Of Starship Troopers and Refuseniks: War and Militarism in U.S. Science Fiction, Part 2*

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A major part of the investigation "Of Starship Troopers and Refuseniks: War and Militarism in U.S. Science Fiction," including Part 1 that deals with 1945-74 or the "Fordist" phase and some further conclusions to be drawn from the whole, will be found in the book *New Decades of Political SF* edited by D. Hassler and C. Wilcox (U of S. Carolina P, forthcoming). This second part was in the original sub-subtitled "1975-2001: Post-Fordism and Some Conclusions."

> "Do we get to win this time, Sir?"
> Rocky's query in one of Stallone's movies

1. Historical Texts 1975-2001, a Deluge with Exceptions

> Americans have a peculiar chronic blind spot when thinking about war. . . they always imagine [it] as taking place *somewhere else.*
>
> Lois Bujold

1.0 The Coastlines of Atlantis Erode

■ From the mid-70s on, the lay of the land around and within US SF suffered a sea-change. The US government cut in 1973-75 its losses in Vietnam, leaving

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that country devastated by more high explosives than were used against the Axis in World War 2 and by chemical warfare (the most believable count of Vietnamese civilians killed is around two million), and clamped down on any dissent going beyond the peace plank—hence the Le Guin story "New Atlantis" and Dick's novels *A Scanner Darkly* and *Radio Free Albemuth* discussed in Part 1 of this essay. Analogous, only cruder, repression was going on in the Soviet bloc after the 1968 invasion overthrowing the reformists in Czechoslovakia (and had similar, if more heavily coded, echoes in the SF of the Strugatskys). The arms race, huge military procurements, and proxy wars or armed interventions did not at all abate, witness the 1973 US-organized overthrow of the Allende government in Chile, the ongoing clashes in Africa, then in the late 70s the clerical revolution in Iran and the Left revolution in Afghanistan, followed by the alliance of the USA and fundamentalist "islamists" against it and the Soviet intervention with its symmetrical mini-Vietnam. After the defeat of the 60s' movements and all independent Leftism, the US governing classes were on a steady counteroffensive to regain the terrain lost through the Keynesian compromise with labour and the decolonization in the global South, which had culminated in the peace movement and the Vietnamese liberation struggle. The rise of Reaganism and Thatcherism was an abrupt shift to the Right, going on ever since. From communists to liberals, the Left was in a material and moral disarray, which (strangely enough) became terminal after the collapse of USSR in 1989, and savage despoiling of the Welfare State went on full swing. Intellectuals adjusted, at best concluding with Foucault, Deleuze, and Derrída there was nothing outside epistemic power, infinite rhizomes, and micro-differe/ances, at worst denouncing any systematic understanding in favour of "weak" thought. The only politics they deigned to notice was micro-politics of, say, gay rights or "textual politics" (emblematically, in Delany's important *Triton* a "gravity war" between planets is pooh-poohed in order to concentrate on choice of life-styles and genders).[1] Even the feminist movement, within which by far the best modern SF satires (such as Joanna Russ's splendid agitprop novel *The Female Man*, in which one of the strands presents an actual gender war) and open-ended utopias (such as Le Guin's unsurpassed *The Dispossessed*) had been written in the 1960-75 period, was split and then contained along those lines.

The main instrument in the systematic climb to power of the Right in metropolitan capitalism without a human face was the strengthening of the State's repressive, i.e., armed, functions at the expense of its welfare functions, and at the cost of hundreds of billions of dollars going from taxes to armament corporations (see Mesnard). This was centered in the USA, that had become a permanent Warfare State which led a global reorientation of technology and economics toward armaments (cf. Hirsch and Roth 126-28 and passim). As the strategic keystone in the ongoing "commodification of everything" (Wallerstein 90) and in sustaining profit accumulation, spiralling State

procurements for the military were the easiest and most lucrative way of keeping the economy going, even when consumer demand stagnated in the assault on permanent employment. By the time of the First Gulf War, a conservative estimate of spending for military purposes was nearly a trillion (one million millions) US dollars annually, or between 2 and 2.5 billion dollars daily, and this is now growing by leaps and bounds, so that after 2001 the US military budget was back on Cold War levels. The Pentagon and Department of Defense became thus the US equivalent of the State planning commission, with built-in enormous and omnipresent expense transgressions for key research and technologies (the best portrayal of such procedures in SF may be found in K.S. Robinson's *The Gold Coast*, and of organized warmongering already in the splendid 1967 *Report from Iron Mountain*).

A grim prospect opens up: the deflection of more than half of the world's research and of its financing into profitable commodities for killing makes a sham of democratic control and decision-making. As Wallerstein has repeatedly argued, ideological and economic "liberalism" is incompatible with democracy. Externally, the rise to power of the oil-centered fraction of US corporations under the Bush regimes meant that the post-Cold-War struggle for raw materials was openly entrusted to "gunship diplomacy" and where need be smart bombs. Internally, as discussed at length in Part 1, the political fall-out of the Warfare State "is the spread of military rule and militarization that subordinate all other aspects of civil society to its barbarity not only during wars but in times of official 'peace'" (Mesnard 72). This necessarily leads to large powers for the top bureaucracy and the military in relation to civilians and to a corresponding degradation of democratic institutions and practices; the military-industrial complex has also become "the single greatest source of environment destruction in the USA" (McMurtry 174). The divide between military and police actions and power (and also between the military incarcerated and those subject to normal law) grew more and more permeable even before the welcome excuse of anti-terrorism; it is by now employable at will against all real or supposed, present or future enemies of the US world hegemony, such as the Genua protesters of 2001 (see Dal Lago 71-90).

1.1 The Deluge Begins

In SF, the frenzied drive for not simply profits but "big profits! this year!" intervened first of all with the lure of Hollywood and dumbing down to bestseller level for it. Looking at our radar screens, the editors of *Science-Fiction Studies* in 1979 put it this way (I believe the phrasing was mine):

> It is our impression that the bestseller mentality invading the market is a clear example of how the potentialities of this genre are co-opted and sterilized by economic

> and ideological forces. This has already resulted in vastly overblown novels, poorly organized and without much else to show for itself except for reducing the level of SF to that of the bestseller reader. ("Editorial" 7-8)

By vastly overblown novels I, at least, was alluding to Pournelle and Niven's *The Mote in God's Eye.* We thought it was an aberrant trend. Maybe so, but it became the dominant trend.

In spite of what we critics usually focus upon, SF is not only a literary genre. It was first widespread in comics—it was "that Buck Rogers (or Flash Gordon) stuff"—and then in both Wells-derived and comics-derived movies, not to mention Frankenstein and King Kong. But after Kubrick's two movies of the 60s, *Dr. Strangelove* and *2001*, after *The Planet of the Apes* and its sequels, and especially after the smash hit of a safely dumbed-down, fairytale and Manichean, kind of fake SF in Lucas's *Star Wars* from 1977 on—a technospectacular fairy-tale at the level of showdown in the OK Corral—Hollywood had become gung-ho for SF (see Fitting's and La Polla's articles in Suvin ed.). Stories of copyright advances in six or seven digits to Heinlein and other SF luminaries began floating around the SF community. Extremely few were chosen (cf. Fitting's filmography in Suvin ed.), but very many felt called to write so as to respect Sam Goldwyn's immortal statement "Nobody ever went broke underestimating the great American public." Thus, by the end of the 80s the SF film boom had subsided in "the filmic equivalent of fast food, offering no lasting satisfaction. Also, too much US product seemed to more astringent foreign tastes to be suffused with an oversweet sentimentality..." (Nicholls). Even so, its impact persisted. Many SF writers wrote scenarios or tie-ins for the *Star Trek* series, which has from its semi-liberal beginnings in the 60s oscillated wildly in quality, SF content, and ideological orientation (the 1968 episode "A Private Little War" clearly justifies the US war on Vietnam); other SF on TV was more staggeringly brainless. There is little doubt that military and warmongering SF revived in *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* before they did in SF writing.

Possibly even more important was the impact of computers (the first IBM mass PC hit the market in 1981), and the increasingly violent video games cultivating killing lust in the 80s. Both grew exponentially, and their users were disproportionately concentrated in the social stratum that also supplies SF readers. On the highest level, computers and internet supplied the ambience for cyberpunk, the most important SF movement of the 80s which included at least two masters, William Gibson and Pat Cadigan. Within a post-Vietnam revulsion from nationalism, it shrewdly concentrated on the small people caught in the merciless metaphorical, virtual, and real wars of neofeudal corporativism, using cyberspace as a virtual reality of ambiguous mastery and escape.

A further mega-trend directly splitting or hollowing out SF writers and readers was the rise of Hero Fantasy, following in much inferior ways the success of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* and the *Conan* movies, and then of Horror Fantasy culminating in the world's best selling writer, Stephen King. Science was compromised by wars, ecological degradation, and capitalist rationality, so that New Age "spirituality" bloomed in lush old and new variants; alert critics had already in the 60s begun to downgrade SF in favour of "speculative fabulation" which might mean anything on earth that was not suburban realism. My overview concluded that Fantasy's readers are a large group drawn from the presently marginalized intellectuals, the young, and the lower classes, mainly male and precariously or desultorily employed. It is centrally shaped by a refusal of ongoing social history—the technology, urbanization, finances, and human relationships that came about in modern capitalism. But no alternative project of historical self-governance is allowed: "in Horror Fantasy the power of destiny is absolutely superordinated and plot is subordinated to inducing the affect of fear and horror, while in Heroic Fantasy destiny is within the hero's will to power and plot is a serial manifestation of that will which could go indefinitely on"—as it does in the never-ending warfare series both in Fantasy and SF. My hypothesis was that "SF appeals to social groups with confidence that something can at present be done about a collective, historical future—if only as dire warnings.... To the contrary, when the entire life-world has undergone much further tentacular and capillary colonization, Fantasy's appeal is to uncertain social classes or fractions who have been cast adrift and lost that confidence," so that they face their own present and future with a resolve to use vicarious horror or heroism—or both—as a safe thrill before the deluge ("Considering" 235 and 238). The deluge was coming apace, and another way to strike out seemed military imperialism.

True, SF literature was stagnating quantitatively, losing much ground (and also abruptly lowering its quality) because of movies, and even falling behind the number of titles in Hero and Horror Fantasy. Still, SF sales were probably aided by the movies, and readers not wishing to read only (or any) Fantasy were still an ideological and commercial force to be reckoned with. As the Left drooped—including for SF in particular its feminist vanguard—the Right, supported by huge financial and power networks, mobilized. The narrative center of SF was inundated and largely filled—in publication fact rather than in cognitive and formal value—by an organized Right-wing effort to roll back the anti-war sentiment by a new Cold War literature insisting in numerous ideological tracts first on space exploration and rearmament (see Proietti, "Saving" in Suvin ed., Section 4) and soon thereafter on warfare as measure for Man. This translated into SF as space wars of unbridled Social Darwinism, which differed from the individualist entrepreneurship, in swashbuckling colonialism of the Anderson type or in sword-and-sorcery Fantasy, by resolutely praising space technology, US military imperialism (often—as already in *Star Trek*—tenuously masked as

multiracial Earthmen), and strict hierarchy. The major new writer of this trend was Larry Niven, in whom the passage from the Soviet to the "Third World" threat may be seen (see Jameson "Science Fiction"), and its major entrepreneur Jerry E. Pournelle.

Niven had started in the mid-60s to introduce his Man-Kzin Wars universe, and in the 1973 novel *The Protector* his tough frontiersman hero becomes a "superman" monster, literally exchanging such human characteristics as sex for brains, lips for beak, hands for claws, and skin for armour in order to save humanity from incoming Aliens, and incidentally wiping out the whole planetful of Martian natives. The mad logic of militarism, "in order to save this town (country, world), we had to destroy it," is fully present here, sparked by vengeful fury at the Vietnam defeat. In several further novels, all coauthored with Pournelle, beautiful space battles wiping out entire armadas are described with juvenile glee (in a pedigree that descends from Italian Futurists and Fascists); the enemies are always cruel and underhanded—in Pournelle the genocide targets are often dark races, or indeed the lowest class as in *Mercenary*—and it is war to the last survivor. Two further collaborations transfer the story overtly to Earth. *Lucifer's Hammer* picks up the torch from Heinlein's survivalist template in *Farnham's Freehold* by repeating the horde of (cannibal!) Blacks that attack the civilized White stronghold, in order to be luckily decimated by poison gas and the remnant enslaved—as near fascism as SF had got by the end of the 70s.[10] In the Californian class war of *The Oath of Fealty*, a rich enclave, ruled by an infallible hierarchy and a brilliant leader, defeats assorted eco-freaks and terrorists. The relatively best but still indigestible Niven-Pournelle collaboration is the already mentioned *A Mote in God's Eye*, where the interesting encountered aliens (Niven's best work is the "Ringworld" series where this interest was not yet yoked under militarist ideology) provide a modicum of mystery, only to be explained as dastardry and awful threat. The follow-up novel, *The Moat around Murcheson's Eye*, is to my mind even more interesting, for it abandons head-on conflict for an attempt to differentiate between groups that will and will not co-operate with "us," parallel to evolving US policy toward West Asia. The precondition for co-operating, though, is that it happen on "our" terms, here induced prevention of breeding rate. Alas, the first *Mote* became a paragon for the next decades.

My Bibliography of SF Narrations appended to the first publication of this article may give an idea of the mushrooming of such militarist SF series. How do these function? Several narrations situated in the same spacetime, a device which economically supplied venues for a series of different, yet connected, events as well as means of reader identification, have been an organizing SF device since the dime-novels and early space-operas in the pulp tradition of E.R. Burroughs and E.E. Smith, mimicking the epic drive of Realistic narrations after Balzac. They were either organized simply around the adventur-

ing hero, a descendant of Ulysses or Aeneas, or more interestingly around a sequence of compatible types in a future history. But the potential breakthrough of SF after the *Star Wars* into financial big time, beyond the up-to-one-cent-per-word stage, set loose a startling avalanche of publishing mutations identified in the new vocabulary of "shared worlds" and various other "ties" or tie-ins (single novels or shared-world anthologies) of a "sharecropping" kind. Shared worlds are narrations by various authors in a preset sociohistorical and planetary spacetime, usually more or less loosely defined by the venue's copyright owner—original author or indeed corporation—in a set of instructions called a "bible," which often accretes beyond its core "genetic code" supplementary backgrounds, including maps, tables, genealogies, etc.; Pournelle's "War World" bible seems to have been one of the larger concentric growths, though the concept was traced back to the late 70s. The bible can be partly or largely derived from earlier SF literature, film, TV, games or cartoons—say from *Star Wars, Star Trek* or the genetic warrior-class propaganda of "BattleTech" games--and the tied-in exfoliations, as a rule written for hire, are called sharecrops (cf. Clute, "Tie" and "Shared," also Proietti, "Saving" in Suvin ed., section 5).

Such "ties" are deeply ambiguous: they tie the writers to preset limits, usually for modest money offset by promises of visibility; yet they could potentially be occasions for creative ingenuousness and collective co-operation in what one might call world-thickening. Thus, the ties could be innovative manifestations of a shared collective ethos, which would have been called evil empires had the bible been proposed and enforced by a Communist Party Agitprop section or by a Ministry of Propaganda instead of by market carrots and whips; in reality, I suspect (since financial and other negotiations are secret) they are quite often instances of subaltern drudgery and disempowerment, as exploited sharecroppers have been in agriculture. I found that the "Darkover" tie-ins by M.Z. Bradley and Mercedes Lackey within a feminist ethos, which include interesting variations on Bradley's "Free Amazons," approximate the creative pole. On the opposite pole are the very numerous aggressive, warmongering and/or militarist concoctions by Niven, Pournelle, Saberhagen, and down to David Drake. There may be a few less uniform exceptions here and there, and to my mind the idea of serial collaboration may still in the (rare) right circumstances offer promising possibilities. But on the whole, in them and their authors Heinleinian "species racism" was reborn in the blood of the wars and moved center stage.

1.2 Islands of Higher Ground: From Card to Haldeman II

As Proietti rightly concludes, writings propagating war and military-centered social organization have from the 70s on so inflected SF "as to become

one of [its] default images" ("Saving" 91ff.). By my count from a reliable London SF bookstore catalogue in 2004, 30-40% of new US SF titles published were "military SF." The year when the crucial offensive started that resulted in this capture of the SF center may be 1979, when the impetus of Reaganism and of *Star Wars* (the two were in 1983 successfully fused in the public mind by Reagan's "Star Wars" speech) had begun to bear fruit, so that three major warmongering series by Bretnor, Drake, and Pournelle were started by central SF publishers, reinforcing Pournelle's pioneering "Co-Dominium" series of 1971. In the 80s the series multiplied further, and a proper SF pro-military group was constituted lobbying for Star Defense armaments and wars. I cannot add much to the story already well told by Franklin (200-01, 211, and passim), Proietti ("Saving"), and other critics to be found in the Proietti-Suvin Bibliography. From the early 80s on, SF movies also bettered the *Rocky* series or other mundane hypermasculine warriors in the "hardened" cyborgs of *Terminator, Robocop, Cyborg,* and similar.

Eventually, in the militarist SF the torch began to pass from Pournelle's pioneering zest to the more routine activities of the entrepreneur-writer David Drake, who ranges from heroic planetary mercenaries to rewriting the battles of the Roman Empire with help of Aliens. However, I shall rather as briefly as possible concentrate on some works within the middle (and thus relatively much higher) ground of an SF weighing the pros and cons of war, militarism, and their price for people. The complex but considerable talent of C.J. Cherryh, who started publishing SF in 1977, though she deals much with aliens and conflict and seems to me as interesting as anybody else after that time, stands to my mind aslant to our polarized theme and will regretfully not be dealt with. This holds also for major contemporary UK writers, from James White's thoughtful "Sector General" sequence of novels on medicine and aliens (1962ff.) to Gwyneth Jones and Iain M. Banks from the 80s on and Ken Macleod from the 90s on, who can be rightly opposed to the prevailing black-and-white simplicities hugely preponderant in US SF. Finally, from the middle ground of what Jones rightly identifies as the feminized military SF series after 1985, I shall here discuss only their best writer, L.M. Bujold, and refer the reader to Jones's discussion of what I'd see as the lower forms from Elizabeth Moon to David Feintuch and David Weber.

Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game* is both one of the most important SF novels of the 80s and a broken-backed piece in many respects—possibly characteristic in that too. For 296 out of 324 pages, it looks like a remarkable use of kids' spacewar videogames as training for real space warfare with merciless Heinleinian Buggers. Exactly such behaviour by kids was praised at the time by President Reagan (see Fitting's article in Suvin ed., note 18) and channelled to the same effect in the movie *The Last Starfighter,* where a teenage videogame champion saves the galaxy; it was at the time also popularized by

the furore—and movies, one called *Wargames*—about teenage hackers. In the coda of 28 pages, our genius protagonist is told he and his child helper-friends actually fought and annihilated the whole species of Buggers. Thus the initial 91% look like a Cold War militarist scenario renewed by the point of view of an inmate of a very youthful military academy being dehumanized into a tool (if need be a "despicable" one—4/35) for humankind's survival. This would be an interesting piece of cynicism on its own, but it is suddenly unhinged in the 9% ending by Ender's guilt and horror at what he and the Terrans have wrought. Gwyneth Jones goes incisively to the novel's heart by noting that its basic move is "Ender annihilates rival: sheds crocodile tears; Ender annihilates rival: sheds crocodile tears. . . " (Section 1)—and I'd add that in Card's well-crafted writing this simultaneously formal and ideological gambit operates both within briefer segments and in the novel as a whole. The only question is, are they really crocodile tears, i.e., hypocritic sorrows?

To my mind they are and aren't: that is, Card attempts to have it both ways. True, when after each near-murderous or fully murderous triumph Ender feels terrible and indulges in moral agonizing, this could be written off as standard Puritan hypocrisy within a power trip. Joe Haldeman has noted how "This childlike, more or less boy-like, fascination with machines is a dominant motif in science fiction, especially the subgenre of military sf. . . . Like most American boys of my generation and previous ones, I had a childhood dominated by weapons-oriented play." (94) On the one hand, then, the body of Card's novel yokes convincingly such a (slightly extrapolated) psychology of usually defenceless children to the blind needs of the huge war machine: the individual is predisposed towards it but has, in this period which Jones's essay shrewdly identifies as the "pause" (between Vietnam and the Twin Towers), to be persuaded to assume all of its murders, up to Pournellian genocide of a whole alien species and civilization. But on the other hand—and here Card's religious antecedents come into play—the most arresting passages of the novel are Ender's encounters with what seems a kind of own externalized subconscious in the school computer game; and in the ending, after Ender refuses to lead another war, it turns out these were attempts by the Buggers to communicate with him. He finds the cocoon of the last Bugger hive-queen, potential progenitress of a renewed species, and gathers from telepathic messages the two species had been alike in the inability to understand there could be any thinking (psychozoic) Other. He writes a book detailing "all the good and all the evil" (15/322) of the Bugger hive, and becomes a Speaker for the Dead, a habit that catches on among humans. This unashamedly utopian and pacifist ending is then transferred to Ender's further cosmic travels which in following novels (*Speaker for the Dead* and *Xenocide*) result in finding a planet for the cocoon and averting another potentially genocidal interspecies misunderstanding. Ender's qualms in the first novel remain belated and quite

insufficient to balance a genocide, but its ending and the sequels forbid treating them as hypocrisy. They share the blind spots of all religious pacifism: to end war, they define it as due to misunderstandings rather than interest conflicts (no nations or classes exist for Card), and they put their faith in a super-charismatic Saviour to effect the necessary moral contagion; but at least they want to end them.

Gwyneth Jones argues that Card's *Ender's Game* is in a way near to Haldeman's *Forever War*, since both of their authors are working off the influence of the 60s, evident in the horror at the loss of innocence in and because of inescapable war. The point is well taken—both protagonists "light out for the Territory" (far-off planets), working out their personal destiny and leaving Earth to rot on its own—though the divergencies between a Vietnam veteran turned pacifist and a Mormon missionary to Brazil should not be minimized either. The first notes the ravages of irreversible linear time, only partly stanched by male comradeship and heterosexual erotics; the second uses Einsteinian time-dilation to string on it planets like beads in the earnest (and sexless) Messianic quest among strange tribes. In the interval, something has been gained, mainly in "thicker" description; much has been lost.

Lucius Shepard's *Life during Wartime*, though, is clearly a throwback to the spirit of the 60s—youth culture, drugs, and all: primarily to the feverish throbbing of its music. Its narrative texture reads like a nightmare hijack of Mailer's (or indeed Pynchon's) war absurdities into early Spinrad country. His protagonist is a rock-loving soldier in an interminable Central American jungle war (a melding of Vietnam and the dirty "little wars" the US government was fighting in Latin America before and after it, usually by proxy mercenaries). Its first part describes in vivid vernacular detail the drug-saturated atmosphere and confused decay in and around the army, and Mingolla's[3] eventual ethical revulsion from such dehumanization; but then it founders in an overlong confusion of ESP, love and treachery, and a politically illiterate attribution of global power struggles and protracted wars to an *Illuminatus*-type conspiracy, based yet on two Panamanian families in control of a rare drug source.

A similar problem besets John Shirley's in many ways rich and extraordinary "A Song Called Youth" or "Eclipse" trilogy (*Eclipse, Eclipse Penumbra*, and *Eclipse Corona*). Like the politically aware SF of the 60s, and indeed the 40s, but isolated in the latter half of the 80s (when it came out), it is engaged in antifascist resistance, this time against a Rightwing US Christian variant of fascism called SA, which is taking over Europe with the connivance of NATO during a protracted stalemate within a limited nuclear war against the USSR. Various protagonists, notably the rock musician Rickenharp (who composes the Song Called Youth) meet, fight, and die under the leadership of a maverick Israeli in an unequal underground struggle, mainly in Paris but ranging widely over the Old World, and there is a parallel subplot on an orbital

colony. Impressive accounts of technical advances in warfare and communication, including cyberpunk-type jacking in, and of political skulduggery on both sides are intercut to form a broad global overview, within which an antifascist coalition ranging from punk anarchists and communists to liberals unmasks the dastards before the UN, and our main protagonist Danny or Hard-Eyes can go off and enjoy true love in orbital free-fall. The long and deft plot is vastly superior in political savvy to Shepard and indeed most US SF, which has since Spinrad and Le Guin become addicted to navel-gazing; Shirley even prefigures the 90s' youth and antiwar movements, which have again had extremely few echoes here. Yet his narrative is still naive about the sea-change in world politics and militarism that was developing in the USA. If Shepard's novel is a drug-perfected ESP story used for anti-war purposes, Shirley's smoother trilogy is a somewhat macho youth-culture revolt mingling Chicago in 1968 with the anti-Nazi resistance in retro ways. Both narratives have their heart in the right (60s') place but their head has not been updated, and both in retrospect seem anachronistic. Eschewing rosy sentimentality and feel-good inwardness to delve into disturbing yet essential matters of collective survival, they have not had nearly the popularity of much inferior writings.

After Kelso's essay "Loud Achievements" and the brilliant pages by Jones devoted to Lois McMaster Bujold, I can be briefer about her improbable but successful marriage of the sentimental and military narratives than this would deserve. The marriage can be read either as militarism with a human face, gathering new SF readers from the kinder and gentler wing (mainly women) who may perhaps then go on to sterner stuff, or as a subtle subversion weaning readers away from war and militarism. In the absence of a full dissection of her dozen volumes in and around the "Vorkosigan Saga," my impression is that Bujold modulates from one position to the other within each work but that within the development of the series she leans more strongly toward the non-militarist horizon. Kelso argues that from the second novel on the dominant military space opera slowly gives way, within the education of our quite central hero, Miles Vorkosigan, to what I'd call sentimental-cum-political intrigue, so that in the second quinquennium of publication—from *Barrayar* (1991) on—which effects a "deeper pass over the landscape of the earlier books" ("Loud" 12), the taking back of militarism on the whole predominates. This is symbolized by Miles's death and rebirth in *Mirror Dance* (1994), and becomes compositionally unmistakable when he in *Memory* (1996) resigns from the military, and the "saga" shifts into the civilian mode.

Furthermore, by a series of binary manoeuvers Bujold has shifted Miles right from the beginning out of the Pournelle-to-Drake patriarchal killer type, hugely predominant in US SF. The first such manoeuver is his descent from a strong "progressive" mother, Cordelia Naismith, and an honourable ruling-class officer in the first and possibly untranscended volume, *Shards of Honor*

(1986). Even the title is doubly binary: honour (an important value in and out of the military) is in shards, but even if broken up they are still shards of honour. Indeed, *Shards* and *Barrayar* have been retrospectively but not without reason reunited in a dilogy called *Cordelia's Honor*, which not only underscores the original focus on Cordelia and sympathetic parenting but makes it obvious how Miles too is a blend with the "feminine" qualities predominating. The second manoeuver is Miles's fetal poisoning by enemies of his father's reformism, which results in brittle bones, small stature, and a distinctly non-macho, even slightly comical appearance. This has the advantage of triggering the Ugly Duckling or folktale pattern, where the seemingly poor and downtrodden hero at the end wins, here by a combination of brains and valour, enlisting the empathy of readers. The third binary is Miles's double role as junior officer (who is in reality a privileged imperial spy) and swashbuckling admiral of a mercenary fleet doing the empire's dirty business among far galaxies. The fourth is a foregrounding of the doubling or mirroring device in the interaction with his clone brother Mark, and less obtrusively with the trajectory of one of his loves, Elena Bothari; and one could doubtless go on (say about the name Miles, both archetypal Latin soldier and Twain's pauper that passes for prince, see Kelso "Loud" 12 and Proietti, "Saving" note 12). One could even suspect that such doublings anamorphically reproduce and negotiate Bujold's double allegiance to psychological SF of the Le Guin type (half a dozen subsidiary characters are deftly sketched in) and to military SF of the galactic space-opera type: to exploring malleable gender identities within the rigid line-up of the military.

There are drawbacks to Bujold's meld: Miles is often the hero of a Regency romance, improbably charming, resourceful, even sexy—Rochester masquerading as Jane Eyre. Conversely, gory interstellar warfare is hollowed out but also accepted as inevitable—this is well symbolized by the marriage of Miles's liberal mother to his heretic warrior father. Within Bujold's briskly competent narrative drive, her writing encompasses both felicitous nuggets and what I'd call some (not quite purple but) rosy prose. While planets are—somewhat vaguely—differentiated by ideological traditions, any vertical social tension is absent (Kelso cites Bujold's remark that the home Vorkosigan planet is the "white-bread suburb of the galaxy," "Loud" 14). However, it should not be forgotten that in two somewhat marginal novels, foremost in *Falling Free*, she managed to broach a working-class exploited as slave labour, the genetically modified "quaddies," disguised as childlike innocents in a love story of modest pretensions. And the great final chapter of *Shards*, finding and washing the space dead, to my mind transcends Card's focus on the heroic protagonist's guilt and reparation: it encapsulates Bujold's concern with the simultaneously *collective and individual price of war* to ordinary people, whom it destroys.

A more overt antiwar-cum-feminist voice is to be found in Joan Slonczewski's *A Door into Ocean* (1986). It is a variant on Le Guin's untranscended template in *The Dispossessed* of an exploitative planet, whose inhabitants are possessed by "propertarianism," vs. an egalitarian moon, here with several go-betweens of different stature. In place of the greedy rich planet as against the poor egalitarians, here the hard-dry-stony, aggressively militarist and feudal, hi-tech planet is opposed to the soft-wet-silken water-covered moon, inhabited by ecobiologically oriented and parthenogenetic women, while the rule and mores of a highly destructive and repressive patriarchy is opposed to the "lovesharer" women, who live in a cross between modern basis-democracy anarchism, early Quaker sharing unanimity, tribal communism, and a feminist sister-gathering. Furthermore, instead of the non-interfering estrangement in *The Dispossessed* between the opposed camps, *A Door* is halfway to *The Word for World Is Forest* in that a more realistic military invasion of the hard imperialists takes place and has to be thwarted with great losses to the seemingly soft but unyielding pacifists. A major strength of Slonczewski's is the creation of a very full world ecology, in the imaginative and liberating tradition of explicitly anthropological SF—among others by Oliver, Blish or Bishop—which does not take place in the linear clarity of Le Guin's (or Herbert's) desert but in the rich depths and interstices of the planet-wide ocean. The politics of the conflict are supply dialectical rather than black and white (the worst military torturer is a woman), but to my mind the respectably Gandhian premise of the ocean-dwellers' victory is much too optimistic. Yet if this novel, one of the masterpieces of the 80s, is a throwback to the US 60s, it also carries forward its "make love not war" theme, being reborn in the protests against the ravages of global eco-destruction.

Perhaps this is the place to mention briefly works of two SF authors I consider to be second to none in their respective generations, and indeed our major beacons, Ursula K. Le Guin and Kim Stanley Robinson. But both have given their major contributions to our theme outside of this period, Le Guin in 1972, with *The Word for World Is Forest*, as argued in my Part 1, and Robinson in 2002 with the *Years of Rice and Salt*, so that their partial incidence on our theme will here be dealt with briefly. Within Le Guin's monstrously multifaceted and splendid work *Always Coming Home*—perhaps the most impressive summa of soft primitivism we have had in utopian or science fiction—the astoundingly rich pastoral recreation of tribalism and ecological balance is systematically violated only by the slave-owning warring male horde of Condors in the "Stone Telling" sections, for whose militarism only rapacious machismo seems responsible. But it is marginal within the mosaic-like work, and a sickness that ebbs away by itself. While this may be acceptable in that (so to speak) renewed prelapsarian world, it is of little help with the immediate concerns becoming more pressing every year.

Robinson has in the Dennis McPherson-Stewart Lemon strand of his multi-plotted *The Gold Coast* given us the best inside description of skulduggery in (very slightly extrapolated) Pentagon procurements deals, which have "all the trappings of an objective rational process, but [are] at the same time fairly easy to manipulate to whatever ends are desired" (42/213) and the crazy self-serving world of the military-industrial complex. As an exasperated engineer grumbles:

> "Need a boost—military spending—it's been the method of choice ever since World War Two got them out of The Great Depression. Hard times? Start a war! Or pump money into weapons whether there's a war or not. It's like we use weapons as a drug, snort some up and stimulate the old economy. Best upper known to man." (42/220)

Within a novel centered on drug-taking, this is the most potent drug. And Robinson went on to his masterpiece of the 90s, the "Mars" trilogy, which to my mind made him the torch bearer of the historicizing SF that Le Guin had by then largely forsaken for other interests. It is the richest and most believable history—slightly anamorphic to Terra, as when our "green" movement is on Mars (of course) the "red" one—of both corporate struggles against people who actually create a livable planet and ecological struggles of conservation vs. transformation. Revolution and repression, militarization and resistance happen here too, but the occasional shooting is given unrivalled scope and breadth by the multiple and criss-crossing causes and consequences, allowing the reader the greatest of all freedoms: to think through and about it, as an estranged history with alternate time-streams whose coming into being as collective history is the work of praxis (cf. Jameson "If I Find").

Disclaimers similar to what I can discuss here from the opuses of Le Guin and Robinson are due for another as important writer, Marge Piercy. Quite reasonably, she bet in the 1991 *He, She and It* on a future of ecological mega-breakdown and, before the full takeover by Bushism and the Warfare State, on the passage of power to a few mega-corporations with wastelands and gang-ruled urban sprawls in between. Corporation centers and a few "free cities" supplying indispensable specialized know-how live under domes, one of them being our focal Jewish city of Tikvah (which is lay and cyber-oriented—Israel has been destroyed in an atomic war). Life in the mega-corporation cities is indistinguishable from total militarization in the name of technoscience, whereas their conflicts between each other and the free cities at times erupt into mini-wars conducted by both internet and reality warfare. This is the case after our protagonists in Tikvah succeed to produce the perfect defense cyborg Yod, who is programmed both with the male and female stance, with power and deviance, and thus also a perfect, considerate and tireless, lover (a parallel plot, which I shall slight here, concerns the Golem Joseph defending the Jewish ghetto in Baroque Prague). The successful defense of Tikvah flows at the end

into a tentative alliance with the politicized gangs in the sprawl on the ex-US East Coast. This rich novel focusses not only on female scientists but presents also, most cognate to our theme, two female underground fighters, the info pirate Rivkah and the enhanced cyborgized Nili from an Israeli-Palestinian women's enclave surviving hidden in the radioactive zone. It is an example of intelligent SF integration of warfare into her earlier mixture of ecology and political economy with resistance and feminist concerns in her two SF novels *Dance the Eagle to Sleep* and *Woman on the Edge of Time*. Its scenario is at the moment not on the historical agenda, but may return to it if Bushism is defeated and/or the ecology massively breaks down.

My final exhibit here is another novel by Haldeman, *Forever Peace*. It is nearest to us in time, so that it can incorporate both the latest technoscience and the urgency of getting out of Bushist warfare. It has the, to my mind enormous, advantage of attempting to show how the war-cum-militarist universe could be ended by action, but an ambiguously utopian and finally unbelievable way to get out of it. The premises are scientifically impeccable, though by now overoptimistic: a nanotechnology which determines both the protracted North-South global-cum-civil, class-cum-race war in the first part of the novel and (in its ability to create any objects out of water and sand) the "Universal Welfare State" with "electrocash" economy on the US side of the war divide. The warfare is fought mainly by highly trained university people on their three-year minimum draft, "combat-jacking" into invulnerable war-robots—thus melding the SF traditions of Heinleinian suits and cyberpunk. The interesting psychological aspects of a platoon of ten soldiers with interconnected brains, making for a new morality but also vulnerability, is carried over into the "civilian" part, which begins as a scientific puzzle about building a planet-sized particle accelerator on Jupiter and ends as a political thriller. It turns out that the Jupiter Project, supposed to recreate the Big Bang conditions, would also destroy the known universe, but that a Fundamentalist Christian End of the World sect blocks its suspension for religious reasons. Our heroes, who are by convenient coincidence also colleagues of the top US scientists, find out that prolonged collective jacking-in renders people incapable of hurting others. Though the sect's hard core has infiltrated the government and army command, our heroes' derring-do (they occupy the neuralgic center of power in Washington, DC and subject its inmates to the pacifist jack-in) prevails, and we all live happily ever after in a saved universe and pacifist world.

It is not clear why the "nano-forges" are kept a US Government secret when their worldwide use would obviate all scarcity and the need for unending wars, but this is perhaps politically believable; more to the point, it is not believable they could remain a secret. Furthermore, while a plot by scientists to save both peace and the universe by changing the brains of the generals is a very welcome utopia, this unfortunately encompasses both its meanings of a better place and

of an impossible no-place. The story's beginning of super-cyborgized jungle warfare remains a believable anti-war tale, its middle a rare SF warning about the misuses and huge dangers of technoscience, and its end a very early prescient alarm at one of the main pillars of present US administration, the so-called Christian Zionists who do hold a belief that one should hasten Armageddon. It is also a rare example, just like Haldeman's earlier novel, of a story adopting the usual military and technoscientific grounds (cyberwarfare, huge scientific projects) but then hollowing them out in an, as it were, self-criticism from within. But like some other narratives based on miraculous nanotechnology (say one by Greg Bear), it degrades into a fairy tale.

2. Hints as to a Conclusion

2.1 A Little Sociology

US "Military SF" (one of five subgroups for SF in the catalogue I referred to in 1.2) is a small though meaningful epicycle on the mega-cycle of imaginatively organizing and then really fighting this never-ending war. What does it matter that is as a rule poorly written, monotonous, repetitive, and addictive? Or, perhaps even more strikingly, that it defies elementary rules of sense, such as when, in *Star Trek: Nemesis* of 2002 (though mass media are always more brainless that the corresponding level of written fiction), the final conflict between huge spaceships is still a pirate-style boarding and fistfight? It sells well and confirms audience expectations. I have to be the bearer of bad news: obviously, a large part—most probably a majority—of the main audience that has historically nurtured SF after Wells, the US youth and intellectuals, has undergone what is in Italian nicely called *imbarbarimento*, descent into barbarism, or in US idiom dumbing down. Gwyneth Jones pithily characterizes the core that reads military SF as "the rich-poor (materially rich, poor in every marker of high culture) of the USA" (79). The causes would include huge existential pressures on the spottily employed and systematically humiliated youth as well as the huge monophonic propaganda machines of all the media, turning aggression and rage against foreign scapegoats.[4] In the middle of this process (still ongoing), Rifkin concluded that the USA is becoming

> a country populated by a small cosmopolitan elite of affluent Americans enclosed inside a larger country of increasingly impoverished workers and unemployed persons. The middle class, once the signature of American prosperity, is fast fading.... In 1989 the top 1 percent of families... owned... 50.3 percent of the net financial assets of the country. (173; see on the horrendous statistics of "The Other America" and "The New Reserve Army" of increasing poverty 177-94)

However, a kind of "cold Civil War" that raged in many US cities of the 60s-70s, and still characterized much cyberpunk in the 80s, has been turned to growing criminality and drug-consumption—though not at all to greater urban security. Not only the richest capitalists and executives but also the new elite professionals or "symbolic analysts"— "distinguished from the rest of the population by their global linkages, comfortable lifestyles,... and abundance of security guards"—went in for secession into isolated enclaves (Robert Reich, cited in Rifkin 177), lauded early on by a Pournelle-Niven novel and best depicted by the latter Ballard. On the fringes of such symbolizers, subject to the same pressures as their readers, most SF writers have joined the engineers of material and human resources, the admen and design professionals, the new bishops and cardinals of the media clerisy, most lawyers, and the teeming swarms of supervisors as the Post-Fordist "organic" mercenaries. They have sincerely or cynically jumped aboard and refused to think about the price of war and militarism, in US and abroad. They are engaging in what Le Guin has, already in less extreme contexts, called "[a] denial of authorial responsibility, a[n elitist,] willed unconsciousness" ("Introduction" 5). We are lucky to still have niches for the Robinsons and Slonczewskis, voices going against the current, as well as SF from the UK. In the climate of increasing repression, with laws in USA (also UK and France) already allowing for secret, unlimited, and judicially unreviewed detention of any stranger plus suspect "sympathizer," I can only hope such niches will last. But the overall frenzied propaganda for war and militarism will obviously go on in the USA until the macro-political climate changes.

In the meantime, we should strive to understand. All of this is being done in a feedback system of writers and readers, our colleagues, our classmates (if I may coin a term). How come?

2.2 Notes on Agents and Stances

My hypothesis developed in the first part of this study (in Hassler and Wilcox eds.) is, first, that various fractions of intellectuals, between the poles of Le Guin's humanly responsible and irresponsible ones, talk to each other in the symbolic analyses of art. In military SF, a great majority of titles and writers belong to the latter pole. The balance between the two groups in the subgenre may be skewed, for many prominent writers and critics have such a distaste for anything associated with war, and therefore the military, that they refuse this framework *a limine*. The key question is: how is such a dialogue conducted, in what ways and forms? In fiction, by means of a narration employing agents, chronotopes, and stances. My hypothesis is, second, that in SF, and even more clearly in such a schematized subgenre as military SF, they are all to some degree (and in novel ways) allegorical: that their reason for being is to

refract societal stances, choices or structures of feeling. I have discussed their novelty, and some examples elsewhere, so I here only attempt a sounding of their stances.

Almost all the narrative agents in militarist SF, from Heinlein's archetypal Space Soldier called Johnny Rico on, repose on an irreconcilable contradiction. The individualist stress on the narrative protagonist-hero/ine, who is—with wens and all, as Cromwell said to his painter—the reader's narrative focus and guide, is at odds with the collective framework into which modern mass organizations (the bureaucracy, but most notably the executive, Catch-22 bureaucracy-in-arms of an army or interstellar navy) and the consubstantial mass technology inevitably put her. What Jameson would call the personal and the tale of the tribe are simultaneously contrary to each other and a source of potential strength. In military SF, you must be both a hero and an interchangeable cog in the all-encompassing machine. Thus the price is very high: the collectivity no longer stands for participatory democracy from below upward but for militarized hierarchy.

A basic choice presents itself here, which is part and parcel of the perennial "two souls" of US SF, polarized between the paths which I argued for in Part 1, the thoughtful Twain-to-Le Guin one weighing the price and the gung-ho Edisonade-to-Heinlein path. The poles differentiate warmongers from the war critics. Is there a material and moral price to what Henry James's *American Scene* called the US linear accumulation of the "perpetual increase of everything" or not? Will the authorial stance focus on the inevitable or even exhilarating nature of war, boyishly—and after the 80s also girlishly—foregrounding the nifty technology and ranging through all the times and spaces of actual or imaginable history, or will it focus on its historical price in atrocious psychophysical suffering of victims, whether enemies or "our" soldiers, and the destruction of things and values? If the former, is there any redeeming element to be found within imperial trash indulging in destruction? If the latter, is there any indication as to the causes of war and militarism which would help the reader to understand how these might be prevented?

Often, the refusal to envisage the price in blood and suffering means a shift from army to navy locales, and in the extreme cases to space equivalents of the Strategic Air Command (cf. Franklin 95-108; Jameson, "Science Fiction" 36) busting planets into smithereens. When the Marines have to descend to slugging it out on the ground, the technological wonders of "suits" isolate combatants from the gory mess, even more so when battles are followed from spaceships on virtual space screens in pretty streaks of colour—as inaugurated by *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*, which spoke to the adolescent "love for shiny gadgets, spiffy uniforms, authoritative-sounding technotalk and a hot rod that shoots really cool laser blasts" (Corliss). But such militarist SF mainstream, from Pournelle to Drake or Moon is rather dreary (and furthermore much of it is discussed in the

essays by Jones and Proietti). As a rule, the pro-war writings are only about the war/military, plus some crude identificatory ego-psychology. To the contrary, as a rule the anti-war writings are only partly about the war, i.e., also about much more around the war. Though this makes them difficult to summarize, I shall focus on a few narrative as well as ideological characteristics of the better SF about war and militarism, mainly in the "pause" period 1974-2001 discussed above. First, about the narrative agents and their consubstantial chronotopes: and centrally, do victims have faces here?

Militarist and pro-war SF works are at best, say in Heinlein, allegories of socializing the reader (at first only male, as of the mid-80s also female—see much more in Jones) into triumphant warfare and the military. As opposed to them, in anti-war works the voice, stance or view of (and at best from) the plebeian *underdogs and victims* is incorporated to various degrees and in various ways, latching on to the Twainian tradition of Sturgeon, Disch, Le Guin, Dick, and others. The underdogs—as a rule, overtly or covertly, US characters—are variants on either duped soldiers in the field (in both Haldeman titles and Shepard) or on the refuseniks who understand they're other, as already Sturgeon's soldier and Cordwainer Smith's Commander did: some of Shirley's, Robinson's, Le Guin's (in "New Atlantis") or Haldeman's (in *Peace*) underground members or subversives, Slonczewski's collectivist women, and Piercy's alliance of women, cyborg, and underground (surprizingly, Poul Anderson has an exceptional refusal of genocide in "Dereliction"). Card's Ender begins as a dupe with an aptitude for ruthlessness plus agonizing about it, but at the end bursts that chrysalis, as it were, and becomes a religious and super-elite refusenik. Again, Card is having it both ways: Ender is a child, for most of the narration much sinned against, but also a genius and White as in the most Rightwing militarist SF. But as a rule, our protagonist to be identified with is a draft-age male, and such SF rehearses from the late 60s on the alternatives posed in all clarity for the Vietnam War generation.

In some significant exceptions, the protagonist is not single but serial/collective and/or female, as in Slonczewski and Robinson (Piercy adds the ambidextrous cyborg). Haldeman's *Peace* seems inscribed into "hard SF," written for and about scientists and academics, but subversively speaks out of this community and about the dangers of technoscience; Piercy is equally immersed into cyber-programming but here science is again (also) a weapon for freedom. At the "soft" end of this spectrum, in Le Guin, Slonczewski, Robinson, and Piercy, the status of women (and of sane erotics) is, as usual in the Left tradition, a measure of both power and victimization: rape precedes and signals genocide. As the Italian Futurists' Manifesto of 1909 pithily put it, on the eve of the season of World Wars: "We shall glorify war—the world's only hygiene—militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of freedom-bringers, beautiful ideas worth dying for, and scorn for women" (Marinetti 41-42).

To the contrary, with a very few exceptions such as Haldeman and Piercy, in the war critics technoscience is slighted in favour of psychological and even political argument. The presence of a hospital (quite frequent in Bujold) is a signal of heterodoxy, concentrating on the bodily price of war, and even more so the rare presence of burial ceremonies (as at the end of Bujold's *Shards* and in a way of Card) or of sacrifice (in Piercy). Both may show the raw presence of mangled bodies, this final vulnerable rampart of humanity, excised in pro-war writing beginning with Heinlein (see my Part 1, and much more in Proietti, "Saving"). Finally, the victims we are shown can be supposed enemies and outright Aliens—a difficult feat, managed only in Le Guin's creechies in *The Word*, Piercy's cyborg, or at a remove in Card's Bugger queen, though I suppose the parthenogenetic collectivist women of Slonczewski's are the truly alien Other to the mercantile patriarchy. The family resemblance between terms for such derided and disposable people, taken from the dominant lingo which the SF shows up as alienating, reveals to my mind their root in political deviance: creechies (the natives) are homeomorphic to Disch's conchies (conscientious objectors) and even earlier Pohl-Kornbluth's consies (conservationists), the template for all of them being the post-1945 witchhunt commies (communists).

The last 100 years (from, say, 1911 on) have been, first, times of never-ending mass warfare, internal or international, of which the two World Wars were only the noticeable peaks; the lulls in the North around the two World Wars were a local illusion. World War 2 was fought in good part to end the internal dangers of the US and then global Depression, and it can be argued the USA is since the early 1960s exporting its low-grade urban warfare precisely in the form of militarized "police actions"—certainly there's no dearth of prominent SF works arguing that. Second, not coincidentally, this is the epoch of mass bureaucracy, itself born out of war procurements, and identified in the pioneering novelists and critics from the neuralgic areas of imperial Europe East of the Rhine—Germany, Austro-Hungary, Russia. It is again Jameson who remarks how Big Brother has in the US globalization been supplanted by the language as used by prostitute mass media and experts: "Everyone today is, if not organized then at least organizable," and what has been called "subject-positions" are "the forms of identity afforded by group adherence." The demolition of the nuclear subject has had positive cognitive aspects, bursting the shackles of individualism. But Jameson adds the warning, quite evidently also applicable to militarist SF, that "the dissipation of those illusions [as to the autonomy of thought] may reveal a wholly positivist landscape from which the negative has evaporated altogether, beneath the steady clarity of what has been identified as 'cynical reason'" (*Postmodernism* 322-23).

When people (or their stand-ins, the narrative agents) are inserted into huge organized groups—bureaucratic, technoscientific, military—with an overwhelming structure, seemingly as firm and eternal as Saussure's *langue* is when

compared to any of its actualizations in *parole,* this is much more than a framework. Just as language, it is an intimately osmotic home (that with startling frequency in this corpus turns also into a prison-house) intervening into or indeed shaping the protagonist's deepest love-hate values. These may be most revealingly analyzed as the knot of belonging, which will lead to stances toward war and militarism. In this knot, the single personality is not only part of a collective, it is made possible and at least co-created by the collective. The best theoretical tool I've found to begin dealing with this is Jameson's "overdetermination in ambivalence," where works and narremes (such as the protagonist) "become endowed with associations at one and the same time 'plebeian' and 'bureaucratic,' with the not unexpected political confusion inherent in such ambivalence" (*Postmodernism* 314).

Thus, a crucial parameter in these narrations is the difference in *authorial stance* (usually transferred to central narrative agents) concerning mass slaughter, which entails a choice of belonging. Blithely condoning it as either inevitable or even good, and correlatively finding a home in the military, is omnipresent in pro-war SF, which has a special narrative role of "shreddies," minor characters wasted mercilessly and repetitively (though there are exceptions concerning military honour and care for the troops as against *realpolitik*). On the other pole is opposition to slaughter, especially when the line between the killed are combatants or civilians becomes unclear, vividly brought out in Shiner, Haldeman's two novels, Robinson, and Piercy, correlative to which are alternate communities of dissident scientists and even underground fighters (as already in Russ's *Female Man*, Le Guin's *Word*, and Dick's *A Scanner Darkly*). In this most alienating world, opposition to war and to the military is not always identical, for the military can be an apparent—and for a while real—surrogate home of soldierly fraternity, as in most Bujold and in the earlier Haldeman (and as, for a while, in the 20th-Century armies arisen from liberation wars or revolutions, from Trotsky's Red Army, Villa, Zapata or Ataturk to the later guerrillas and partizans).

In function of the narration's stance (*intentio operis*) is the *political setup* envisaged. It ranges from direct extrapolation of the Cold War and Vietnam War situations, modulating into Third World threats and then terrorism, say in both of Haldeman's novels, to Bujold's benevolent quasi-feudal empire with local autonomy (not capitalist, but more than a little Ruritanian—however, as different from Cordwainer Smith's not so benevolent and immensely powerful oligarchy, rather rosy than somber); Card characteristically straddles both extrapolation and exoticism. I am tempted to posit as the absolute limit of all US SF about war the fact that politics are never caused by economic interests—at the very rare best, in Le Guin's *Word*, Robinson's "Mars" or Slonczewski, these can be mentioned as one not further examined factor. The economic process is reduced to the destructive consumption in war, while class interests (so glaring in Bushism) do not appear even in an authorial subconscious. In that context, Piercy's setup

of economic politics is a glaring exception, correlative to her not writing primarily for the SF readership.

The opposition may range from (loyal or cynical) doubt to outright anti-war stance, beginning with passive resistance. As Haldeman's article exemplarily concluded, illustrating his trajectory to *Forever Peace*:

> I had refused to kill people directly, but wasn't reluctant to apply technology and expertise to the same end.... [M]erely paying income tax made you an accessory to the murder of Vietnamese; civil disobedience was the only moral alternative. If I'd known then what I know now, that may have been the route I'd taken. ("Vietnam" 100-01)

Beyond doubt and passive resistance, or indeed the quite frequent *deus ex machina* happy ending (as in Haldeman *War*, Card, Shepard, and Shirley) often making for what I have called broken-backed narratives, actual active resistance, if need be an apostasy against one's own country of provenance and original allegiance, arises very rarely: I can think in this period only of Shirley, Le Guin, Robinson, Piercy, and Haldeman *Peace*. The huge pressures of fannish (and probably publishing) conformism as well as of self-censorship are evident here.

The 1961-74 "Golden Age" culminated in the refusal of linear *time*, of technoscientific progress that led to vaster murdering, by opting out as in Haldeman's *Forever War* or by more heroic opposition as in Le Guin's *The Word for World*. This recurs here too but in muted forms. It may become simply personal evasion, as in Shepard, improbably coupled with political reversal, as in Card, or it may be collective resistance, as in the failed group of Le Guin's "New Atlantis," in Robinson's, Slonczewski's, and Piercy's more successful and best articulated mass movements or, midway between them, Haldeman's improvised scientists' cabal. Often, as in Shirley, there is a nostalgic ending having the best of both: after the victory of resistance, the bliss of anti-gravity erotics. Bujold's simpler worlds of space opera avoid the final evasion by structurally incorporating it into the binary tensions between the militarist and sentimental or erotic aspects, yoked together by our victorious but afflicted hero, victim and power-holder in a charmed universe.

I would consider all of these narrative strategies, finally revealed at the end of each book, as attempts to find a space for the utopias of pacifism, erotics, and finally of self-determination in a hostile world which often bends them out of recognition. Yet narratively and realistically unmotivated utopianism easily degrades into improbable fairy tale, if not Card's outright Messianism. Obversely, where alternatives are not only suggested but up to a point believably (which means collectively) shown in "thick" detail, as in Slonczewski, Robinson, and Piercy, utopianism grows what Bloch would call "concrete."

Just like its readers, US SF has not found a believable way out of war and militarism, but at its best it has given us precious articulations and signposts.

Notes

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1. As we all know, the story is more complex and contradictory. I am here speaking only about the overall effect of the intellectuals' adjustment, and have written at length about the nuances in "Introduction" and "Polity."

2. On criteria for fascism today, cf. Britt.

   On "survivalism": it is the fictional equivalent of the near-fascist or fully fascist "libertarian" militias, religious or lay, which bloomed in the 1980s and into the 90s. Their stories are set in post-holocaust venues where the hated State apparatus and its all-embracing citizenship has disappeared, so that our macho hero must kill or be killed. I would read this as the extrapolation and coming to the fore of the smouldering mini-civil-war in the post-1960s USA. It comes in two variants, with group protagonist, usually a political Right-wing tract with dystopian pretensions of eventual world-domination (cf. the pioneering survey by Orth in the Proietti-Suvin Bibliography), or with single protagonist, usually a tale of unbridled violence including torture and rape. The latter variant's higher, more or less sanitized reaches may be seen in Kate Wilhelm's *Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang* already in 1976 (discussed in my "Science Fiction"), the *Mad Max* movies and books, and in some fiction by Niven (cf. Franklin 211, Clute "Survivalist," and Proietti, "Saving" 94ff.). Significantly, as Clute notes, after the first Gulf Oil War in 1991 the fortunes of this subgenre abruptly ebbed; pre-empted by Bushism, this anxiety has been stanched, the war has been exported.

   Similarly, the very success and shameless ubiquity of earlier privately employed, secret or supposedly idealistic *mercenaries* (the "mercenaries business" is estimated at 130 billion dollars per year or one sixth of the global military spending, there are over 50,000 of them in Iraq only; cf. Singer, Traynor, and the wealth of data in "Multinationales") has reduced their visibility in military SF to just another variant or niche, as in Drake's "Hammer's Slammers" or the "Battletech" series.

3. An interesting question is why the Italian names like Mandella and Mingolla. My guess would be that they connoted a semi-peripheral position of their bearers: neither admitted to fully share WASP power like the Irish or the Jewish-Americans, nor on the periphery like the Black, Hispanic, and Asian-Americans.

4. The transferral of rage, when faced with what appears an insoluble existential quandary, to Others is a well-known sickness, present in the US tradition since the first colonizers applied it to Native Americans, see Smith-Rosenberg 1333 and passim. Cf. on rage when a sense of justice is offended Arendt 63-64 and on "the brutalizing effects of post-Fordist labor markets" and rage Luckhurst 149 and passim. The

best insights into the subject of mass killings and their meaning is to be found in the burgeoning new disciplines of Peace Studies and Sociology of Violence, cf. for an introduction Herberg-Rothe.

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