy taunt.

> Then the sallow oval between Ged's arms grew bright. It widened and spread, a rent in the darkness of the earth and night, a ripping open of the fabric of the world. Through it blazed a terrible brightness. And through that bright misshapen breach clambered something like a clot of black shadow, quick and hideous, and it leaped straight out at Ged's face.
> (Le Guin, 1971:71)

The presence of this force haunts Ged's life as he grows up. The powerful Masters of Roke protect Ged to a certain degree while he is still at the school. However, when it is time to leave, he is unable to become a full member of any community because he fears that he will bring the presence of the shadow back if he attempts any powerful spells. At Low Torning, for example, he is forced to leave the village after he protects it from the dragon of Pendor because he does not want to put the community in danger now that he has revealed his whereabouts to the shadow once again (Le Guin, 1971:87-102). The pattern of Ged's flight continues until one day he decides to stop running away from the shadow and confronts it.

All wizards have two names, their everyday common name which everyone knows and their true name, only known to the chosen few. To know the true name of something or someone is to possess immense power of life and death over that person. Ged is thus understandably disturbed, not to mention perplexed, to discover that the shadow knows his true name. He realises they are bound to one another and, in order to master the shadow, he has to learn its true name in turn.

> Aloud and clearly, breaking that old silence, Ged spoke the shadow's name, and in the same moment the shadow spoke without lips or tongue, saying the same word: 'Ged.' And the

> two voices were one voice.
> Ged reached out his hands, dropping his staff, and took hold of his shadow, of the black self that reached out to him. Light and darkness met, and joined, and were one. (Le Guin, 1971:187)

It is not merely enough to confront the shadow as a being separate from the self, an other. Just as it is necessary for Ender to symbolically kiss the snake in his fantasy game, so Ged needs to embrace his shadow in order to free himself from its overpowering influence. By acknowledging their dark sides and past mistakes as essential parts of themselves, both protagonists are better equipped to handle future challenges.

Gisela Hoyle (1992:48 and 54) comments on Ged's journey:

> Once he has accepted and made peace with his shadow, the balance within him is restored and he is made whole, no longer only yang, reason and light, but also yin, chaos and darkness. He now recognises his nature as a whole, mortal human being.... The structure that underlay *A Wizard of Earthsea* was that of the quest for Jung's archetypal shadow, which is within each human being and must be accepted if it is not to turn destructive.

The Left Hand of Darkness is yet another of Le Guin's novels preoccupied with the necessary acknowledgement of the paradoxical duality and unity of the human psyche. Whereas in *A Wizard of Earthsea* Ged has to reconcile conflicting forces within himself, the protagonist of *The Left Hand of Darkness,* Genly Ai, has to understand the precarious balance between unity and duality on the planet Winter before he can complete his personal mission on that world.

As the reader will recall from the section dealing with the novel in chapter two, *The Left Hand of Darkness* tells of a human representative, Genly Ai's, mission to the

planet Winter. He must attempt to persuade the local authorities of the benefits of joining a council of different worlds and embarking on trade and cultural exchange. Genly's mission is complicated by the local political situation and by the inhabitants' drastically different gender model as the people of Winter are androgynous. They exist in an asexual state for a period of twenty one or two days, followed by a brief time of sexual awakening. The gender the individual assumes is determined by environmental factors. Two individuals in close proximity will "battle it out" hormonally to determine which one is to assume which of the two sexes (Le Guin, 1969:90).

The novel tackles the motif of duality and unity on many levels. For example, the androgynous individual is a curious combination of separate sexes. Two men, Genly and the local politician Estravan, who are aliens to each other at the beginning of the novel, are thrown together by a common goal. Hoyle (1992:65) believes that the novel traces a personal quest: "It is Genly's discovery of a "thou", of a completely different, alien being who is also a friend, that is the central focus of the book." The planet is home to two countries, Karhide and Orgota, in the midst of political and religious conflict. In terms of narrative structure, two differing perspectives are, at times, offered on a single event. This facilitates a more holistic view of events as we get to examine issues from differing perspectives.

Although duality is prevalent in the novel, there is much interaction between the counterparts. It is precisely because of that interaction that the move towards unity is possible. The concept of unity in duality is embodied by Winter's androgynous society. In her article on *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Barbara Brown (1980:228) explains the interesting life-force of androgyny:

> Androgyny is an affirmation that humanity should reject all forms of sexual polarisation, emerge from the prison of gender into a world in which individual behaviour can and is freely chosen. ... Androgyny is not a prescription for blandness, for homogeneity, for the submerging of differences. Human experience will always be paradoxical, containing opposite energies and qualities. According to Jungians, the life system works as a result of the dynamics of the interaction of the opposites. We must have this tension. In androgyny, however, the source of the dynamics is not the opposition of the male and female but rather the alternating thrust and withdrawal of the masculine and feminine principles within each individual's psyche.

This tension and interaction, whether sexual, political or personal, forms the core thrust of the novel. My focus will be on the personal, although the three spheres cannot be sharply divided.

Genly and Estravan are forced to undertake a hazardous journey through a vast plane of ice. Predictably, the physical journey becomes both a metaphor for their mutual recognition process and a physical reflection of it. Hoyle (1992:63) elaborates:

> On the glacier, whose whiteness permits no shadows and makes vision impossible as total darkness would, the two aliens are totally isolated. In the tale this centre of the ice is a place of death. It is the place of no shadows where the dead go and in this way functions to warn the reader against the Yomeshta [a local religious cult] who would deny the need for shadow to see, for darkness to live, as they seek to transcend mortal life. This is the symbolic death from which Genly Ai and Estravan are reborn. It is the death which makes new life, love and brotherhood possible.

It is a reflection of the novel's seemingly paradoxical message, that the two men learn about themselves, each other and life in a place of death.

In fact, many dualities are reconciled during that fateful journey. Estravan tries to explain the concept of unity and that polar opposites can find middle ground to Genly

by quoting an old Handdara saying. As the reader will notice, the title of the novel as well as that of my own thesis originate from this passage.

> Light is the left hand of darkness
> and darkness the right hand of light.
> Two are one, life and death, lying
> together like lovers in kemmer,
> like hands joined together,
> like the end and the way. (Le Guin, 1969:222)

Genly finally understands Estravan's message when he is able to relate it to his own frame of reference. The circle of understanding in the novel is closed when, after some time, he shows Estravan the Taoist symbol of yin and yang:

> It is found on Earth, and on Hain-Davenant, and on Chiffewar. It is yin and yang. *Light is the left hand of darkness* ... how did it go? Light, dark. Fear, courage. Cold, warmth. Female, male. It is yourself, Therem. Both and one. A shadow on snow. (Le Guin, 1969:252)

Genly has finally acknowledged the influence that duality can exert. According to Brown (1980:231): "This is precisely Le Guin's thesis. Ambiguous duality must exist if unification is to occur."

Furthermore, such unification and harmony are not stable. Just as Ged's problems do not all miraculously disappear when he acknowledges his shadow, so Genly loses Estravan just after the two have grown to love and understand each other as friends and not strangers. Hoyle (1992:61) aptly comments:

> ...the delight in striving for harmony is balanced by a wise sadness at the bottom of which lies the consciousness of the abyss, the depths of isolation and terror within the human heart,

> which limit the possibility of such a harmony. The beauty of the dance danced above the abyss stems partly from its very precariousness, its fragility.

Just as both *A Wizard of Earthsea* and *The Left Hand of Darkness* could be said to be concerned with the theme of unity within an individual, so Theodore Sturgeon's *More than Human* explores the concept of unity in showing how a number of individuals form a human gestalt.

The story tells of the coming together of several outsiders as they form the first Homo Gestalt. The question that crops up at this point is what precisely constitutes a Homo Gestalt. Lone, one of the novels central characters, explains:

> 'This all happens with humans,' he said eventually. 'It happens piece by piece right under folks' noses, and they don't see it. You got mind readers. You got people can move things with their mind. You got people can move themselves with their mind. You got people can figure anything out if you just think to ask them. What you ain't got is the one kind of person who can pull 'em all together, like a brain pulls together parts that press and pull and feel heat and walk and think and all the other things.'
> 'I'm one,' he finished suddenly. (Sturgeon, 1970:108)

We notice how the concept of Homo Gestalt differs from simple telepathy. Whereas telepathy is the possibly consensual sharing of something, usually thoughts, a member of a Homo Gestalt unit shares everything, mind and body. Gerry, who replaces Lone after the latter's accident, explains the workings of their particular unit:

> 'What *are* you?'
> 'I'll tell you. I'm the central ganglion of a complex organism which is composed of Baby, a computer; Bonnie and Beanie, teleports; Janie, telekineticist; and myself, telepath and central control.' (Sturgeon, 1970:115)

In other words, they are separate individuals that, for all intents and purposes, function as one, albeit very unusual and powerful, person. It is significant to note that all the members of the Homo Gestalt have been outsiders in mainstream society. Their first sense of belonging and unity occurs when they form the gestalt. For several of them, notably Gerry and Hip, the path is difficult. Both young men have to undergo a long process of piercing together their own blocked and painful memories as they slowly discover and eventually accept their uniqueness. To paraphrase, they have to discover their own identities before they can be incorporated into a Homo Gestalt, a whole. Like Ged, these individuals have to know themselves intimately before they can think of embracing an other.

It is curious to note that when their journey commences they are separate individuals considered to be society's outsiders and outcasts. As they join the gestalt, their outsider status shifts slightly; they now belong to a very small and tightly-knit unit and are no longer truly alone. However, as a group, they are now a grand other to humanity. The tension between belonging and not-belonging is maintained throughout the novel. It is mentioned that Homo Gestalt has probably evolved from Homo Sapiens as the next step up (Sturgeon, 1970:170). It is obvious that humans, used to believing in their superiority to all other creatures, might not embrace this news cheerfully. Strictly speaking, all members of the gestalt are human and, as Lone has previously mentioned, cases of telepathy and teleportation have been recorded in the course of human history. However, as a whole, this group of people is "more than human" and significantly enough they consider themselves as a unit and not as individual entities. This all poses grave difficulties in classifying them. Perhaps that is the reason why the author chooses not to expose them to society. On the one hand, they are human but, on the other, they are a new species that has probably originated

from us. Just as the boundaries between self and otherness are blurred during the interaction of a human mother with her alien child, so humanity might encounter problems in labelling the Homo Gestalt as a complete other.

The structure of the novel mirrors the coming together of a gestalt. We initially meet all the characters in isolation. The author then pieces their lives and paths together to form a greater whole. Select parts of the novel are at times difficult to understand; the reader might ask, "Where is this going?". However, just as the gestalt gels towards the end of the novel, so the different strands of the narrative come together.

It is worthwhile to pause and notice how different these novels are compared with their hard SF brothers and sisters. As Ballard has pointed out (see introduction), the New Wave style of writing works on the assumption that outer space fiction is in fact a projection of inner space. *A Wizard of Earthsea, The Left Hand of Darkness* and *More than Human* are less event-based than, say, the works of Wells or Wyndham. Furthermore, personal relationships, such as the friendship between Genly and Estravan, are explored in greater depth. The reader will recall that these are, among others, some of the characteristics of New Wave or soft SF writing. Given this, *More than Human,* first published in 1953, follows an unusually soft approach for its time.

In her critique of *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Barbara Brown comments on the seemingly paradoxical nature of dualities: "They are extremes on a continuum, separated but nonetheless joined, unified. Duality can be unity." (Brown, 1980:234) However, I strongly believe that it is necessary to differentiate between dualities coming together to create a greater whole and dualities being submerged in one

another. Sheri S. Tepper's *Raising the Stones* illustrates the problems inherent in the latter.

The task of outlining the plot of *Raising the Stones* is challenging due to the fact that the story is very multi-layered and almost web-like in structure. The novel is concerned with two very different planets, homes to the countries aptly named Voorstod and Hobbs Land respectively. Voorstod is the heart of the worst imaginable form of patriarchy where bloodthirsty men rule in religious frenzy. Hobbs Land is a haven of liberalism and peaceful co-operation. The choice of name is a reference to Thomas Hobbes, the prominent liberal political philosopher. The two countries can be said to be on opposite sides of the continuum linking dualities. Can their drastically different approaches ever coexist or even be reconciled? The matter is greatly complicated by the presence of an alien life-form, "worshipped", though not in the traditional sense, as a god, on Hobbs Land. This entity is benign and appears to flourish while helping the local humans achieve peace and prosperity. Because of the connections between the novel's central characters as well as the political situation, the two countries slowly move towards a meeting and ultimately, considering their polarised approaches to life, conflict.

The people of Hobbs Land are adaptable - they have gladly accepted the presence of the new god. But can the Voorstoders ever change their violent ways? Jep, an important character in the novels, explains:

> 'One way of saying it might be that certain people are hard-wired,' said Jep. 'In our equipment maintenance classes, we have to learn a lot about agricultural machines. Some of our machines can be programmed to do different things. But some others, harvesting machines mostly, are hardwired for plucking or mowing or whatever. Saturday and I think that some people

> are hardwired a certain way, and they invent religions to go along with the way they are. Like they're hardwired for bigotry or violence or being ignorant - or maybe ignorance is just a kind of bigotry. People say they don't want to know a complicated truth, you know, because they already believe something simple, something that's easier on their minds. Well, then those people convince others, followers, who maybe aren't hardwired, but who are...'
> 'Impressionable?' offered the Queen.
> Jep nodded. 'Born followers, maybe. The followers might be able to change their minds, but the leaders, the hardwired ones, they can't.'
> 'And the Voorstoders can't?'
> 'Some Voorstoders can't. Probably most of the prophets can't.' (Tepper, 1992:469-70)

Marie, a settler from Voorstod on Hobbs Land, is thankful that there are no legends in her new home (Tepper, 1992:24). Granted, when she refers to legends she means a long-standing tradition of killing, cruelty and slavery. The myths and legends of her old home, Voorstod, are precisely such tales of violent conquest. Ironically, this view is severely undermined by the use of the name Hobbs Land which is a reference to Thomas Hobbes, one of the fathers of liberalism and himself something of a legend. Her son, Sam, comes to a similar conclusion about the putrid influence of legends towards the end of the novel. He takes a more proactive approach by burning all his treasured books.

The implications of both this view and actions resulting from it are wide. The novel seems to advocate, to borrow a term from philosophy, a *tabula rasa* (clean slate) approach. It implies that we can and should throw away our past if we are to embrace a peaceful future. This is based on two assumptions: firstly, that human history is so bloodthirsty and horrid that it must be forgotten and secondly, that this is both desirable and possible. Because I subscribe to the hermeneutic school of thought, I would strongly question both these assumptions. Our past, for better or for worse, shapes us and makes us who we are. This does not imply that change for the better is

impossible, but it does mean that such a divorce is almost absurd. On a common sense level, not everything is, as they say, black or white. When one discards a whole past, one is sure to throw away at least some good with the bad.

Seen in this light, the "hardwiring" that Jep speaks of becomes a tricky issue. While the ability to adapt and be reasonably persuaded is undoubtedly a desirable quality, the implication that the refusal to change because of a belief in one's own strong convictions is always a sign of weakness and bigotry is disturbing and false. Presentation of the Voorstoder prophets and select social delinquents as examples of such "hardwired" cases is also manipulative. No decent, reasonable person is described as presenting a resistance to the new gods' way of doing things. The willingness and strength to stand up to the god is equated with bigotry and not offered as a valid choice. Once again, the reader is led down the path of Cartesian logic and forced into an uncomfortable choice.

The new life-form is beneficial to humans (and vice-versa) but it seems to require that a changed self enters into a relationship with it - a self devoid of a past that could in any way defy it. There is no struggle between humans and the god life-form that we witness in other novels that depict a relationship between a self and an other as they learn to interact in new ways. Instead, there is only the submerging of humanity within the new life-form. The end result might be positive but we lose much of that struggle that defines our history.

It could be argued that Tepper's vision can be viewed as the reverse of the Wellsian one. To me both concepts are unsatisfactory because neither allows for real interaction between different life-forms. Wells blindly kills off all of humanity's

opposition; Tepper engulfs it in an alien presence for its own benefit. Has anything really changed? In first case, the perceived other is literally obliterated. In the second, a form of spiritual, if not actual, death occurs as the old concept of self has to die before it can be reborn as an other. Both are extreme solutions that treat otherness as a problem.

Does the encounter between aliens and human beings always have to spell loss of identity or death for either of the parties? Not necessarily. Hermeneutics offers a more satisfying alternative as the following short explanation of basic hermeneutic principles shows. B. Wachterhauser (1986:6) summarises these principles as follows: "In short, hermeneutical thinkers argue that language and history are always both conditions and limits of understanding." Our understanding might be finite but that does not completely inhibit our ability to learn because: "...we are still responsible to a large extent for the way we appropriate our past as we project ourselves toward our future." (Wachterhauser, 1986:9) Keeping in mind that language and history paradoxically both open and close the doors of our understanding, hermeneutic thinkers denounce the age-old Western preoccupation with a neat method as the ultimate tool for acquiring knowledge and discovery.

> Methodological solipsism seeks a basis of knowledge in the thinking subject in that it assumes that rational consciousness has privileged access to its own contents and autonomy with respect to its own rational activity. ... What this amounts to in practice is the assumption that rational beings can so know and control the conditions of their own reason that we can develop a set of criteria, rules, or categories that are sufficient to determine unequivocally and for all times and places the difference between such things as meaningful and meaningless statements, valid and invalid interpretations, true and false knowledge claims, and so on.
> (Wachterhauser, 1986:15)

From this follows the implication that supporters of hermeneutics ask for a decentering of the subject. They claim that, in order for understanding to happen at all, the distance between subject and object has to be decreased so that the two can be involved in a two-way interaction.

There are various theories as to how this can be done. For the purposes of this thesis, I will focus on H-G Gadamer's theories of "fusion of horizons" and "play/game". One of the most prominent philosophers of our time, Gadamer postulates his ideas in his famous work *Truth and Method.*

A Gadamerian expert and editor, D. Linge (1977:xiv) explains the role of the knower in a process of understanding:

> An ideal of understanding that asks us to overcome our present is intelligible only on the assumption that our own historicity is an accidental factor. But if it is an *ontological* rather than a merely accidental and subjective condition, then the knower's own present situation is already constitutively involved in any process of understanding.

Keeping the above hermeneutic concept in mind, Gadamer proposes that understanding occurs as a "fusion of horizons". Linge (1977:xiv and xix) sheds light on this theory:

> Gadamer takes the knower's boundness to his present horizon and the temporal gulf separating him from his subject to be the productive ground of all understanding rather than negative factors or impediments to overcome. Our prejudices do not cut us off from the past, but initially open it up to us. ...
> Thus for Gadamer the knower's present situation loses its status as a privileged position and becomes instead a fluid and relative moment in the life of effective history, a moment that is indeed productive and disclosive, but one that, like all others before it, will be overcome and fused with future horizons

He goes on to quote Gadamer's own words:

> In truth, the horizon of the present is conceived in constant formation insofar as we must constantly test our prejudices. The encounter with the past and the understanding of the tradition out of which we have come is not the last factor of such testing. Hence the horizon of the present does not take shape at all without the past. ...Rather, understanding is always the process of the fusing of such alleged horizons existing in themselves. ... For the old and new grow together again and again in living value without the one or the other ever being removed explicitly. (in Linge, 1977:xix)

We notice how different this approach of working with our prejudices as an essential premise is to the *tabula rasa* approach. It asks us to accept ourselves before we can understand anything or anyone new but, at the same time, leaves room for growth. We are asked to remember that our point of departure, our past with all our prejudices, is present and real but that does not mean we cannot, or should not, embark on a journey of new discovery as we incorporate our past into our present and future.

At a practical level, how does one find such a path towards true understanding? Linge (1977:xxiii) elaborates (also see introduction):

> As Gadamer points out, the difference between methodological sterility and genuine understanding is *imagination*, that is, the capacity to see what is questionable in the subject matter and formulate questions that question the subject matter further.

Gadamer links this element of imagination to the ability to really "participate in the very life of understanding as a movement that bears all participants beyond their initial horizons" (Linge, 1977:xxii).

He uses the analogy of the game or playing to illuminate his point. Ideally, during a game, players are absorbed in the game and do not hold back. They should be willing

to explore and be led by the game itself. In other words, the process of playing is not necessarily goal-orientated. "The real subject of playing is the game itself. ... The movement of playing has no goal in which it ceases but constantly renews itself" (Linge, 1977:xxiii). As the reader will recall, this idea of play as the ultimate mode of interaction is echoed by Huizinga and to a lesser extent, Le Guin.

The discussion will now turn to two novels, *Speaker for the Dead,* the second volume of the *Ender* saga, and *The Homeward Bounders,* as an attempt is made to apply these broad hermeneutic ideas to the interpretation of science fiction.

In *Speaker for the Dead* we discover that Ender, the young genius who, in ignorance, destroyed the bugger race in *Ender's Game,* is now united with his sister Valentine and has been travelling from planet to planet as Speaker for the Dead, a person who speaks the whole truth about a given person at their funeral. It is a tradition Ender himself started by writing *The Hive Queen and the Hegemon,* the true story of the buggers.

In the meantime, a new form of intelligent life, the pequeninos or "piggies", have been discovered on the human colony planet of Lusitania. When a request to speak a death comes from the Lusitania colony, Ender, or Andrew as he is now known, decides to answer it. He takes the cocoon of the Hive Queen with him, hoping that the planet will prove to be a suitable habitat for a new generation of buggers. After he arrives on Lusitania, Ender faces many challenges as he tries to become a member of both the local community and the Ribiera family. The novel contains many subplots and important new characters and this adds to its cubist structure which skilfully weaves several storylines simultaneously.

In many ways, this novel is about the power of healing, redemption and understanding. It is important to note that Ender's true age and original identity are a well-kept secret. Because of the miracle of star-travel, Ender appears to be in his thirties but, in truth, three thousand years have passed since what is now in shame called "The Bugger Xenocide". Ironically, because of his own book *The Hive Queen and the Hegemon* which he signed as Speaker for the Dead, most people regard Ender as "The Xenocide" and the epitome of evil while they consider the original speaker as almost a holy man. The irony that the two are the same person does not escape Ender:

> 'But the Speaker for the Dead, one who wrote this book, he's the wisest man who ever lived in the age of flight among the stars. While Ender was a murderer, he killed a whole people, a beautiful race of ramen [a coined word to denote an alien who is not an other] that could have taught us everything -'
> 'Both human, though,' whispered the Speaker.(Card, 1989:262)

Ender's past plays a central role in his life. Yes, it might have been simultaneously bloodthirsty, ignorant and innocent but it has shaped him to become the kind of man he is now. His confrontation with his brother Peter at the close of *Ender's Game* in which he attempts to both really understand his sibling and face his darker half teaches him a lot both about himself and other people. Ender's past also enables him to connect with other's people's pain and mistakes without being judgmental. He announces:

> 'I'm not one to despise other people for their sins,' said Ender. 'I haven't found one yet, that I didn't say inside myself, I've done worse than this.' (Card, 1989:379)

Ender is able to become a better, more compassionate person by facing his shadow side and not burying his past deep inside himself. This, as the reader will notice, is a rather hermeneutic approach. Ender's past defines him but it does not necessarily limit him in his progress towards understanding others.

The process of Speaking, shown both in the Speaker gathering knowledge about his subject and the effects of a Speaking on a community, can be compared to a sort of "fusion of horizons". Ela, one of the Ribeira daughters, catches a glimpse of the effects of a Speaking when she tells Ender of her past mistakes:

> A strange thing happened then. The Speaker agreed with her that she had made a mistake that night, and she knew when he said the words that it was true, that his judgement was correct. And yet she felt strangely healed, as if simply saying her mistake were enough to purge some of the pain of it. For the first time, then, she caught a glimpse of what the power of Speaking might be. It wasn't a matter of confession, penance, and absolution, like the priests offered. It was something else entirely. Telling the story of who she was, and then realising that she was no longer the same person. That she had made a mistake, and the mistake had changed her, and now she would not make the mistake again because she had become someone else, someone less afraid, someone more compassionate.
> (Card, 1989:230-1)

Ela realises that the acknowledgement of her past mistake changes her present and future situation. Our past can shape us into better people if we let it.

Ender pursues the real story of the piggies in a similar fashion. His approach forms a sharp contrast to the code of conduct prescribed by the ruling Starway Congress. In the Prologue, we learn that the human central government sees the discovery of the existence of the pequeninos as a second chance, a divinely given opportunity to atone for the crimes of the "Bugger Xenocide" (Card, 1989:xiii) and redeem humanity. The piggy culture is not to be disturbed; moreover, scientists are strictly forbidden to interfere with, teach or influence the pequeninos. They are allowed only to observe them. Through descriptions of the work of Pipo and Libo, the colony's xenologers, elaborated upon in chapter one of the novel (Card, 1989:1-33), we learn the practical implications and difficulties of such a scientific approach. Although the human

authorities have the best intentions, the system is not conducive to learning more about the new race. In fact, I would go so far as to compare it to the methodological solipsism condemned by hermeneutic thinkers. The human observer is placed firmly in the centre of the inquiry because he or she is assumed to have full rational ability and thus is able to judge all actions from an outsider perspective. We later learn that this frustrates the piggies because no real interaction or dialogue can take place under such conditions.

As has been mentioned in the previous paragraph, Ender's approach is more direct and practical. In fact, as one of the scientists comments, Ender learns more about the pequeninos during one session than they have over several years (Card, 1989:266). When Ender meets the piggies as a human representative sent to negotiate a covenant between the two races, there is much real dialogue between the two species. Grave misunderstandings arise and are solved, negotiations and explanations are long and often tiresome for both parties. At the beginning of the novel, Ender wonders whether first meetings between different species always have to be stained with blood (Card, 1989:42). This sets a realistic tone in the novel and paves the way for the message that true understanding and communication cannot be instantaneous.

The long-negotiated final covenant is a success. We notice how the agreement facilitates both cultures developing according to their own rules and judgements while agreeing to some common laws and working towards certain mutual goals. Both sides enter the new horizon with some of their old prejudices and customs intact while certain other rituals, like planting humans, have to be abandoned. The idea is that the two races are not to be submerged into one another. Instead, it is hoped that, eventually, each species will incorporate the other into their idea of self without

feeling threatened or losing their own sense of identity and that identity would have grown and expanded rather than miraculously dissolved.

In the third volume of the *Ender* saga, *Xenocide,* we find the following statement:

> 'Any animal is willing to kill the Other,' said Ender. 'But the higher beings include more and more living things within their self-story, until there *is* no Other...' (Card, 1999b:293)

Valentine echoes similar sentiments in her book, quoted in *Speaker for the Dead:*

> When we declare an alien species to be raman, it does not mean that *they* have passed a threshold of moral maturity. It means that *we* have. (Card, 1989:1)

A fruitful dialogue with another life-form is not only a means for *us* to get to know *them*. Instead, a rich fusion with another horizon ultimately teaches us more and more about our common humanity and the joy that can be gained by intelligent life forms sharing the universe. "How suddenly we find the flesh of God within us after all, when we thought that we were only made of dust." (Card, 1989:385)

Parallel to the alien as other motif in the novel, Ender's position as an outsider within the community of Lusitania is explored through the portrayal of his relationship with the Ribeira family. He falls in love with Novinha, a troubled widow and mother of five. The process of understanding the alien other, the piggies, is juxtaposed with a similar parallel process of understanding the human other. On a personal level, Ender learns how to incorporate family life into his concept of self.

Although a young adult fantasy novel, Diana Wynne Jones's *The Homeward Bounders* is, like the *Ender* saga, concerned with a journey towards acceptance of otherness. It also explores the play motif from various angles.

Jamie is an ordinary twelve-year-old boy living in late nineteen-century England. Through sheer bad luck and ill-directed curiosity, he stumbles upon a mysterious and ominous group of strange creatures, referred to as *Them*, who appear to be playing a game. These creatures indulge in playing a sort of large-scale computer game with our world and parallel universes. Before he really has a chance to understand what has happened, Jamie finds himself uprooted from his home environment and thrown out into the Bounds. Because he has glimpsed the harsh truth and can now disrupt play because he knows too much, he becomes a homeward bounder, a random factor tossed continually from one parallel universe into another unless he manages to find his way back home. On his journey through the bounds, Jamie meets an assortment of interesting people.

Helen certainly falls into this interesting category. Also a young teenager, she too is a homeward bounder. She is abrupt and at times unpleasant, her face covered by a curtain of hair. But that is by no means the only thing Helen has to hide. She has been born with an unusual gift, a withered arm that can metamorphosise into an elephant-like trunk. Unlike Jamie who, before his exile, was an average child, Helen's strange gift and manner have always made her an outsider. When he first meets Helen, Jamie is taken aback by her abrasiveness. Their strained relationship slowly turns into friendship as they share their adventures. Towards the end of the novel, Jamie not only learns to accept Helen for her differences but grows fond of her precisely because of her otherness:

> But I kept going, thinking of my friends. ... Then I thought of Helen. That was when I was trying to climb the wall into the garden, and it was really hard work. Helen hiding a withered arm made of spirit, just like she hid her face in her hair. Helen taking the Archangel out of me and snarling and snapping. She couldn't thank people, Helen. She hated saying thank you. As I said, Helen, my friendly neighbourhood enemy.
> (Jones, 1993:200)

Jamie matures enough to embrace Helen as she is, not as what he wishes her to be. His relationships with other bounders are also unique. He befriends Joris, an Arab demon fighter. As in his relationship with Helen, this friendship teaches Jamie about differences and similarities between people who come from diverse worlds. It is not a lesson an average child like Jamie would have understood had he never left his sheltered home environment.

The author uses the play motif very creatively throughout the novel. I would like to pause and remind the reader of both Gadamer and Huizinga's comments concerning the phenomenon of play. Gadamer notes that a game has a life of its own. As has been mentioned in the introduction, Huizinga calls play a cultural phenomenon and believes that "civilisation arises and unfolds in and as play". This is certainly true in this novel where the word "play" connotes more than its mere colloquial use. Rather, it is a form of discourse which forces characters to interact with each other and teaches them valuable lessons about themselves and others.

Most noticeably, *They* play by using normal people as pawns in a game. There are certain rules Jamie learns about this play (Jones, 1993:31). After all, if there were no rules, there would be no game. These rules are, however, moulded to protect and suit *Them.* It is only after Jamie truly understands that there are no rules, only natural principles (Jones, 1993:54), that he is free to use his imagination to outwit *Them.*

Towards the end of the novel, Jamie understands that, in a way, Gadamer's idea that the game has a life of its own holds true in this case as well:

> 'The no interference rule,' he said. 'You mentioned it to me yourself. Rule Two.'
> I said, 'Do you mean *Them* -' Grammar! my mother would have said - '*They* are bound to keep that rule too?'
> 'Yes,' he said. 'If you play a game, then you have to keep the rules, or there is no game any more.' (Jones, 1993:212)

This realisation is of paramount importance to Jamie. The locus of power has shifted. Whereas previously Jamie believed he was being played by *Them,* now he realises that the game has a thrust of its own, even beyond *Their* control. This prompts him to actively participate in the game rather than allow himself to be tossed about like a tool. The final confrontation between the Bounders and their allies and *Them* sees Jamie enjoying the experience of playing the game for perhaps the first time. That factor, coupled with Jamie's gradually growing love for people whom he previously demarcated as others, leads him towards making a final self-sacrifice:

> As long as I don't stay anywhere long, as long as I keep moving and don't think of anywhere as Home, I shall act as an anchor to keep all the worlds real. And that will keep *Them* out. ... If you like, you can think of it as my gift to you. I never had much else to give. You can get on and play your own lives as you like, while I just keep moving. (Jones, 1993:224)

Jamie has come a long way from the sheltered ordinary boy who, if not feared, was certainly apprehensive of otherness, to the kind of person who gives of himself for the benefit of others. This echoes Ender's character development. Like Jamie, after the "Bugger Xenocide", Ender gives of himself to humanity by becoming a Speaker for the Dead.

Jamie and his friends also meet Adam, an important character who is not a bounder, when they are forced to play cricket with him (Jones, 1993:132). In this case the game is initially used to gain advantage over a perceived opponent and humiliate the outsiders, namely Jamie and Joris, but results in the boys engaging in dialogue and forming an important alliance between the bounders and Adam and his sister. Once again, a parallel can be drawn between Jamie's and Ender's situation. In *Ender's Game*, Ender is lured into playing a very destructive game which he believes not to be real. As in *The Homeward Bounders,* the game has grave effects on real life. In both novels, the game motif is used to initiate further, more positive play or discourse of life. Like Jamie, Ender is forced to piece together his identity after he has been played and grow strong enough again to enter the game of life as a willingly participating player.

The opening chapters of many of the novels discussed in this section see characters such as Ged, Genly, Estravan, Ender and Jamie make mistakes. Because of pride, ignorance or fear, these protagonists firmly label another thinking entity as an other, clearly different and separate from themselves. However, unlike the case of the protagonists dealt with in chapter four, their journey only commences at that point. They are all forced to take a painful look at themselves and acknowledge their darker side. This process is laborious and painful but necessary if they are to become truly mature. It is their hard-won maturity that allows them to finally acknowledge an other as an equal and not merely an inferior side-kick of the self.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Life, and all that lives, is conceived in the mist and not in the crystal.
Kahil Gibran

A similar sentiment about creation is echoed by Le Guin (see introduction) when she remarks:

> The dance of renewal, the dance that made the world, was always danced here on the edge of things, on the brink, on the foggy coast. (Le Guin, 1989a:48)

Two very different authors, an Eastern philosopher and an American SF and fantasy writer, both express the idea that the moulding of new lives and worlds is shrouded in an element of mysterious wonder. Damon Knight (1967:4), a prominent SF critic, theorises about the possible source of this element of wonder in SF literature:

> We live on a minute island of known things. Our undiminished wonder at the mystery which surrounds us is what makes us human. In science fiction we can approach that mystery, not in small, everyday symbols, but in the big ones of space and time.

Rubenstein (1998:281) also acknowledges a wondrous essence within SF and fantasy in her thesis when she talks about the genres' similar uses of imagery:

> ... images that are imbued with that 'sense of wonder' which constitutes, perhaps, the most mysterious and fascinating aspect of this kind of writing, and which both writers and readers seek so assiduously. For sf and fantasy have ... more than almost any other fictional genres, the ability to awaken the urge to contemplate what is most enigmatic about existence and about the cosmos which surrounds humankind.

She suggests that this sense of wonder evoked by SF and fantasy is linked to these genres' use of archetypal imagery that speaks to the unconscious (Rubenstein,

1998:281). Knight proposes that, through the introduction of new dimensions of space exploration and time manipulation, SF pushes the boundaries of human experience into new and uncharted territories. I would like to add to this and suggest that such wonder is intimately bound to SF and fantasy's exploration of the grand concept of otherness within these new universes.

When pushed into new and startling worlds, readers of SF encounter the inhabitants of these planets. Needless to say, such inhabitants are usually different from humans, whether in appearance or in behaviour and way of thinking. Yet if we look closely that otherness contains a curious tension. By tracing the etymology of the term "other" (see introduction), R.K. Papadopoulous arrives at the conclusion that the word incorporates seemingly paradoxical meanings of difference and sameness. SF places the human self in this uncomfortable middle between identification and non-identification and leaves the reader to reconstruct identities, both their own and those of the characters, in this new scenario. I would argue that it is such identity reconstruction that, in part, contributes to the sense of wonder that the reader feels when he or she faces a new planet or people in a SF novel. Whether set on Earth or in space, the full spectrum of otherness is presented.

Of course ordinary, everyday life provides us with ample opportunities to encounter various forms of otherness. Numerous authors, from Jackson to Card, quoted in this study have mentioned that treating someone as an other is largely a matter of how *we* choose to approach the issue. In other words, it is our attitude towards someone, as opposed to an inherent characteristic within that person, that often determines whether we consider them to be an other.

Humans have a long and notorious history of treating other humans as the other. We only need to think of racial conflicts or the treatment of women in patriarchal societies. Cleverly constructed SF and fantasy can introduce new elements, such as time travel or telepathy into the male/female dynamic and thus perhaps make us see the situation from a fresh angle. Marge Piercy and Joanna Russ both use such distancing techniques. Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* presents the protagonist, Connie, with two possible futures where men and women interact very differently. Connie is taken out of her present situation and shown two polarised possibilities in order to highlight her present choices and illustrate how they may, in a small way, affect the future. Similarly, the protagonist of Russ's *The Female Man* is tossed though space and time as she tries to pierce together her identity as a woman and a human being in the modern world. In both instances, these authors wield concepts traditionally present in SF to equip the reader with innovative tools and ideas that may be used to change the demarcation of women as the other. The genres are also able to offer alternative gender models to the usual heterosexual one, for instance, the androgynous people of Winter in Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*. Again, this presents the reader with an alternative to the dominant dichotomy that presents women as the "have-nots" and men as the "haves". We are removed from our everyday circumstances and forced into universes where different relationship dynamics are explored.

Thought provoking SF not only sheds new light on gender issues, but can also be used to examine other age-old relationships, such as the dynamic between a creator and his creation or a parent and child. The complex dynamic between parent and child has been well documented by experts through the last few centuries. The already precarious balance of independence and interconnectedness within a normal

parent/child relationship is tilted into a new dimension when one of the parties is not fully human. Several older, hard SF texts, such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* discussed in chapter three, portray protagonists that refuse to acknowledge any affinity with their own creations. Victor's desperate negation of his self-created monster has disastrous effects on both his external and internal reality. As he tries to divorce himself from his creature, Victor fails to understand their interconnectedness and his responsibility towards his creation. Such patterns of denial also feature in John Wyndham's *The Midwich Cuckoos* where the potentially intriguing situation of human mothers being forced to incubate alien children is pushed aside and converted to the issue of species survival. In both instances, the creation or child is firmly labelled as the Cartesian other and a mortal threat to the self. The delicate thread of responsibility that binds parent and offspring is severed, along with interesting implications that might have developed had that relationship been nurtured. More contemporary soft SF, with its focus on interpersonal relationships, explores the scenario of an alien child born to a human mother in greater depth. For example, Lilith in Octavia E. Butler's *Xenogenesis* trilogy embraces her alien children. Her struggle to help her children forge their own identities is an intricate part of her own self-discovery and growth. This hard-won and delicate balance between independence and interconnectedness that Lilith shares with her children fills the reader with a sense of wonder. We marvel at the courage of a being that refuses to conveniently embrace the easy solution and instead battles to redefine past ideas about who and what we can include in the story of self and ultimately learn to love.

Many other forms of fiction focus on everyday otherness and alienation of modern life. SF and fantasy push the equation of human and other a step further by introducing creatures that are truly alien into an already volatile situation. This

creates the ultimate breeding ground for the drama of otherness. The meeting of various life-forms can take several directions.

In the first place, humans can downplay or even ignore the importance of such a meeting - the glory of one intelligent life-form meeting another. This mode of thought is embodied in the kill-the-alien-before-it-kills-you SF novel, examples of which are discussed in chapter four. Such novels depict characters such as Miles from *The Invasion of the Bodysnatchers* or Bill from *The Day of the Triffids* whose fear prevents them from throwing themselves whole-heartedly into the meeting with an other. Several theories as to what that fear may represent are suggested and expanded upon. Unfortunately, as Brian W. Aldiss has remarked (see chapter four), characters that turn away from the confrontation with their darker side seldom grow or mature, so the reader is left with an unsatisfactory and incomplete picture of Miles and Bill's new world.

Almost a polar opposite to this approach is the notion of one life-form being submerged into another. This is illustrated in Sheri. S. Tepper's *Raising the Stones.* Just as in hard SF novels discussed in chapter four, there is no meaningful interaction between humans and aliens in this instance. Both outcomes focus on death - the literal demise of the alien or humanity's spiritual death as, devoid of any traditions, good or bad, that have previously defined us as a species, the human race dissolves into another entity's way of life.

The last proposed result of the meeting between aliens and humans is explored in chapter five. Here, we witness a difficult but rich incorporation of one life-story into another. It is important to note that the majority of the novels discussed in this

chapter are more contemporary than those examined in chapter four. The move away from hard SF towards soft SF which focuses on interpersonal relationships and social problems, is reflected in these novels. Damon Knight (1967:277) is of the opinion that:

> The humbling truth is that science fiction is only for the small number of people who like to think and who regard the universe with awe, which is a blend of love and fear. 'The public' does neither; it wants to be spoon-fed by its magazines and movies, and regards the universe with horror, which is a blend of fear and hate.

I would venture to disagree. SF characters such as Miles or Bill have been shown to regard the universe or our place in the universe with fear. This fear is arguably only a step away from hate. Knight's opinion does not differentiate between different kinds of SF and their functions. It can be argued, for example, that hard SF mirrors society's fear of the unknown. Such fear is still present in soft SF but the sub-genre is perhaps better equipped to explore ways to conquer and understand that fear because of its premise that the emphasis falls on the human element and how scientific changes affect society rather than on hard facts themselves.

I agree with the implication that some of the best SF, as Rubenstein, Suvin (see introduction) and even Knight, have noted, carries an essential reverence and love for life. Rubenstein (1998:291) points out that it is the manner in which select authors convey and explore that reverence and love that inspires awe in readers:

> It is the strong sense of humanity which such writers bring to their work, their intense awareness of the complexity of human nature, its terrible propensity for evil and stupidity, and its paradoxical yearning for transcendence, which helps

> them to create beings who appear to inhabit a world that is larger, more terrifying, more beautiful - and more real - than the surface of the printed page.

Character development is perhaps one of the most powerful vehicles used to convey this "strong sense of humanity":

> Moral dilemmas and choices are now considerably more complex and subtle than in traditional forms of fabulous or romantic writing. But even more striking is the fact that solutions to problems are not clear-cut. Where traditionally the protagonist would be returned to a state of original happiness after the vicissitudes and torments of adventure, in much sf and fantasy the return is ambiguous and profoundly disquieting, demanding significant mental and emotional adjustment, signalling the equivocal and fragile nature of human happiness, and pointing to the compromises which lie at the heart of all experience. (Rubenstein, 1998:292)

Writers such as Card or Le Guin have such an awareness of the complexity of human nature. Their characters reflect that - figures like Ender or Ged come alive for us as readers. Both make mistakes and are not sketched as faultless heroes. Instead, they only begin their journey of personal redemption and growth when they acknowledge their errors and fear and face the universe as humbled participants in, rather than controllers of, life.

Throughout chapter five, hermeneutic criticism has been used as a framework for discussion. The premise that language and history are conditions and limits of human understanding places firm emphasis on the idea that the past shapes and defines our present situation. The ideal of an all-knowing Cartesian subject who views life from a removed, rational standpoint is replaced by the belief that we are embedded in language and history and cannot divorce ourselves completely from our circumstances. This, however, does not limit new knowledge and understanding. On

the contrary, a decentered and dethroned self is only now free to engage in a dialogue with another being on an equal footing. The two parties learn to understand each other through a slow process of incorporating elements of diverse cultures and ways of thinking into their own life stories. They are not submerged into one another, but reconstruct a newer, richer self-identity that allows for the possibility of learning from another, different being. It is precisely that unique interaction, which I have chosen to explain in terms of play or game, that allows them to embrace, eventually understand and even learn to love an other.

A boy like Ender, for example, causes mayhem in ignorance. In fact, his past, shapes and defines his future. Ender is willing to learn - often a long and excruciating process in which he not only faces his own darker side but interacts with others with admirable courage and integrity. Unlike Miles or Bill, he is not given a privileged position in this dialogue but battles to understand another species as an equal. To me, Ender embodies SF's sense of wonder; the message that life, whether it be our own or that of another species, should be played with passion and enthusiasm.

Speaker for the Dead ends in the hope that a new, intelligent life-form is about to be reborn:

> Life, so long waited for, and not until today could she be sure that she would be, not the last of her tribe, but the first. (Card, 1989:415)

In my opinion, SF provides a perfect arena for the spectacle of "the dance that made the world". New species and ideas are born and can either be annihilated because of fear or nurtured as we learn from them. Because fiction is more open ended than other written forms, it can aid us to elude Cartesian Anxiety. Instead of being forced

to make a false and unnecessary choice, the reader is invited to participate in a learning process which allows us, through incorporation, to enlarge our view of humanity.

Bibliography

Aldiss, Brian W. 1996. Kepler's Error: The Polar Bear Theory of Pluripresence. In Science Fiction Studies. Vol. 23, pp. 1-10.

Armitt, Lucie (ed.). 1991. *Where No Man Has Gone Before: Women and Science Fiction.* London: Routledge.

Armitt, Lucie. 1991. Your Word is my Command: The Structures of Language and Power in Women's Science Fiction. In Armitt 1991: pp. 123-137.

Attebery, Brian. 1992. *Strategies of Fantasy.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Ayres, Susan. 1995. The 'Straight Mind' in Russ's *The Female Man.* In Science Fiction Studies. Vol. 22, pp. 22-34.

Bainbridge, William Sims. 1986. *Dimensions of Science Fiction.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Baudrillard, Jean. 1993. *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena.* London: Verso.

Baudrillard, Jean. 1993. The Melodrama of Difference. In Baudrillard 1993: pp. 124-138.

Baudrillard, Jean. 1993. The Hell of the Same. In Baudrillard 1993: pp. 113-123.

Bear, Greg. 1997. *Tangents.* London: Vista. (first published in 1989).

Bear, Greg. 1997. Sisters. In Bear 1997: pp. 227-266.

Benjamin, Marina (ed.). 1993. *A Question of Identity: Women, Science and Literature.* New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Benjamin, Marina. 1993. A Question of Identity. In Benjamin 1993: pp. 1-21.

Bernstein, Richard. 1983. *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics and Praxis.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Brown, Barbara. 1980. The Left Hand of Darkness: Androgyny, Future, Present, and Past. In Extrapolation, Vol. 21 (3), pp. 227-235.

Butler, Octavia E. 1988. *Wild Seed.* New York: Time Warner. (first published in 1980).

Butler, Octavia E. 1988. *Dawn.* London: VGSF. (first published in 1987).

Butler, Octavia E. 1989. *Adulthood Rites.* London: VGSF. (first published in 1988).

Butler, Octavia E. 1990. *Imago.* New York: Warner Books. (first published in 1989).

Card, Orson Scott. 1989. *Speaker for the Dead.* London: Arrow. (first published in 1986).

Card, Orson Scott. 1999a. *Ender's Game.* London: Orbit. (first published in 1985).

Card, Orson Scott. 1999b. *Xenocide.* London: Orbit. (first published in 1991).

Cohen, J.M & Cohen, M.J (eds). 1976. *The Penguin Dictionary of Quotations.* Middlesex: Penguin.

Conrad, Joseph. 1990. *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

De Laszlo, Violet (ed.). 1958. *Psyche and Symbol: A Collection from the Writing of C. G. Jung.* New York: Doubleday Anchor.

Derksen, L. D. 1983. *On Universal Hermeneutics: A Study in the Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer.* Amsterdam: VU Boekhandel/Uitgeverij.

Donne, John. 1624. Devotion XVII from *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions.* In Maxwell-Mahon 1992: pp. 1-2.

Erikson, Erik H. 1971. *Identity: Youth and Crisis.* London: Faber & Faber.

Finney, Jack. 1978. *Invasion of the Bodysnatchers.* London: Sphere. (first published in 1954).

Gentle, Mary. 1987. *Ancient Light.* London: Victor Gollancz.

Gibran, Kahil. 1997. *The Prophet.* London: Heinemann.

Harpman, Jaqueline. 1998. *I Who have Never Known Men.* New York: Avon. (first published in 1995).

Hillegas, Mark. 1979. The Literary Background to SF. In Parrinder 1979: pp. 2-16.

Hoyle, Gisela B. 1992. *Pushing Out Towards the Limits, and Finding the Centre: The Mystical Vision in the Work of Ursula K. Le Guin.* Unpublished thesis. Grahamstown: Rhodes University.

Huntington, John. 1979. The Science Fiction of H.G. Wells. In Parrinder 1979: pp. 34-49.

Huzinga, J. 1949. *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-element in Culture.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Jackson, Rosemary. 1991. *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion.* London: Routledge.

Jancovich, Mark. 1992. *Horror.* London: B. T. Batsford.

Jones, Diana Wynne. 1993. *The Homeward Bounders.* London: Mammoth. (first published in 1981).

Jones, Gwyneth. 1991. Writing Science Fiction for the Teenage Reader. In Armitt 1991: pp. 165-185.

Jordaan, W. & Jordaan, J. 1992. *Man in Context.* Insando: Lexicon Publishers.

Joyce, James. 1993. *Ulysses* (edited with introduction by Jeri Johnson). Oxford: Oxford University Press. (first published in 1922).

Jung, C.G. 1958. The Shadow. In de Laszlo 1958.

Knight, Damon. 1967. *In Search of Wonder* (with introduction by Anthony Boucher). Chicago: Advent.

Kramerae, Cheris. 1981. *Women and Men Speaking: Framework for Analysis.* Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House.

Le Guin, Ursula. 1969. *The Left Hand of Darkness.* London: Macdonald. (first published in 1969).

Le Guin, Ursula. 1971. *A Wizard of Earthsea.* London: Victor Gollancz.

Le Guin, Ursula. 1973. The Child and the Shadow. In Le Guin 1989b: pp. 37-45.

Le Guin, Ursula. 1974. Why are Americans Afraid of Dragons? In Le Guin 1989b: pp. 31-36.

Le Guin, Ursula. 1975. American SF and the Other. In Le Guin 1989b: pp. 83-85.

Le Guin, Ursula. 1977. Introduction to *The Word for World is Forest.* In Le Guin 1989b: pp. 125-129.

Le Guin, Ursula. 1981. World-Making. In Le Guin 1989a: pp. 46-48.

Le Guin, Ursula. 1982. A Non-Euclidean View of California as a Cold Place to be. In Le Guin 1989a: pp. 80-100.

Le Guin, Ursula. 1987. Is Gender Necessary? Redux. In Le Guin 1989a: pp.7-16.

Le Guin, Ursula. 1989a. *Dancing at the Edge of the World: Thoughts on Words, Women, Places.* London: Victor Gollancz.

Le Guin, Ursula. 1989b. *The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction* (edited with an introduction by Susan Wood). London: The Women's Press.

Le Guin, Ursula. 1991. *The Eye of the Heron & The Word for World is Forest.* London: VGSF. (first published in 1972).

Levin, Ira. 1976. *The Boys from Brazil.* London: Michael Joseph. (first published in 1976).

Linge, David E (ed.). 1977. *Hans-Georg Gadamer: Philosophical Hermeneutics.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Maxwell-Mahon, W.D & Tiltlestad, P. J. M. (eds). 1992. *Ways with Words* (Third Edition). Johannesburg: Lexicon Publishers.

Mortley, Raul (ed.). 1991. *French Philosophers in Conversation.* London: Routledge.

Newman, Jenny. 1991. Mary and the Monster: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Maureeen Duffy's *Gor Saga*. In Armitt 1991: pp. 85-95.

Piercy, Marge. 1985. *Woman on the Edge of Time.* New York: Fawcett Crest. (first published in 1976).

Papadopoulos, Renos K. & Saayman, Graham S. (eds). 1984. *Jung in Modern Perspective.* Craighall: AD Donker.

Papadopoulos, Renos K. 1984. Jung and the Concept of the Other. In Papadopoulos 1984: pp. 54-88.

Parrinder, Patrick (ed.). 1979. *Science Fiction: A Critical Guide.* London: Longman.

Parrinder, Patrick. 1979. Characterization in Science Fiction: The Alien Encounter: or Ms Brown and Mrs Le Guin. In Parrinder 1979: pp. 147-161.

Parrinder, Patrick. 1980. *Science Fiction: Its Criticism and Teaching.* London: Methuen.

Roberts, Marie Mulvey. 1993. The Male Scientist, Man-midwife and Female Monster: Appropriation and Transmutation in *Frankenstein.* In Benjamin 1993: pp. 59-73.

Rubenstein, Avril. 1998. *Bearers of Dreams: A Study of Archetypal Symbolism in Fantasy and Science Fiction.* Unpublished thesis. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Russ, Joanna. 1985. *The Female Man.* London: The Women's Press SF. (first published in 1975).

Russell, Elizabeth. 1991. The Loss of the Feminine Principle in Charlotte Haldane's *Man's World* and Kathrine Burdekin's *Swastika Night.* In Armitt 1991: pp. 15-27.

Sargent, Pamela (ed.). 1995. *Women of Wonder: The Classic Years.* San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Shelley, Mary. 1994. *Frankenstein* (1818 text edited with introduction and notes by Marilyn Butler). Oxford: Oxford University Press. (first published in 1818).

Squier, Susan. 1993. Conceiving Difference: Reproductive Technology and the Construction of Identity in Two Contemporary Fictions. In Benjamin 1993: pp. 97-115.

Stallworthy, Jon (ed.). 1993. *The Oxford Book of War Poetry.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sturgeon, Thoedore. 1970. *More than Human.* New York: Ballantine. (first published in 1953).

Suvin, Darko. 1979. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Suvin, Darko. 1988. *Positions and Presuppositions in Science Fiction.* London: Macmillan.

Tepper, Sheri S. 1990. *The Gate to Women's Country.* London: Corgi. (first published in 1989).

Tepper, Sheri S. 1992. *Raising the Stones.* London: Grafton. (first published in 1991).

Tiptree, Jr. , James. 1973. The Women Men Don't See. In Sargent 1995: pp. 308-334.

Wachterhauser, B. 1986. *Hermeneutics and Modern Philosophy.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Weldon, Fay. 1989. *The Cloning of Joanna May.* London: Collins. (first published in 1989).

Wells, H.G. 1996. *The Island of Dr. Moreau.* New York: Dover. (first published in 1896).

Wells, H.G. 1997. *The War of the Worlds.* New York: Dover. (first published in 1898).

West, D. 1996. *An Introduction to Continental Philosophy.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Wyndham, John. 1977. *Chocky.* London: Penguin. (first published in 1968).

Wyndham, John. 1979. *The Midwich Cuckoos.* London: Penguin. (first published in 1957).

Wyndham, John. 1980. *Day of the Triffids.* Harmondsworth: Penguin. (first published in 1951).

Wyndam, John. 1985. *The Chrysalids.* London: Penguin. (first published in 1955).