A Literary and Cultural History of Military Science Fiction and the United States of America, 1870s-2010s

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Abstract

This thesis is both a literary history of the military science fiction (military SF) subgenre and a cultural history of the United States of America during the twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries. This thesis academically rehabilitates a neglected literary subgenre, and utilises it to prove the efficacy of using literary texts, specifically science fiction (SF) texts, in the study of cultural history. It expands both the sources and methods of interpretation open to cultural historians. Employing the military SF subgenre as its archive, it examines the military SF narratives' engagement – through extrapolation, metaphor and allegory, as well as didacticism – with their historical-cultural contexts and those contexts' popular rhetorics, adopting methodologies from cultural history, the history of ideas, and the literary New Historicism. In addition to looking at period-specific themes – ranging from the emergence of the military-industrial complex and consensus anticommunism during the 1950s, through soldier alienation and the 'cult of the mercenary' during the Vietnam and post-Vietnam era of the 1970s and 1980s, to the renewed American Exceptionalism and military-civilian divide of the 2000s – this thesis focuses on American attitudes towards militarism and militarisation. The concept of militarism also provides a foundational division in the subgenre, between the two 'streams' of militaristic military SF and antimilitaristic military SF. This thesis, however, shows that the subgenre has primarily been sympathetic to militaristic and right-wing rhetorics, support for which has become increasingly strident in modern military SF.

<u>Acknowledgements</u>

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INTRODUCTION

Operation Plan: Military SF and the United States

While the military of the United States of America was involved in international conflict during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries – World War Two, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the First Gulf War, and the Iraq War – its counterparts and descendants in prose military science fiction (military SF) were fighting their own wars – the Bug War, the Chinger War, the Forever War, the Third Invasion, and the Slug War. This thesis is a literary history of military SF – a predominantly American phenomenon – and a cultural history of the United States between the 1870s and 2010s.

Military SF is science fiction featuring military organisations, military personnel as characters, military operations and technology, realistic depictions of military action and military culture, and a focus on the military viewpoint. The central aim of this study is to produce a foundational text defining and historicising the military SF subgenre of science fiction (SF) literature: to describe what military SF is, determine its history and major works and authors, and analyse how works of military SF have reflected and/or interrogated the cultural, political, and military contexts in which they were produced. It examines how military SF texts engage with ideas, rhetorics, and themes during various distinct periods of United States and SF history; and how quintessential military SF themes often correspond to quintessential or dominant U.S. cultural ideas, rhetorics, and themes. These themes range from the 'Yellow Peril' and Genocidal War, through Anti-communism and American Exceptionalism, Soldier Alienation and the Vietnam Syndrome, to the Superweapon and the Cult of the Mercenary, among others.[1] In particular, this thesis is interested in tracking U.S. cultural militarism – and militarisation (the

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[1] By rhetorics, this thesis means the reactions of discourse to context, or the place where language is engaged in cultural work, 'the sign of the play of forces within cultural life.' This look at discourse and rhetoric could be seen as in contrast to more traditional investigation of myth – which is seen as a fixed, satisfying and stable story. The term rhetorics is used, also, because in the view of some the U.S. has no ideology, lacking as it does the 'apparatus of ideology: a national religion, a unitary system of education under the control of the state, a cultural life and media monopolized by the state.' Philip Fisher, 'Introduction: The New American Studies: From Myth to Rhetorics', in *The New American Studies: Essays from* Representations, ed. by Philip Fisher (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), pp. vii-xxii (p. xxii).

reorganisation of society to enforce militarism) – through its representations in military SF. These representations take place within the two 'streams', broadly termed 'militaristic' military SF and 'antimilitaristic' military SF, which have been a part of the subgenre since its emergence in the 1940s and 1950s.[2]

Operational Environment: Background of the Topic

This thesis participates within several disciplines – usually treated separately and seldom approached together – including SF studies, literary studies, American studies, and cultural history. This study is a contribution to studies of the SF genre, in particular to histories of SF, in that it surveys and examines the military SF subgenre. It is a literary history of a distinct subgenre of literature, and a demonstration of the use of a New Historicist approach to literary study. It also contributes to the discipline of American studies, with a focus on a potentially uniquely American subgenre and American historical understanding. Finally, and most importantly, it is a contribution to the cultural history of the United States, and adopts, and encourages the use of, a cultural history approach utilising military SF as its primary sources. It demonstrates the usefulness of military SF as a source of U.S. cultural history and shows that studying narratives such as these is beneficial for historical research by bringing into relief cultural ideas, values, attitudes, and representations of the world. This thesis seeks to fill gaps in the body of literature of each of these disciplines: the gaps resulting from the neglect of an entire archive of literary texts – military SF – which provides useful sources for understanding the science fiction field, American literary culture, American popular culture, and American cultural history. While this thesis does not offer any startling new conclusions about American culture or for American historical understanding, it does provide confirmation through new sources and new approaches.

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[2] Darko Suvin, 'Of Starship Troopers and Refuseniks: War and Militarism in U.S. Science Fiction, Part 1 (1945-1974: Fordism)', in *New Boundaries in Political Science Fiction*, ed. by Donald M. Hassler and Clyde Wilcox (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 2008), pp. 115-144 (p. 122). Darko Suvin, 'Of Starship Troopers and Refuseniks: War and Militarism in U.S. Science Fiction, Part 2', *Extrapolation*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (2006), pp. 9-34 (p. 27).

Mission: Objectives of Thesis

This thesis builds on and contributes to work in both the fields of SF literary studies and American cultural history. The gaps in the study of SF literature – the lack of an examination of military SF – and in American cultural historiography – the failure to examine military SF texts for their historical worth – are both approached and ameliorated. This thesis provides both a literary history of military SF and a broad cultural history of the United States using military SF as the primary sources. The thesis' core concern is to demonstrate the usefulness of the military SF subgenre as a source for U.S. cultural history and cultural militarism.

The military SF subgenre – which is considered a literary ghetto by many people, including many SF fans – is a body of writing that contains a few masterpieces, a substantial number of mediocre and uninspired texts, and some truly awful works. However, this is not an aesthetic history of military SF; it is concerned primarily with military SF as a cultural representation, not as an art form. The subgenre is the 'archive' investigated by this thesis: this study 'maps' this archive, building a literary taxonomy of military SF, and studies its relationship to the historical-cultural contexts in which it was produced. [3] It thus contributes to the 'comprehensive mapping of the subgenres of science fiction' advocated by Gary Westfahl. [4] In addition it seeks to help academically rehabilitate and seriously engage a genre of literary that is often disparaged and neglected by scholars and readers of 'mundane', or 'mainstream', works. [5]

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[3] 'Archive' here is approached in a quasi-Foucauldian sense, referring less to a literal and concrete physical space where historians engage with material objects and more to an imaginative space where historians engage with cultural and discursive artefacts. It is a pluralistic body of authors and texts; a shared field of discourse, as Foucault writes, made up of a 'whole mass of texts' by 'so many authors who criticize one another, invalidate one another, pillage one another.' Disassociated from the physical space of the traditional archive, this 'archive' is more a 'discursive formation' in which 'different examples share the same patterns of concerns, perspectives, concepts, or themes.' Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1972), p. 146. Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, 'discursive formation', *Oxford Reference: A Dictionary of Media and Communication*, 2011 <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199568758.001.0001/acref-9780199568758-e-0729> [accessed on 14 November 2016].

[4] Gary Westfahl, *Cosmic Engineers: A Study of Hard Science Fiction* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), p. 116.

[5] 'Mundane' is an exclusionary term used describe work that is not related to science fiction, a synonym for 'mainstream' literature used by critics such as Damon Knight, Samuel Delany and Jonathan Clute. *Mundane,* despite its condescending overtones is a usefully contrastive form that avoids debates aroused by other current terms, such as 'mainstream,' 'realistic,' or 'naturalistic.' Kathleen L. Spencer, '"The Red Sun is High, the Blue Low": Towards a Stylistic Description of Science Fiction', *Science Fiction Studies*, 10, 1 (March 1983), pp. 35-49 (p. 47, f. 2). In addition, as

Each chapter looks at the literary texts (as historically constituted cultural practices) and the social, cultural, techno-cultural, ideological, and political contexts in which they were conceived, produced, and received. This thesis firmly espouses the belief that literary texts are absolutely inseperable from their historical contexts and should be studied with that in mind. It is interested in the way works both contest and replicate dominant rhetorics of the twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries in the United States; in how the fictional works engage with the rhetorics of 'consensus reality.'[6] Because military SF is a relatively recent addition to the field of literature – as is science fiction itself, only recognised as a distinct genre since the 1920s – this cultural history is a 'contemporary' history and concerned with so-called 'modern' literature: the vast majority of the thesis is focused on the post-1945 period, and only in Chapter Two does discussion stray before the mid-twentieth century.[7] The study is constructed around an investigation of how key ideas, rhetorics, concepts, topics, and attitudes are expressed and imagined in works of military SF, and how these representations changed, or not, over the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. These 'themes' include the Other ('the Alien'), Exceptionalism, Imperialism and Colonialism, Technology and War, Governance and Authoritarianism, Soldier Experience and Soldier Alienation, Mercenarism, and, above all, Militarism.[8] The thesis is an interpretive history of changing ideas, and the attitudes toward the themes are less a debate between authors and more a

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Samuel Delany writes, the use of the term mundane shows 'generic self-confidence.' Samuel Delany, *The Jewel-Hinged Jaw* (Elizabethtown, NY: Dragon Press, 1977), p. 12.

[6] 'Consensus reality' is what is generally agreed to be reality based on a consensus view and is a term used, in this thesis, as a contrast to the reality of the reader from the 'fictional reality' of the narratives examined. It is used in place of terms such as 'reality', the 'real world', 'real life', the 'actual world', 'empirical reality', and the like.

[7] These terms – 'modern' and 'contemporary' – are widely recognised as being problematic to historians, but are apropos enough for the time being. See Jordanova for discussion of these issues regarding modernity and contemporary history. Ludmilla Jordanova, *History in Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 124-128, 138.

[8] For the purposes of this thesis militarism involves the principle or policy of maintaining a large military establishment and aggressive military preparedness, military activity that does not contribute directly to the purpose of military forces (that is, the prevention or winning of wars), the belief that war is inevitable and necessary, the glorification of the ideals of a professional military class and the adulation of warrior culture, the postulation that military virtues are civil virtues, the tendency to regard military efficiency as the supreme ideal of the state, the predominance of the armed forces in the administration or policy of the state, the pervasive role of the military in the economic and political life of a nation, and the self-aggrandizement of the military and its promotion of war itself. Derived from the discussion of militarism in Chris Hables Gray, '"There Will Be War!": Future War Fantasies and Militaristic Science Fiction in the 1980s', *Science Fiction Studies*, 21, 3 (November 1994), pp. 315-336.

chronicle of how American perspectives on war and the military evolved between the 1930s and 2010s.

It should be made clear that these perspectives and attitudes are from a reduced field of viewpoints. Literary SF has long been dominated by straight, white, middle-class, Anglo-American males, so it is unsurprising that it is a literature bound up with white, middle-class Anglo-American concerns. William Gibson called SF 'triumphalist and militarist, a sort of folk propaganda for American exceptionalism', and noted its habit of projecting 'the world as a white monoculture' and 'the protagonist as a good guy from the middle class or above.'[9] Its influence 'reflects the cultural power of U.S. hypermodernism and the technoscientific ideology that undergirds its cultural hegemony.'[10] This is even more pronounced within the military SF subgenre. Military SF is, fundamentally, white, masculine, politically conservative, 'rich-poor' (that is: materially rich, culturally poor), formulaic, and addictive. Saying this, however, as well as white, male, conservatives – such as Robert Heinlein, Jerry Pournelle, and John Ringo – military SF has been produced by non-white (Gerry William), female (Andre Norton and Elizabeth Moon), and liberal (Joe Haldeman and John Scalzi) authors.

Commander's Intent: Significance of the Study

This research differs from previous studies in American cultural history by identifying and examining an entire SF subgenre, that of military SF, and utilising it as the archive for a study of the rhetorics and discourses promulgated in the United States during the twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries. This thesis is significant for both cultural history and literary studies.

This thesis presents an exemplar of the military SF literary subgenre's usefulness as an archive when looking at the cultural history of the United States. It also shows this archive's usefulness for examining American cultural militarism. As at least one scholar has written, SF 'is at its most American when it addresses military

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[9] David Wallace-Wells, 'William Gibson: The Art of Fiction No. 211', in *Paris Review* 197 (Summer 2011), pp. 107-149, available from < http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/6089/the-art-of-fiction-no-211-william-gibson> [accessed 20 June 2015].

[10] Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), p. 11.

themes', with American history and culture apparently providing 'conditions under which science fiction aligns itself creatively, productively, and critically' with such themes.[11] Studying military SF is germane to the study of United States cultural history because, despite many Americans' professed hostility toward war, war is central to their history and the way they define their nation. Furthermore, militarism and militarisation has always been an important part of U.S. history and popular culture, especially during the twentieth century, as seen in the writings of Michael S. Sherry, Tom Engelhardt, James William Gibson, Darko Suvin, and Andrew Bacevich.[12] Perhaps this explains why the vast majority of military SF is produced in the United States and suggests how beneficial studying such narratives is for historical research, as proven by this thesis.

This cultural history of military SF and the United States demonstrates a new way of looking at and understanding the events and attitudes of the twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries both in terms of sources and interpretation. Recognising the contentiousness of the issue, this thesis inserts itself into the debate over the use of fiction by historians, and provides an example of how the discipline can be expanded and enriched by such an approach. More specifically, regarding SF, it exhibits the usefulness of SF texts in historical research and argues that such texts are particularly revealing about cultural attitudes. It is obvious that SF, 'however much committed to the future, also reflects sideways upon its contemporary present' – engaging with it in an estranged setting, through metaphor and extrapolation – and that any SF text is a product of its time, 'now history as well as prophecy.'[13] Lisa Yaszek writes that cultural historians can read SF texts 'for what they reveal about the social values and practices of the past, especially as these texts confirm,

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[11] Steffen Hantke, 'Military Culture', in *The Oxford Handbook of Science Fiction*, ed. by Rob Latham (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 329-339 (p. 329).
[12] Michael S. Sherry, *In the Shadow of War: The United States Since the 1930s* (New Haven, Ct: Yale University Press, 1995); Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation,* revised edition (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007); James William Gibson, *Warrior Dreams: Paramilitary Culture in Post-Vietnam America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994); Suvin, 'Of Starship Troopers and Refuseniks: War and Militarism in U.S. Science Fiction, Part 2', pp. 9-34; Andrew Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans are Seduced by War* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[13] Paul A. Carter, 'From the Golden Age to the Atomic Age: 1940-1963', in *Anatomy of Wonder*, fifth edition, ed. by Neil Barron (Westport, CT, and London: Libraries Unlimited, 2004), pp. 45-58 (p. 57). Likewise, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr. calls SF is 'an institution of ideological expression' and 'a ludic framework… in which the hegemony is entertained, absorbed, and resisted.' Csicsery-Ronay Jr., p. 10.

complicate, and sometimes even directly challenge official pronouncements about these values and practices.' [14] This thesis shows the value of putting this into practice. The use of military SF stories as primary sources, in particular, offers a new angle on a century, and a nation, characterised by armed conflict, and cultures, ideas, and rhetorics shaped by these conflicts. This thesis proves the utility of military SF in investigating themes and ideas that both literary and history scholars have had success analysing through attention to mainstream war novels. [15] This possibility is acknowledged by Frederic Krome in his anthology and analysis of future war narratives: SF war stories should be understood as 'assertions of the hopes, fears, aspirations, and anxieties of the period that produces them.' [16] Furthermore, military SF offers insight into war, an interesting and significant cultural complex where cultural and literary critics can investigate a distinct cultural ordering. [17]

This thesis is also significant for literary history: it fills a prominent gap in the literature and historiography of SF regarding military SF. Criticism and histories of SF have all failed to give attention to military SF, despite its importance to the genre in popular culture. [18] This thesis evolves from existing work on SF literary criticism, but will constitute the first comprehensive examination of military SF and its history, as well as its close relationship to American culture and history. It will provide an overview of the neglected subgenre of military SF, as well as contribute to scholarship regarding the wider SF literary field. It will also provide an example of the efficacy of historical methods in any investigation of literary works and

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[14] Lisa Yaszek, 'Cultural History', in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. by Mark Bould, Andrew M. Butler, Adam Roberts, and Sheryl Vint (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 194-203 (p. 194).

[15] A. D. Harvey, *A Muse of Fire: Literature, Art and War* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007); Philip D. Beidler, *American Literature and the Experience of Vietnam* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2007); M. Paul Holsinger and Mary Anne Schofield (Eds.), *Vision of War: World War II in Popular Literature and Culture* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1992).

[16] 'Introduction', *Fighting the Future War: An Anthology of Science Fiction War Stories, 1914-1945*, ed. by Frederic Krome (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 1-20 (p. 4). Michael Paris similarly argues that popular fiction is 'a product of the society' that published it, and as such is a representation of the 'concerns and anxieties of that society.' Michael Paris, *Winged Warfare: The Literature and Theory of Aerial Warfare in Britain, 1859-1917* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 17.

[17] As Chris Hedges writes, even those opposed to war gain meaning from opposing it and how war is structured in a text reveals something of how war is structured in the culture. Chris Hedges, *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning* (New York: Public Affairs, 2002).

[18] Some of the most well-known and popular SF narratives are military SF, for example the best-selling *Starship Troopers* (1959)*, The Forever War* (1974), and *Ender's Game* (1985).

genres, especially firmly context-bound texts such as those of military SF. This is this thesis' major original contribution to scholarship: in the process of undertaking both a literary and cultural history, it will demonstrate the importance of interdisciplinary use of new sources – military SF as primary sources – and the critical advantages of interdisciplinary scholarship combining literary and historical methodologies and thinking.

Concept of Operations: Overview of Methodology and Theory

The approach of this thesis is strongly interdisciplinary, combining ideas and assumptions from both historical and literary studies. As discussed in Chapter One, this thesis is a literary *history*, which reads military SF texts as historical documents to be explored for what they say about contemporary politics, society, and culture. Three main methodological approaches contribute their insights. First, cultural history, looking at popular culture traditions and cultural interpretations of historical experiences as inscribed in texts. Second, the history of ideas, concerned with the production, expression, and change of human ideas over time and within specific historical contexts, as expressed in literary works. Third, the literary theory of New Historicism, which is interested in history as represented and recorded in texts, and in reading and interpreting literary works in their biographical, social, cultural, and historical contexts. These three approaches are all interested in the relationships between literature, culture, and history, and suggest the blurring of distinctions between the study of history and the study of literature. While the question of the impact of cultural products on an audience emerges inevitably from a study like this, this thesis does not try to assess how audiences read military SF or what direct influence the reading may have on them. Such an assessment would be difficult to perform in any meaningful way, as consuming entertainment is, ultimately, a very personal and idiosyncratic experience.

Execution: Overview of Thesis Structure

Recognising the importance of establishing a framework for constructing the history of the subgenre, Chapter One begins with an effort to define 'science fiction' and 'military SF.' After presenting a workable description of the wider SF genre as

a 'family of resemblances', it examines the origins of the military SF subgenre, differentiates it from near-congruent subgenres, determines its literary ancestry and prototypical texts, and offers a preliminary description of military SF as a form of 'formula fiction.'[19] Next this chapter discusses science fiction criticism, with the two distinct 'traditions', the 'popular' and the 'academic', which converged near the end of the 1970s. Also discussed are historical studies of the SF genre: from Sam Moskowitz's history of SF fandom, *The Immortal Storm* (1954), through the first historical overview of the genre in Brian Aldiss' *Billion Year Spree* (1973), to modern critical histories from Roger Luckhurst, Adam Roberts, and Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr. Finally, this chapter discusses the theoretical and methodological approaches of this thesis, including cultural history, the history of ideas, and New Historicism.

Chapter Two explores the origins of military SF – combining tropes and attitudes of future war fiction, which originated in the 1870s, and space opera, which developed in the 1920s and 1930s – and examines proto-military SF texts which emerged during the 1940s and 1950s. It begins with a discussion of future war fiction which developed in Britain before spreading throughout Europe and later to the United States. It then moves on to space opera – romantic, large-scale SF adventure narratives – and examines important series by Edmond Hamilton, Jack Williamson, and E. E. 'Doc' Smith. Both American future war narratives and American space opera depict the U.S. as a benevolent superpower which secures peace through spectacular, and necessary, genocidal war against the (racial, national, alien) Other. Next, the chapter looks at the emergent phase of military SF, during the Golden Age of Science Fiction and the beginning of Sherry's 'Age of Militarization', with works being fashioned with increased military realism. The works also start displaying the two streams – militarism and antimilitarism – that characterise military SF.

The next chapter, Chapter Three, investigates early military SF between 1959 and 1965. It is constructed around the view that Robert Heinlein and Gordon R. Dickson are the grandfathers of military SF and their novels *Starship Troopers* and *Dorsai!*,

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[19] Adopting terms from Paul Kincaid and John G. Cawelti: Paul Kincaid, 'On the Origins of Genre', *Extrapolation*, 44 (2003), pp. 409-19; John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

both published in 1959, serve as prototypical military SF texts. The focus is on the heavily militarist and social Darwinist *Starship Troopers*, but the chapter also examines other texts from Poul Anderson, Ben Bova, Gordon Dickson, Harry Harrison, Fritz Leiber, and Norman Spinrad. Continuing the dialogue between militaristic military SF and antimilitaristic military SF, the works analysed engage with themes of Militarism, Veteranocracy and Democracy, Anti-communism, and the Fight for Survival. They do so within the context of the early Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, during the increasing dominance of what President Eisenhower called the 'military-industrial complex', and during the early years of the U.S.'s intervention in Vietnam.

Chapter Four covers the period 1966 to 1980, when military SF entered its self-conscious, mature phase and when the Vietnam War's significance to SF and American culture was at its peak. The chapter focuses on two anti-militaristic novels – Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War* (1974) and Stephen Goldin's *The Eternity Brigade* (1980) – but other novels and short stories, both of the militaristic and antimilitarisic streams, are also considered. These include texts by Orson Scott Card, David Drake, Jerry Pournelle, Norman Spinrad, Harry Harrison, Gene Wolfe, and Kate Wilhelm. The divide between the two streams was made concrete in the publication of two advertisements – pro-war and anti-war, both signed by in excess of seventy SF writers – regarding U.S. involvement in Vietnam in the June 1968 issue of *Galaxy Science Fiction* magazine. The thematic focus of the chapter is Soldier Alienation: including alienation from the enemy (the enemy as alien), alienation from civilian society (home as an alien world), and alienation from their own humanity (dehumanisation of the soldier).

Chapter Five investigates military SF in the 1980s, when the subgenre flourished within the right-wing, militaristic and xenophobic climate of the Reagan Era. It reflected and disseminated 'Reaganite' attitudes and aspirations, and the subgenre is read beside the ultimate symbol of these Reaganite visions: the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), also known as 'Star Wars.' The chapter is structured around a discussion of Jerry Pournelle's nine-volume *There Will Be War* military SF anthology series (1983-1990), and the Citizens' Advisory Council on National Space Policy, a future war 'think tank' and lobbying group for the militarisation of space. Also examined are works by Timothy Zahn, Lucius Shepard, Karl Hansen,

David Brin, Barry B. Longyear, Lois McMaster Bujold, C. J. Cherryh, Orson Scott Card, Ben Bova, and John Steakley, and their engagement with the major themes of the period – the Vietnam Syndrome and Redeeming Vietnam, American Exceptionalism and the New American Militarism, Anti-communism, and the Technical Fix and the Superweapon – and the embodiment of these themes in SDI.

Chapter Six provides an overview and discussion of 'modern' military SF over the period 1989 to 2011, covering what this thesis calls 'the Pause' between 1989 and 2001, and the period arising after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, which 'marked the opening of a new period in global history.'[20] Military SF was thriving by the early-1990s, and there was an increase in both production and far-right and militaristic attitudes. Four 'Hornblower in Space' series characterise military SF during the Pause, written by Lois McMaster Bujold, David Weber, Elizabeth Moon, and David Feintuch. Other, less popular and more masculine, works were also produced by Rick Shelley, William C. Dietz, and David Sherman. In the Post-9/11 section the chapter examines three main themes: first, The Enemy, as depicted in works by Robert Buettner, Tom Kratman, and Michael Z. Williamson; second, American Exceptionalism and a Hobbesian universe threatening America, engaged with by Ian Douglas and John Scalzi; third, the Civilian-Military Divide, in which Americans have developed a reverent but disengaged attitude toward the military, as treated in works by Steven L. Kent, John Scalzi, and T. C. McCarthy.

The final body chapter, Chapter Seven, abandons the chronological periodization used earlier, to focus on mercenary-themed military SF between the 1950s and the 2010s. The chapter's main theme is alienation from state authority, including government forces as inadequate and mercenaries as an alternative, which is examined in three distinct periods. The first section looks at early mercenary-themed military SF and the 'soldier of fortune' on the edges of civilisation (1950s-1960s), including works by Gordon Dickson, Mack Reynolds, and Andre Norton. The second section discusses Vietnam Era and post-Vietnam mercenary-themed MSF and James William Gibson's 'cult of the mercenary' (1970s-1980s), examining works by Jerry Pournelle, David Drake, Robert Asprin, Lois McMaster Bujold, John Dalmas, and Joel Rosenberg. The third section examines modern

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[20] Phillip Wegner, *Life between Two Deaths, 1989-2001: U.S. Culture in the Long Nineties* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009), p. 9.

mercenary-themed MSF and the 'corporatized' private military industry which has become a regular part of the military landscape (1990s-2000s), with a focus on works by Jerry Pournelle and S.M Stirling, Leo Frankowski, Tom Kratman, John Ringo, Elizabeth Moon, and Rick Shelley. The chapter not only investigates changing 'popular' attitudes toward mercenaries, as opposed to the 'official' ones of international law, it tracks the increasing insistency and intemperance of far-right attitudes in these works, as within the military SF subgenre as a whole.

CHAPTER ONE

Tactics, Strategy, and Logistics: Theory and Methodology

This thesis is confidently interdisciplinary, bringing together a wide range of primary and secondary sources, critical studies, histories, and theories and methodologies, both historical and literary. This chapter begins with a discussion of definitions: the first section will define, for the purposes of this thesis, what exactly is meant by terms such as 'science fiction' and 'military science fiction.' It contends that military SF is a distinct subgenre within the wider science fiction field and that military SF is a hybrid of the future war story and the space opera. Next, in section two, it examines the literature about science fiction criticism and histories of SF that has been produced over the last seventy years. The chapter ends, in section three, with a look at the key theoretical approaches taken in this thesis, including cultural history, the history of ideas, and New Historicism, which offer something for the interpretation of peripheral literature, for the use of literature as historical artefacts, and for tracking the emergence, spread, and change of ideas over time.

Definition of Terminology: SF and Military SF

Defining Science Fiction

As numerous scholarly works have demonstrated while attempting to describe SF, the term 'science fiction' resists easy definition, there are many difficulties in delimiting the field, and no substantial consensus exists as to how SF might be defined.[1] Literary critic Patrick Parrinder has called SF a 'confused concept and a confused field', while Gary K. Wolfe suspects that the quest for definition is 'quite hopeless, diverting though it may be.'[2] The problem of definition is also

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[1] Adam Roberts, *Science Fiction: The New Critical Idiom* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 1.; James Gunn, *Speculations on Speculation: Theories of Science Fiction* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005), p. 1.; Brian Stableford, *Historical Dictionary of Science Fiction Literature* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004), p. xxxi.

[2] Patrick Parrinder, 'Editor's Introduction', in *Science Fiction: A Critical Guide*, ed. by Patrick Parrinder (London and New York: Longman, 1979), pp. xii-x (p. xii). Gary K. Wolfe, *The Known*

complicated by the fact that SF is, in James Gunn's terms, a 'super-genre' – a mode – with no typical action or setting, as in other popular genres, and can thus incorporate other genres, resulting in science fiction mysteries, science fiction love stories and science fiction adventure stories.[3] Nevertheless, the fact that so many academic works on SF begin with a more or less extended discussion of the problem of definition 'testifies to its importance in establishing a framework for constructing the history of the genre, specifying its range and extent, locating its principle sites of production and reception, selecting the canon of masterpieces, and so on.'[4] This subsection serves two purposes: first, to outline this thesis' approach to the science fiction literary genre as a 'family of resemblance'; and, second, to present a workable description of the genre suitable for this thesis.

While this thesis, by necessity, is focused on print SF, it is important to note that SF has long since ceased being only – or even primarily – a literary phenomenon: it can be seen as, using Eric S. Rabkin's adopted terminology, a cultural system.[5] The distinctive traits of the SF genre apply meaningfully across a range of forms and artistic media, including short stories and novels, comic books and graphic novels, radio serials and television series, console and computer games, role-playing and board games, drama and film, poetry and music, and painting and other visual arts.[6] This 'feedback loop', as Brooks Landon calls it, in which science fiction thinking has self-replicated across multiple media and with texts of all kinds sharing and developing SF assumptions, themes, and icons, has made SF the 'first truly multimedia genre and, more importantly, the only popular genre to have a clear cultural impact.'[7]

Previous scholars have commented on the difficulty of defining SF as a genre. For example, cinema theorist and critic Vivian Sobchack writes that a definition can be

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and the Unknown: The Iconography of Science Fiction (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1979), p. xiii).

[3] James Gunn, 'Toward a Definition of Science Fiction', in *The Science of Science Fiction Writing* (Toronto and Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2003), p. 74.

[4] John Rieder, 'On Defining SF, or Not: Genre Theory, SF, and History', *Science Fiction Studies*, 37, 2 (July 2010), pp. 191-209. (p. 191).

[5] Eric S. Rabkin, 'Science Fiction and the Future of Criticism', *PMLA*, vol. 119, no. 3 (May 2004), pp. 437-473 (p. 461).

[6] Possibly even extending to forms such as industrial design, city planning, architecture, fashion, and politics.

[7] Brooks Landon, *Science Fiction after 1900: From the Steam Man to the Stars* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. xiv.

'neither too arbitrary and personally manufactured nor so general that it becomes useless as a critical tool' and that it must accommodate 'the flux and change which is present in any living and popular art form.'[8] Similarly, drawing on the work of Rick Altman's *Film/Genre*, Mark Bould and Sherryl Vint argue that genres are 'fluid and tenuous constructions made by the interaction of various claims and practices by writers, producers, distributors, marketers, readers, fans, critics and other discursive agents.'[9] Elsewhere, genres have been called 'ongoing, and by definition irresolvable, fields of contention between myriad discursive agents.'[10] This thesis adopts the idea of a 'family of resemblance' as outlined by Paul Kincaid in 'On the Origins of Genre' (2003) and adopted by John Rieder in his own scholarship on SF as an historical process.

Kincaid's thesis is that it is impossible to 'extract a unique, common thread' that binds together all SF texts, and that SF, or any historical literary genre, is best understood as a group of objects that bear a 'family resemblance' to one another rather than sharing some set of essential, defining characteristics.[11] Rather than being connected by a single essential common feature, works are connected by a series of overlapping similarities, with no feature necessarily common to all: as summarised by Rieder, 'a genre consists of a web of resemblances established by repetition across a large number of texts.'[12] Rieder proposes that SF is historical and mutable, and a 'differentially articulated position' in a historical and mutable field of genres; it has no unifying characteristic and no point of origin, and attribution of SF-identity to a text constitutes an active intervention in its distribution and reception. This approach is ideal for a historically focused thesis because, while definition and classification are useful points of departure for critical and rhetorical analysis, this historical approach to genre theory allows the 'project

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[8] Vivian Sobchack, *Screening Space: The American Science Fiction Film* (New Brunswick, NJ, and London: Rutgers University Press, 2004), pp. 17-18.

[9] Rick Altman, *Film/Genre* (London: British Film Institute, 1999), p. 101., discussed in Mark Bould and Sherryl Vint, 'There Is No Such Thing as Science Fiction', in *Reading Science Fiction*, ed. by James Gunn, Marleen Barr, and Matthew Candelaria (New York: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 43-51 (p. 48, 50).

[10] Mark Bould, Andrew M. Butler, Adam Roberts, and Sherryl Vint, 'Introduction', in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. by Mark Bould, Andrew M. Butler, Adam Roberts, and Sherryl Vint (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. xix-xxii (p. xix).

[11] Paul Kincaid, 'On the Origins of Genre', *Extrapolation*, 44 (2003), pp. 409-419 (p. 415).

[12] Kincaid, pp. 409-419 (p. 415). John Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), pp. 18-19.

of comprehending what sf has meant and currently means' to be 'accomplished through historical and comparative narrative rather than formal description.'[13]

This version of SF genre theory is less restrictive and reductive than, for example, Westfahl's approach to SF as a historical genre. Westfahl defines a historical genre as 'consisting of a body of texts related by a shared understanding of that genre as recorded in contemporary commentary' and argues that a genre has to be self-conscious about conventions, aesthetics, and reader expectations. For Westfahl, then, 'science fiction' did not exist before 1926, when Hugo Gernsback created the first specialist SF magazine – *Amazing Science Fiction* – and provided the genre with a name and critical theory, and at which point practitioners began to self-consciously identify themselves as writers of science fiction.[14] This view is shared by Mark Rose, who sees labelling Shelley's *Frankenstein* as SF as 'retroactively recomposing that text under the influence of a generic idea that did not come into being until well after it was written.'[15] Edward James also writes that a genre requires 'a consciousness of appropriate conventions, a certain aesthetic, and even a certain ideology, as well as readers who have particular expectations' and that this did not happen for SF until the specialist magazines of the 1920s.[16]

A problematic but workable description of the characteristics of SF – derived from the formulation of Darko Suvin, and subsequent definitional attempts by Eric Rabkin, Carl D. Malmgren, Carl Freedman, Samuel Delany, Damien Broderick and Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr. – includes, for the purposes of this thesis, four key points.[17] First, and foremost, SF is a 'fiction of the imagination rather than observed reality, a fantastic literature.'[18] The main formal device of SF is 'an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment': that is, SF works are set in a scientifically plausible alternate narrative world estranged from our own

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[13] Rieder, 'On Defining SF, or Not: Genre Theory, SF, and History', pp. 191-209 (pp. 193, 206).

[14] Gary Westfahl, *The Mechanics of Wonder: The Creation of the Idea of Science Fiction* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998), p. 8.

[15] Mark Rose, *Alien Encounters: Anatomy of Science Fiction* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 5.

[16] Edward James, *Science Fiction is the Twentieth Century* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 51-52.

[17] Darko Suvin's characterisation of SF as 'the literature of cognitive estrangement' is the most influential formulation in the history of SF definition and criticism, and the ground on which all SF genre theory bases itself. It is also, unapologetically, narrow, excluding the vast majority of texts published and consumed as SF. Darko Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976), pp. 8-9.

[18] Roberts, *Science Fiction: The New Critical Idiom*, p. 1

empirical (non-fictional, reader-experienced, consensus reality) world.[19] Second, the estrangement is based on the presence – the 'narrative dominance or hegemony' – of a fictional 'novum', or multiple fictive nova.[20] A novum is a scientifically plausible innovation or novelty, 'usually a rationally explicable material phenomenon', derived through speculation or extrapolation, which is superadded to or infused into the author's and implied reader's empirically 'known' – culturally defined – world, catalysing an imaginary historical transformation.[21] The novum is a totalizing phenomenon in the sense that the novelty involves a change to the whole universe of the narrative, or at least crucially important aspects of the narrative.[22] Third, the changes in the narrative world are validated by 'scientifically methodical cognition', or, as it is usually termed, 'cognitive logic.' [23] The changes are naturalised through a discourse that accepts natural laws and a scientific epistemology, and that imitates, reinforces and illuminates the process of scientific cognition. [24] Extending the Suvinian construction, Carl Freedman sees the 'cognition effect' as being at the heart of SF, which is based not on external epistemological judgements but on 'the attitude of the text itself to the kind of estrangements being performed.' What is required is not necessarily 'accurate' scientific knowledge, but a 'plausible' discourse built on certain logical principles that avoid self-contradiction, a discourse that is rational rather than emotional or instinctual – a rhetorical construction that evokes the sense of true cognition.[25] Fourth, based on the postmodernist approaches to SF as practised by Delany and Broderick, the genre can be characterised according to reading protocols and

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[19] Darko Suvin, 'Estrangement and Cognition', in *Speculations on Speculation: Theories of Science Fiction*, ed. by James Gunn and Matthew Candelaria (Toronto and Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2005), pp. 23-35 (p. 27). Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, pp. 8-9.
[20] Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, p. 63.
[21] Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), pp. 5-6.
[22] Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, p. 64.
[23] Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, pp. 63, 66. Generic fantasy, on the other hand, while it also features a non-realist setting that 'estranges', is 'committed to the imposition of anti-cognitive laws' and is a literature of 'mystification', anti-rationalism, and anti-modernism, with no obligation to be faithful to scientific epistemology. Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, p. 8.
[24] Carl D. Malmgren, *Worlds Apart: Narratology of Science Fiction* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 4. Eric Rabkin defines it slightly differently, writing that the difference in the narrative world must be 'apparent against the background of an organized body of knowledge.' Eric Rabkin, *The Fantastic in Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 119, quoted in Sharona Ben-Tov, *The Artificial Paradise: Science Fiction and American Reality* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p.11.
[25] Carl Freedman, *Critical Theory and Science Fiction* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), p. 18, quoted in Csicsery-Ronay Jr., *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction*, pp. 139-140. Roberts, *Science Fiction: The New Critical Idiom*, p. 9.

strategies which are unique compared with those of other kinds of fiction, particularly mundane literature.[26] SF is very rich compared with mundane fiction, and requires unique techniques for the reader to 'unpack' meaning from it, including access to and familiarity with SF's collectively constituted 'megatext', or using Brian Attebery's terminology, 'parabolas.' This is the continually expanding archive or 'encyclopaedia' of shared and embedded ideas, images, tropes, situations, plots, characters, settings, lexicons, and even grammatical innovations in which the reading of SF unfolds.[27] The term parabola is used to 'describe the inherently collaborative nature of the science fiction genre: more concrete than themes, more complex than motifs, parabolas are combinations of meaningful setting, character, and action that lend themselves to endless redefinition and jazzlike improvisation.'[28] Part of this is an understanding of texts constituted out of signifiers with unusual properties and standing in a fictive relation to consensus reality, what Delany used to call the level of 'subjunctivity' – the tension between words of an SF story and their referents, and the way in which text literalizes metaphors – and the resulting ability to infer a given SF milieu from 'specific semantic implications.'[29]

Defining Military Science Fiction

This thesis approaches the subgenre of military SF as a literary formula within the larger SF field, and the definition of this formula fiction involves discovering how it has been and is currently defined by writers, publishers, and critics of military SF, as well as differentiating it from similar subgenres, such as the 'space opera' and

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[26] Landon, pp. 7-8.

[27] Brian Attebery, 'Science Fiction, Parable, and Parabolas,' *Foundation*, 95 (Autumn 2005), pp. 7-22, quoted in Landon, p. 9. Damien Broderick, *Reading by Starlight: Postmodern Science Fiction* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. xiii.

[28] The concept borrows from John G. Cawelti's work on popular formulas, Samuel R. Delany's descriptions of SF's reading protocols, Gary K. Wolfe's study of icons, Joanna Russ' ideas about SF subjunctivity, Philippe Hamon's theory of the megatext, and William Tenn's description of SF writers as jazz musicians riffing on one another's work. Brian Attebery and Veronica Hollinger, 'Parabolas of Science Fiction', in *Parabolas of Science Fiction*, ed. by Brian Attebery and Veronica Hollinger (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2013), pp. vii-xv (pp. vii, ix).

[29] Samuel R. Delany, 'About Five Thousand One Hundred and Seventy Five Words', in *SF: The Other Side of Realism: Essays on Modern Fantasy and Science Fiction*, ed. Thomas D. Clareson (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1971), pp. 133-46 (p. 140), and Samuel R. Delany, *Starboard Wine* (New York: Dragon Press, 1984), p. 89. Delany has stopped using the term "subjunctivity" for reasons of linguistic theory, but it remains useful. Csiscery-Ronay Jr., *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction*, p. 22.

the 'future war story.' In an effort to provide a more solid foundation for this study, this section seeks to do five things. Firstly, this section examines the origins of the *idea* of military SF and uses of the term in other scholarly works. Secondly, it investigates the comments of several writers commonly associated with the subgenre – as privileged commentators on the topic – and analyses their observations about the characteristics and forms of military SF. Thirdly, it attempts to outline the limits of military SF as a literary subgenre, by differentiating it from near-congruent sub-genres. Fourthly, it determines the literary ancestry of the subgenre and exemplary models for authors, readers, and critics. Fifthly, and finally, this section will offer a preliminary description of the subgenre of military SF – the necessary and sufficient conditions or characteristics whose presence, without reference to any external context, identifies a fictional story as military SF.

This thesis focuses on a single subgenre of science fiction, recognising, as argued by Keith Brooke's *Strange Divisions and Alien Territories* – an edited collection providing an overview of what the authors see as the most important sub-genres active in SF – that science fiction as a whole can be seen as 'one enormous, brawling, cacophonous and invigorating argument' about 'anything and everything' but that by examining individual subgenres 'the shape and essence of its component conversations becomes clearer.' [30] Conceding that all questions of identity, including those relating to literary genres and sub-genres, seem to immediately call for generic outlines, boundaries and borders, inclusions and exclusions, to make for easier discussion, this thesis concentrates on the military SF conversation. [31] Previous scholars have argued for the importance of genre delimitations in the study of science fiction with, for example, Patricia Monk declaring that formal definition 'for its own sake is no virtue, but formal definition for the sake of enabling critics to be sure they are all discussing the same group of works is essential.' Likewise, Darko Suvin wrote that 'no field of studies and rational enquiry can be investigated

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[30] Michael Swanwick, 'Foreword', in *Strange Divisions and Alien Territories: The Sub-Genres of Science Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. vii-x (p. ix). Suvin also encouraged scholars to survey the various forms and sub-genres of SF. Suvin, 'Estrangement and Cognition', pp. 23-35 (p. 33).
[31] Military SF is not considered by *Strange Divisions and Alien Territories*, although the postscript acknowledges that it 'could stake a claim for the sub-genre treatment.' Keith Brooke, 'Postscript', in *Strange Divisions and Alien Territories* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 190-191 (p. 190).

unless and until it is roughly delimited.'[32] As has often been discussed, genre conventions tell the reader what generally to expect in a given type of work and create a context which guides the reader's interpretation of elements of that work.[33] Genre is a crucial interpretive tool as it helps scholars to figure out the nature of a literary work because the person who produced it, and the culture for which that person laboured, used genre as a guideline for literary creation.[34]

While science fiction can be seen as a family of resemblances, military SF, for the purposes of this thesis, is approached as a form of 'formula fiction', as theorised by literary scholar John G. Cawelti.[35] For Cawelti, 'a literary formula is a structure of narrative or dramatic conventions employed in a great number of individual works' and genres are descriptive classes of fiction based on sets or patterns of such formulas. His definition of literary formulas is a combination of two conceptions: the first usage 'simply denotes a conventional way for treating some specific thing or person', and the 'second common literary usage of the term formula refers to larger plot types.'[36] The two central aspects of formulaic structures – which have generally been 'condemned in the serious artistic thought of the last hundred years' – are obvious in the military SF subgenre: standardization of conventions and tropes, and a focus on the needs of escape and relaxation, particularly stressing intense and immediate kinds of excitement and gratification through plot and action.[37] Such formula fiction, as critic and SF writer Thomas Disch notes, is often 'shaped by the (presumed) demands of its audience rather than the creative will of its writers', with the writer accommodating their talents to the genre's established formulae, which, in turn, guarantees readers the repetition of 'pleasures fondly remembered.'[38]

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[32] Patricia Monk, '"Cosmic Skullduggery": A Partial Reconsideration of Space Opera', *Extrapolation*, 33, 4 (Winter 1992), pp. 295-316 (pp. 298-299).

[33] Kathleen L. Spencer, '"The Red Sun is High, the Blue Low": Towards a Stylistic Description of Science Fiction', *Science Fiction Studies*, 10, 1 (March 1983), pp. 35-49 (p. 35).

[34] Thomas G. Pavel, 'Literary Genres as Norms and Good Habits', *New Literary History*, 34, 2 (Spring 2003), pp. 201-210 (p. 202).

[35] John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1976). Cawelti's concept breaks down when applied to science fiction as a whole; it fails to account for the genre's variety and unpredictability. As Mark Rose argues, while most popular literature is formulaic, science fiction does not have explicit formula characteristics, instead 'there is a fairly large vocabulary of simultaneously available formulas from which a science-fiction writer can choose.' Rose, p. 2.

[36] A formula – 'in which specific cultural themes and stereotypes become embodied in more universal story archetypes' – is similar in many ways to the traditional literary conception of a genre, and like such an approach to genre, are essentially historical constructions. Cawelti, pp. 5, 6.

[37] Cawelti, pp. 8-9.

[38] Thomas M. Disch, *On SF* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), p. 6

The Idea of Military SF

In his book-length investigation of the hard SF subgenre, Gary Westfahl argues that a study of the critical commentaries is the best starting point for studies of both the wider SF genre and for individual subgenres. Influenced by Westfahl – and his examination of the use of the term "hard science fiction" in the reviews of P. Schuyler Miller in *Astounding* – this thesis looks at how terms such as 'military science fiction' have been used in reference to SF texts by reviewers and critics, and investigates whether military SF can be said to have been 'invented' or 'constructed' by authors and critics.[39] The term military SF has been inconsistently used since the 1970s: one of the earliest uses of the term was by Jerry Pournelle in his introduction to David Drake's *Hammer's Slammers* (1979), in which he calls 'military SF a highly specialized art form.'[40] Beginning at the start of the twenty-first century, there have been numerous attempts to describe the characteristics and foci of military SF in reference and scholarly works about the SF field, definitions that have become increasingly focused and less nebulous. Brian Stableford, for example, writes that stories dealing with 'future military organization and warfare' have been around since the earliest days of pulp SF, with a 'distinct subgenre of military sf' emerging in the 1950s when writers like Robert Heinlein and Gordon Dickson 'deepened their use of such motifs to address serious consideration to the role of military forces, and warfare, in social evolution.'[41] Don D'Ammassa's *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* describes military SF as 'stories that involve primarily military characters, who are engaged in wars either in space, or for control of specific planets.'[42] He also writes that military SF is interested in details of military action and lifestyles, that most 'follow one of a very small number of patterns, usually pitting a small group of mercenaries or regular military soldiers against daunting odds', and that the action 'focuses on battles and tactical

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[39] Gary Westfahl, *The Cosmic Engineers: A Study of Hard Science Fiction* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), pp. 17, 122. This, however, is complicated by the fact that scholars of SF rarely use the term 'military SF', instead using a range of terms such as: stories of 'galactic warfare' or 'tales of interplanetary warfare' (I. F. Clarke), 'militaristic sf' (Paul Kincaid), an incarnation of the 'future-war story' (Thomas D. Clareson, Frederic Krome), 'science fiction war stories' (Frederic Krome), 'futuristic military stories' (Charles E. Gannon), as well as 'military sf' (Edward James)
[40] Jerry Pournelle, 'Introduction: Mercenaries and Military Virtue', in David Drake, *Hammer's Slammers* (New York: Ace Books, 1979). Republished in Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr (eds.), *There Will Be War* (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1983), pp. 254-259.
[41] Stableford, *Historical Dictionary of Science Fiction Literature*, p. 231-232.
[42] Don D'Ammassa, *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction: The Essential Guide to the Lives and Works of Science Fiction Writers* (New York: Facts on File, 2005), p. 436.

maneuvers' with generally 'little effort to provide rich characterization or to examine the personal consequences of warfare.'[43] Jeff Prucher's *Brave New Words* also states that military SF is a subgenre 'concerned with future military life and military actions, especially in which the setting is outer space and other worlds.'[44] Tim Blackmore characterises military SF as exploring 'alternate past and potential future wars', acting as thought experiments 'about the future of warfare.'[45] Similarly, an article by Scott Connors typifies it as including stories 'that extrapolated the effects of future technological and social developments on the battlefield', which focus on individual soldiers, and provide 'realistic depictions of combat and military life.'[46] Madeline Bodin describes it as SF 'defined by a military point of view', with a focus on realism and authenticity regarding all aspects of warfare, and, to publishers, 'primarily covering books written by military veterans or military historians.'[47] Bodin also quotes Toni Weisskopf, publisher of Baen Books: 'Why we fight, how we fight, how we should fight, how the view of the fight differs from the commander to the grunt, why should one culture survive a fight and why one should not – these are the concerns of military SF.'[48]

Statements by Authors of Military SF

Another important source for describing military SF are the comments of authors – associated with the subgenre – regarding the defining characteristics and tropes of military SF. Among those whose views are explored are: Robert Buettner, David Drake, John Hemry, Mike Resnick, David Weber, and Mike Williamson. They characterize military SF based on setting, plot and viewpoint, and the significant role the military plays in each of these.

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[43] D'Ammassa, pp. 116, 141. The narrative scenario of outgunned and outnumbered American soldiers facing such 'daunting odds' illustrates 'the mechanism by which military SF tends to disavow the historical reality of most wars launched by the United States', especially during the so-called American Century. Steffen Hantke, 'Military Culture', *The Oxford Handbook of Science Fiction*, ed. by Rob Latham (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 329-339 (p. 336).
[44] Jeff Prucher, *Brave New Words: The Oxford Dictionary of Science Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 119.
[45] Tim Blackmore, *War X: Human Extensions in Battlespace* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 2005), p. 7.
[46] Scott Connors, 'The Politics of Military SF', *Publishers Weekly*, April 7, 2008, pp. 34-35 (p. 34).
[47] Madeline Bodin, 'Science Fiction Reports for Active Duty', *Publishers Weekly*, April 11, 2011, pp. 18-21 (pp. 20-21).
[48] Bodin, pp. 18-21 (p. 21).

The first important characteristic, according to Williamson, author of the Freehold series, is that military SF is science fiction 'with a military setting', which addresses 'the politics, logistics, strategy or tactics of an hypothesized military environment.' For him, the 'two important factors are to explore the proposed system, and its interactions with the people – soldiers and civilians – involved.'[49] A key aspect of military SF for Williamson is that this military setting – 'the characters' universe' in the story – includes regulations, rules of engagement, budgets, and the like, that will affect what they are able to do.[50] Weber, author of the Honor Harrington series among other military SF works, also sees 'a well realized military environment' – including the 'definition of hardware, worked out military doctrines, realistic strategic or operations *objectives*, and a body of tactics appropriate to the weaponry with which his militaries are provided' – as an important part of the military SF subgenre.[51]

A more important characteristic of military SF for Weber, however, is the role the military plays in the plot. Weber writes that 'military science fiction is science fiction – near future, far future, or alternate history – in which military organizations, personnel, and technology play major roles in resolving the story/plot line's conflicts and/or problems.' Properly realized 'military personnel, mindsets, and/or operations modes, etc., have to play a *significant* role in the shape and the outcome of a story for [Weber] to consider it military science fiction.'[52] Similarly, Hemry – who writes the Lost Fleet series under the pen-name Jack Campbell – thinks military SF 'is concerned in great part with characters who are in the military and revolves around issues created by the military affiliation or events which the military must deal with.'[53] There is disagreement, however, over whether the plot of a military SF work must involve combat or military action: for example, Resnick, author of the Starship series, writes that military SF 'concerns an enlisted military force in an overt – as opposed to covert – action', while Hemry does not believe

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[49] Mike Williamson, personal correspondence (email), 1 March 2013.
[50] Mike Williamson, personal correspondence (email), 3 March 2013.
[51] David Weber, personal correspondence (email), 1 March 2013.
[52] David Weber, personal correspondence (email), 1 March 2013.
[53] John G. Hemry, personal correspondence (email), 9 February 2013.

that military SF necessarily involves combat, pointing to his own peacetime-set JAG in Space series.[54]

The most significant characteristic of military SF is, according to several authors, viewpoint. Buettner, author of the Orphanage series, sums up his definition of military SF as it being 'distinguished by an inside the military viewpoint of future conflict, furnished with future politics and future technology.' According to Buettner viewpoint 'principally defines the genre' and '[u]sually the principal character(s) in military science fiction serve within a conventional military (even if often in an unconventional way), and his or her experience and development flows from that vantage point.' He emphasises that this viewpoint can encompass a 'spectrum of views' and is not necessarily constrained to be pro- or anti-military. It is this view from inside the military that separates military SF from 'space opera', and it is *Starship Trooper*'s 'grunt's eye view from training to battle all the way' which has 'become the sub-genre's most recognizable trope.'[55] Weber also privileges viewpoint, explaining that military SF 'is written about a military situation with a fundamental understanding of how military lifestyles and characters differ from civilian lifestyles and characters.'[56] Likewise, Drake sees the separation between military SF and space opera as being based on a 'different mindset' by the author and a 'different reaction' from a reader.[57] In addition, Hemry believes that military SF 'must be about the people in the military and the military as a culture, including how it interacts with the culture as a whole.'[58] Despite its importance to the definition, this 'military viewpoint' is nebulous and makes assumptions about a dichotomy between the civilian and military viewpoint and about the coherence, or unity, of viewpoint among the military.

Differentiation of Subgenres

As apparent from the previous subsection – with its comments on military characters, military settings, and military actions – military SF has close ties to other

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[54] Mike Resnick, personal correspondence (email), 9 February 2013. John G. Hemry, personal correspondence (email), 9 February 2013.
[55] Robert Buettner, personal correspondence (email), 8 August 2013.
[56] Quoted in Connors, pp. 34-35 (p. 34).
[57] David Drake, personal correspondence (email), 12 February 2013.
[58] John G. Hemry, personal correspondence (email), 9 February 2013.

SF subgenres that make use of such tropes. Such congruous subgenres include the 'future war' fiction studied by I. F. Clarke, which focused on terrestrial conflicts of the near- to mid-futures, and the 'space opera', which may involve interplanetary and interstellar wars, warships and warriors, but are not considered military SF by critics and academics. Military SF could be engaged with as a kind of 'hybrid' subgenre synthesising tropes and motifs from these two earlier subgenres.

The first congruous science fiction sub-genre is future war fiction.[59] I. F. Clarke writes that Lieutenant-Colonel Sir George Tomkyns Chesney, with the (anonymous) publication of his *The Battle of Dorking* (1871), launched 'a new type of purposive fiction', the future war story, which combined the 'methods of the realistic narrative' with the 'practice of the military assessment' to produce 'a full-scale story of imaginary warfare.'[60] The publication of George Griffith's *The Angel of the Revolution* (1893) helped popularize the future war concept, launching a flood of newspaper serials, and these narratives became the 'core subgenre of British scientific romance in the 1890s.'[61] Today, future war stories are normally defined as those in which 'the events of wars set in the future, especially those also set on the planet Earth, are described.'[62] Charles E. Gannon, in his study of the links between speculative literature and the techno-military and political agendas of contemporary superpowers, provides a taxonomy of future war fiction which explicitly links it to military SF's development. In the 1880s, according to Gannon, future war fiction 'bifurcated into two discursive threads, each with distinctive narrative styles and political purposes': 'political future-war narratives' and 'technological future-war narratives.' The second, and ultimately dominant, branch of the subgenre later split into two relatively distinct types: 'near future' technological war fiction employing extant or imminent technological innovations

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[59] Although some critics are not sure that these pre-World War One future war narratives are really SF. Brian Aldiss and David Wingrove, *Trillion Year Spree: The History of Science Fiction* (New York: House of Stratus, 2001), p. 106.

[60] The purpose of such fiction was to 'either to terrify the reader by a clear and merciless demonstration of the consequences to be expected from a country's shortcomings, or to prove the rightness of national policy by describing the course of a victorious war in the near future. The strong or weak points of a situation – moral, or political, or naval, or military – were presented in a triumphant or in a catastrophic manner according to the needs of the propaganda.' I. F. Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars, 1793-3749*, 2nd edition (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 29, 33.

[61] Stableford, *Historical Dictionary of Science Fiction Literature*, p. 126.

[62] Prucher, p. 70.

(congruous to the contemporary 'technothriller'), and, extrapolating more boldly, 'far future' technological war fiction (which could also be labelled military SF).[63]

Related to the future war story is another literary sub-genre, not properly part of science fiction: the 'technothriller.' The technothriller developed during, and was one of the major publishing phenomena of, the 1980s, and has been practiced by authors such as Tom Clancy, Michael Crichton, Dale Brown, Matthew Reilly, and Neal Stephenson.[64] While it is called the combination of SF and spy thrillers by Gary Westfahl, the technothriller also draws on the formulae and tropes of war fiction and adventure fiction.[65] It is characterized by 'action and violence' and tends to offer readers realistic portrayals of 'powerful people at the highest levels responding to a crisis.'[66] The defining characteristics of the technothriller are an emphasis on real-world or plausible near-future technologies – usually high-tech weapon systems – and military or military-political action. It is distinguished from science fiction because the future wars are usually between already-existing societies rather than between imaginary civilisations, and the novum introduced is rarely 'totalizing' in the way it would be in a work of SF. As Westfahl writes elsewhere, the world of the technothriller is 'essentially our own world, perhaps displaced into the nearest of near futures' and the technological advance introduced to this world exists solely to drive the plot and is 'rarely permitted to have a large-scale effect upon its world.'[67] Such books' plausibility is a key to their interest and there is considerable emphasis on verisimilitude.

The second congruous science fiction sub-genre is 'space opera', which has its roots in the pulp origins of SF. The phrase space opera was coined in 1941, by writer and SF fan Wilson 'Bob' Tucker, to label hack science fiction, or, in Tucker's words,

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[63] Charles E. Gannon, *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines: Technomilitary Agenda-Setting in American and British Speculative Fiction* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), p. 11. Gannon went on to write his own military SF novels, the Caine Riordan series, starting with *Fire with Fire* (2013).
[64] James William Gibson, *Warrior Dreams: Paramilitary Culture in Post-Vietnam America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994), p. 6. Harry Turtledove interprets the modern technothriller as the direct descendant of the future war story. Harry Turtledove, 'Introduction', *The Best Military Science Fiction of the 20ᵗʰ Century*, ed. by Harry Turtledove with Martin H. Greenberg (New York: Ballantine Books, 2001), pp. vii-xiii (p. viii).
[65] Gary Westfahl, '"Twelve Eighty-Seven": John Taine's Satisfactory Solution', *Science Fiction Studies*, 31, 1 (March 2004), pp. 43-62 (p. 44).
[66] Westfahl, '"Twelve Eighty-Seven": John Taine's Satisfactory Solution', pp. 43-62 (pp. 45, 49).
[67] Gary Westfahl (ed.), *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy: Themes, Works, and Wonders, Volume 2* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005), p. 799.

the 'hacky, grinding, stinking, outworn space-ship yarn.'[68] The phrase kept its negative meaning until the 1980s, when it re-entered serious discourse on contemporary SF and was 'redefined' to mean 'colourful, dramatic, large-scale science fiction adventure', usually 'focused on a sympathetic, heroic central character, and plot action… and usually set in the relatively distant future and in space or on other worlds, characteristically optimistic in tone.'[69] During this period it went through a revival, with several writers (such as Iain M. Banks, David Brin, and Dan Simmons) modifying the subgenre into 'more sophisticated narrative forms' and with an increased interest in the exploration of issues.[70] According to Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., the term space opera signifies 'spectacular romances set in vast, exotic outer spaces, where larger-than-life protagonists encounter a variety of alien species, planetary cultures, futuristic technologies (especially weapons, spaceships and space stations), and sublime physical phenomena.'[71] As well as an emphasis on adventure and narrative drive, space opera also tends to be highly encoded, making considerable use of conventions and tropes, and, in its stereotyped form, minimally characterized, imaginatively circumscribed, socially naïve, scientifically fudged, and perpetually violent.[72]

Darko Suvin argues that literary genres 'exist in historically precise and curious ecological units, interacting and intermixing, imitating and cannibalizing each other.'[73] This thesis presents the view that the military SF subgenre can be approached as a hybrid form combining elements of the future war story and the space opera. The congruence between military SF and each of these subgenres has been commented on by critics. For example, military SF, or 'novels of interstellar conflict' exemplified by *Starship Troopers*, have been labelled as 'the military

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[68] Bob Tucker, 'Debts of the Interior', *Le Zombie*, 1, 36 (January 1941), p. 9 (p. 9). Kingsley Amis, equally dismissive of space opera in *New Maps of Hell*, labelled it an 'adjacent field' competing with SF, rejecting it from the canon completely. Kingsley Amis, *New Maps of Hell* (London: Four Square Books, 1963), p. 36.

[69] David G. Hartwell and Kathryn Cramer, 'Space Opera Redefined', in *Speculations on Speculation: Theories of Science Fiction*, ed. by James Gunn (Toronto and Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2005), pp. 259-265 (p. 241).

[70] David Seed, *Science Fiction: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 12.

[71] Csicsery-Ronay Jr., *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction*, p. 218

[72] It is these 'characteristics' of space opera that Monk argued is what provokes hostile criticism from critics outside and within the SF subculture. Monk, pp. 295-316 (pp. 309-311).

[73] Darko Suvin, 'SF and the Genological Jungle', in *Speculations on Speculation: Theories of Science Fiction*, ed. by James Gunn and Matthew Candelaria (Toronto and Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2005), pp. 59-79 (p. 64).

variation of the space opera' in one book-length overview of science fiction.[74] Another scholar writes that military SF is essentially space opera 'whose earlier western tropes have been replaced by those of modern warfare.'[75] Furthermore, military SF works are often included in critical examinations of contemporary space opera.[76] From the other direction, Brian Stableford has written of the European backlash against innately belligerent future war stories after World War One, explicitly linking this to European writers' reluctance to get involved in space opera and military SF, which are presented as direct descendants of the future war narrative.[77] Likewise, Thomas D. Clareson argues that E. E. 'Doc' Smith's novels – the quintessential space operas, the Skylark and Lensman series – offer permutations of the future war motif.[78] Thus, much military SF can be seen as space opera that has altered its intentions, replacing a focus on adventure with a focus on the military, the military viewpoint, and military verisimilitude.

Literary Ancestry and Exemplars

The military SF subgenre can be seen as conforming to the genre development theory followed by SF scholars such as Mark Rose. This approach has genres developing in two phases, emergent and mature: 'First, by combining and transforming earlier forms, the genre complex assembles and the idea of the genre's existence gradually appears. Later, a generically self-conscious phase occurs, one in which texts are based on the now explicit form.'[79] For Rose, science fiction went through its emergent phase in the 1930s and entered its mature phase with John W. Campbell's editorship of *Astounding*. In this approach military SF began to develop out of science fiction addressing war and military matters from the 1930s onwards and especially after World War Two, combining tropes and characteristics from, in

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[74] M. Keith Booker and Anne-Marie Thomas, *The Science Fiction Handbook* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 42.

[75] Andy Sawyer, 'Space Opera', in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. by Mark Bould, Andrew M. Butler, Adam Roberts, and Sherryl Vint (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 505-509 (p. 508).

[76] Hartwell and Cramer, pp. 259-265 (p. 264).

[77] Stableford, *Historical Dictionary of Science Fiction Literature*, p. 127. In addition, many future war narratives and technothrillers could, in the opinion of David Weber, be considered near-future military science fiction. David Weber, personal correspondence (email), 1 March 2013.

[78] Thomas D. Clareson, *Understanding Contemporary American Science Fiction: The Formative Period, 1926-1970* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), p. 18.

[79] Rose, p. 10.

particular, the future war story and the space opera. Examples of these proto-military SF stories include Edmond Hamilton's Interstellar Patrol series, Jack Williamson's Legion of Space series and E. E. 'Doc' Smith's Lensman series. By the end of the 1950s modern military SF had its first direct precursors and exemplars: Robert A. Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* (1959) and Gordon R. Dickson's *Dorsai!* (1959). However, there was still no separate subgenre. The self-conscious, mature phase for military SF, it can be argued, began in 1975, with the reprint anthology *Combat SF*, edited by Dickson. This anthology helped establish the concept of military SF as a separate subgenre, although the term 'military science fiction' is not used in the book.[80] It contained work by some of the most important authors of military SF, including Keith Laumer, David Drake, Fred Saberhagen, Joe Haldeman, Harry Harrison, and Dickson himself. Since the 1990s military SF has been one of the largest and most significant subgenres of science fiction and an important area of specialization, with its own conventions and authors who rarely write anything else.[81]

Preliminary Description of Military SF

A useful preliminary description of military SF is that it is science fiction – set in the near future, far future or alternate past or present, usually in outer space or on other worlds – in which military organisations, personnel, operations, and technology play a significant role in resolving the story's conflicts and/or problems.[82] While the plot often revolves around warfare, depictions of combat and armed conflict are not a requirement. The setting includes a well-realised military environment, and the narrative is interested in authentic details and realistic depictions of military action and military lifestyles. The principal character(s) serve within the military services, within a chain of command, and the stories demonstrate a fundamental understanding of how military characters, lifestyles, and culture

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[80] While *Combat SF* does not use the term 'military SF', Dickson does argue for the existence of a readership interested in 'think-tanking by science fiction authors on the subject [of war].' Gordon R. Dickson, 'Combat SF: Introduction', *Combat SF* (New York: Ace Books, 1981), n.p.
[81] D'Ammassa, p. 121.
[82] Regarding 'alternate pasts and presents': alternate histories and counterfactuals, also known as 'allohistories' or 'uchronias', have been published by fiction writers and unconventional historians for decades. Production increased sharply after the Holocaust, and it was defined as a literary category with the establishment of the Sidewise Awards for Alternate History in 1995, named after Murray Leinster's 'Sidewise in Time' (*Astounding Stories*, June 1934).

differ from civilian characters, lifestyles, and culture, as well as how these different cultures interact with each other. The primary characteristic of military SF is that it understands and focuses on the military viewpoint. In sum, the main features of military SF are the presence of military organisations, military personnel as characters, and an understanding of military viewpoints and culture. This thesis makes no great claims for this description, since it is a preliminary effort, but argues that it works fairly well as a description of the subgenre as it is generally recognised.

Science Fiction Criticism and Histories

SF Criticism

As Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr. recognises, 'no popular genre of fiction has generated as much, and as diverse, critical commentary as science fiction', and SF criticism, quoting Gary Westfahl, 'has been, by any measure, one of history's most extensive discussions about one particular branch of literature.' [83] As well as its extent and diversity, SF criticism is also interesting because of its two distinct 'traditions', the 'popular' and the 'academic', and the close links between the two. In fact, some scholars speak of a 'convergence of the major streams of SF criticism' by the end of the 1970s. [84] This section discusses twentieth and twenty-first century SF criticism and histories of SF.[85]

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[83] Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., 'Science Fiction/Criticism', in *A Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. by David Seed (Malden, MA, and Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 43-59 (p. 43). Gary Westfahl, 'The Popular Tradition in Science Fiction Criticism, 1926-1980', *Science Fiction Studies*, 26, 2 (July 1999), pp. 187-212 (p. 187).

[84] Csicsery-Ronay Jr., 'Science Fiction/Criticism', pp. 43-59 (p. 53). This view of two traditions is different from the three traditions that Gary K. Wolfe identified as being precursors to current critical writing on SF. Wolfe saw these as beginning (1) in the letter columns of the pulp magazines and the 'fanzines' of the 1920s and 1930s, (2) in the commentaries published by professional writers during the 1940s, and, finally, (3) the increasing attention from academically trained scholars and the occasional commentator from the 'mainstream.' The 'popular' tradition used here coalesces Wolfe's first two. Gary K. Wolfe, 'History and Criticism', in *Anatomy of Wonder 4: A Critical Guide to Science Fiction* (1995), pp. 483-85, quoted in Arthur B. Evans, 'The Origins of Science Fiction Criticism: From Kepler to Wells', *Science Fiction Studies*, 26, 2 (July 1999), pp. 163-186 (p. 163).

[85] And will thus not include the pre-twentieth century 'science fiction' criticism identified and discussed by Arthur B. Evans: starting with Johannes Kepler, as 'one of Western literature's first sf authors *and* critics' based on his *Notes* to his lunar voyage *Somnium* (1634), he charts criticism about, among others, Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moone* (1638), Cyrano de Bergerac's *Comical History of the States and Empires of the Moon* (1657), and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), all the way to responses to H. G. Well's scientific romances in the late-nineteenth century. Evans, 'The Origins of Science Fiction Criticism: From Kepler to Wells', pp. 163-186.

The popular tradition of SF criticism began in the 1920s: the editors and writers of the pulp magazines offered their thoughts in editorials, blurbs, and reviews, and they were followed by readers and their letters, and soon enough there developed conversation between the practitioners and audience of SF. The term 'popular' is applied to this stream of criticism undertaken by dedicated amateurs because until the 1970s there was 'relatively little participation or input from those people formally trained and officially qualified to discuss literature.'[86] These 'vibrant discussions' in the pulp magazines – the most widely read, influential and accessible SF publications between the 1920s and 1950s – were encouraged by the prominent editors, such as Hugo Gernsback and John W. Campbell, to voice opinions about the genre and to discuss ideas surrounding the genre raised in magazine editorials.[87] As well as exchanges in the pulps, during the 1930s growing numbers of fan organizations and individual fans started to produce their own publications.[88]

After 1950, other commentators took over from Gernsback and Campbell as the key figures of the popular tradition of SF criticism: these, using groupings adopted from Gary Westfahl's scholarship, included other magazine editors, book reviewers, anthologists, and editors and authors of books about science fiction.[89] The two major editors who emerged in the 1950s were Anthony Boucher of *The Magazine of Fantasy of Science Fiction* and H. L. Gold of *Galaxy*. Two book reviewers became prominent during the 1950s – Damon Knight and James Blish (under the pseudonym William Atheling Jr.) – and had their criticism collected in book form: Knight with *In Search of Wonder* (1956) and later Blish with *The Issue at Hand* (1964).[90] Notably, for the first time in the history of the popular tradition, both Knight and Blish explicitly identified themselves as critics and insisted that SF be

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[86] Westfahl, 'The Popular Tradition of Science Fiction Criticism, 1926-1980', pp. 187–212 (p. 187).
[87] Csicsery-Ronay Jr., 'Science Fiction/Criticism', pp. 43-59 (p. 45).
[88] Westfahl calls *Hammer and Tongs*, a collection of essays from the fanzine *The Science Fiction Critic* (1937), 'the first book devoted entirely to science fiction criticism.' Westfahl, 'The Popular Tradition of Science Fiction Criticism, 1926-1980', pp. 187–212 (p. 192).
[89] Westfahl, 'The Popular Tradition of Science Fiction Criticism, 1926-1980', pp. 187–212 (p. 194).
[90] Damon Knight, *In Search of Wonder: Essays on Modern Science Fiction* (Chicago, IL: Advent, 1956); James Blish (as by William Atheling Jr.), *The Issue at Hand: Studies in Contemporary Magazine Science Fiction* (Chicago, IL: Advent, 1964). Knight was the first person to gain a reputation as a science fiction critic and the first person to win a Hugo Award for his criticism. Harry Harrison considers the publication of these critical collections as the point when SF criticism was "born". Harry Harrison, 'Introducing the Future: the Dawn of Science-Fiction Criticism', in *Histories of the Future: Studies in Fact, Fantasy and Science Fiction*, ed. by Alan Sandison and Robert Dingley (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2000), p. pp. 1-7 (p. 2).

judged by mainstream or ordinary critical standards. Also important for the popular tradition during this period were the anthologies: the first of which was Groff Conklin's *The Best of Science Fiction* (1946), while the first regular series of SF anthologies began with *The Best Science Fiction Stories: 1949*, edited by Everett F. Bleiler and T. E. Dikty, followed by seven successor volumes.[91] These were followed by the works of the 'preeminent anthologist of her era', Judith Merril, who edited twelve 'Year's Best' anthologies (1955-1967).[92] The 1940s and 1950s also witnessed the first regular appearances of books about science fiction, including critical anthologies featuring essays on SF.[93] Fan projects during this period also helped to establish the bibliography as a mainstay in SF research: the pioneer bibliography of primary works in science fiction and fantasy was Everett F. Bleiler's *The Checklist of Fantastic Literature* (1948).[94] Comparable works included Donald H. Tuck's three-volume *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy Through 1968* (1974), and Robert Reginald's two-volume *Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature* (1979).[95] This popular tradition dominated SF criticism until the academic tradition gained a foothold in the 1960s.

Literary critics and scholars were slow to accept science fiction. The 'lonely, self-reliant' pioneers of academic SF criticism during the 1940s were J. O. Bailey, Marjorie Hope Nicolson and Thomas Clareson.[96] The first serious scholarly study

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[91] Groff Conklin (ed.), *The Best of Science Fiction* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1946); Everett F. Bleiler and T. E. Dikty (eds.), *The Best Science Fiction Stories, 1949* (New York: Frederick Fall, 1949).

[92] Starting with Judith Merril (ed.), *SF: The Year's Greatest Science-Fiction and Fantasy* (New York: Gnome Press, 1956). Westfahl, 'The Popular Tradition of Science Fiction Criticism, 1926-1980', pp. 187–212 (pp. 200-202).

[93] Including: Lloyd Arthur Eshbach (ed.), *Of Worlds Beyond: The Science of Science Fiction Writing* (Reading, PA: Fantasy Press, 1947); Reginald Bretnor (ed.), *Modern Science Fiction: Its Meaning and Its Future* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1953); and, Basil Davenport (ed.), *The Science Fiction Novel: Imagination and Social Criticism* (Chicago: Advent Publishers, 1959).

[94] Everett F. Bleiler, *The Checklist of Fantastic Literature: A Bibliography of Fantasy, Weird and Science Fiction Books Published in the English Language* (Chicago, IL: Shasta Publishers, 1948). In 1978 Bleiler issued a revised version of this work under the title *The Checklist of Science-Fiction and Supernatural Fiction* (Glen Rock, NJ: Firebell Books, 1978).

[95] Donald H. Tuck, *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy Through 1968: A Bibliographic Survey of the Fields of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Weird Fiction through 1968: Volume 1: Who's Who, A-L* (Chicago, IL: Advent, 1974), followed by *Volume Two: Who's Who, M-Z* (1978) and *Volume Three: Miscellaneous* (1983); Robert Reginald, *Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature: A Checklist, 1700-1974, with Contemporary Science Fiction Authors II* (Detroit, MI: Gale Research Company, 1979).

[96] Donald M. Hassler, 'The Academic Pioneers of Science Fiction Criticism, 1940-1980', *Science Fiction Studies*, 26, 2 (July 1999), pp. 213-231 (p. 214). Unlike Hassler, this thesis has not included Philip Babcock Gove's *Imaginary Voyage in Prose Fiction* (1941) – a history of criticism, annotated

of the genre was Bailey's *Pilgrims Through Space and Time* (1947): according to Bailey his work is 'descriptive and analytical', describing a large number of 'scientific romances' – principally Victorian and proto-science fiction – and then presenting an analysis of ideas found running through these romances. [97] Unfortunately, as well as being ignored by scholars at the time of publication, for scholars today it is 'severely limited in content and critical judgement'; however, it is still a valuable pioneering work.[98] The second of the pioneering works of SF scholarship was by Nicolson, the 'foremost scholar of the important precursor genre, the lunar voyage': *Voyages to the Moon* (1948).[99] The third pioneer of SF studies was Clareson, the first good organizer of academic work, who was involved in the founding of the U.S. critical journal *Extrapolation* in 1959 and who was the founding President of the Science Fiction Research Association in 1970. [100]

After the pioneering works by Bailey and Nicolson, there was a long gap before the next academic works of importance (apart from studies of single authors such as H.G. Wells and Aldous Huxley) in the 1960s. These were Kingsley Amis' *New Maps of Hell* (1960), I. F. Clarke's *Voices Prophesying War, 1963-1984* (1966), and H. Bruce Franklin's *Future Perfect: American Science Fiction of the Nineteenth Century* (1966).[101] Amis' apologetic survey of genre SF, *New Maps of Hell*, was brief and unscholarly, but also critical and suggestive. It offered SF as the quintessential genre of literary dystopia, and regarded the essential aspects of modern SF as satirical and dystopian. Clarke's *Voices Prophesying War* is a pioneering literary-historical survey of future-war narratives, analysing the texts

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checklist of early voyage texts, and groundwork of definition for the imaginary voyage narrative – because pseudo-SF texts are only a small part of its analysis.

[97] J. O. Bailey, *Pilgrims Through Space and Time: Trends and Patterns in Scientific and Utopian Fiction* (New York: Argus Books, 1947), p. 2. The book was essentially written in 1934 as Bailey's doctoral dissertation, but he 'had much trouble finding an academic publisher who would consider sf worthy of serious study.' Peter Nicholls, with John Clute (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (St. Albans, UK: Granada, 1979), p. 56.

[98] Harrison, pp. 1-7 (p. 2).

[99] Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Voyages to the Moon* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948). Csicsery-Ronay Jr., writes that Nicolson, who had the most distinguished academic career of the pioneers, soon 'repudiated association with SF.'[99] Csicsery-Ronay Jr., 'Science Fiction/Criticism', pp. 43-59 (p. 50).

[100] Hassler, pp. 213-231 (p. 222). The next two academic journals about SF followed in the early 1970s: *Foundation: The Review of Science Fiction* in the UK in 1972, and *Science Fiction Studies* in the USA from 1973.

[101] Kingsley Amis, *New Maps of Hell: A Survey of Science Fiction* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1960); I. F. Clarke's *Voices Prophesying War, 1963-1984* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966); H. Bruce Franklin, *Future Perfect: American Science Fiction of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966).

against their historical context and prevailing discourses. Franklin's *Future Perfect* identified classic American authors such as Washington Irving, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville as pioneers of SF. These works, particularly those of Amis and Clarke, mark the point at which 'informed and academic criticism was born.'[102] From the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s SF criticism and scholarship by academics flourished in quantity and complexity, the academic study of SF benefiting from the general exuberance of intellectual culture in the West during these decades.[103]

The most important studies of the early- to mid-1970s were by Robert Philmus, David Ketterer, David N. Samuelson and Robert Scholes.[104] Philmus' *Into the Unknown* (1970) was one of the first academic histories of SF. Ketterer's *New Worlds for Old* (1974), in the process of demonstrating the viability of critically analysing SF novels and attempting to contribute a new critical approach to literary theory, argues that SF was the direct heir of American literary apocalypticism and that a 'considerable concordance… exists between all science fiction and the characteristics of American literature generally and the American experience.'[105] Samuelson's *Visions of Tomorrow* (1975 – first produced as a doctoral dissertation in 1969) is a New Critical formalist close-reading and analysis of six contemporary SF novels, adopting mainstream literary criticism techniques for the still largely ignored SF field. Scholes' *Structural Fabulation* (1975) offers a generic theory and historical framework for science fiction, mixing 'structuralism and psychoanalysis to argue that SF is cognate with the contemporary literary movements of fabulation.'[106]

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[102] Harrison, pp. 1-7 (p. 3).
[103] Hassler, pp. 213-231 (p. 226). Csicsery-Ronay Jr., 'Science Fiction/Criticism', pp. 43-59 (p. 51).
[104] Robert Philmus, *Into the Unknown: The Evolution of Science Fiction from Francis Godwin to H. G. Wells* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970); David Ketterer, *New Worlds for Old: The Apocalyptic Imagination, Science Fiction and American Literature* (New York: Anchor Press, 1974); David N. Samuelson, *Visions of Tomorrow: Six Journeys from Outer to Inner Space* (New York: Arno Press, 1975); Robert Scholes, *Structural Fabulation: An Essay on Fiction of the Future* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975).
[105] Ketterer, *New Worlds for Old*, p. x.
[106] Csicsery-Ronay Jr., 'Science Fiction/Criticism', pp. 43-59 (p. 51). Scholes later teamed up with Eric S. Rabkin to produce summaries of theory on fantasy and fabulation that have been widely accepted: see, Robert E. Scholes and Eric S. Rabkin, *Science Fiction: History, Science, Vision* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), a textbook survey of SF that offers a synthesis of the historical, intellectual, social, thematic, and scientific elements that comprise the history and background of SF.

After Scholes' *Structural Fabulation*, according to Csicsery-Ronay Jr., 'ambitious studies of the cognitive and sociological preconditions of the genre appeared in quick succession.'[107] As well as Scholes' work, there was: Eric Rabkin's *The Fantastic in Literature* (1976), which argued for reading SF as the successor of the mythological and mythopoeic traditions; Gary K. Wolfe's *The Known and the Unknown* (1979), perhaps the only major work of academic SF scholarship of the period that did not use a metacritical apparatus, but used a structuralist organising theory that moved Bailey's 'motif' analysis of SF considerably forward by identifying the iconic elements through which SF mediates the oscillation between the known and the unknown; and, Mark Rose's *Alien Encounters* (1981), which, adapting Northrop Frye's notion that SF is a modern incarnation of the mythos of romance, and developing his readings of individual texts around the paradigmatic opposition between the human and the inhuman (and consequent subversions of this paradigm), lays out the dominant archetypes of the genre.[108] The most significant – if contentious, for its dismissal of most genre SF as relatively worthless – full-length study of SF during this period was Darko Suvin's *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* (1979), a structuralist analysis of the blending of science and fiction in 'cognitive estrangement': an imaginative framework alternative to the author's, and mundane fiction's, empirical environment, and in which the displacement is logically consistent within the scientific and rational ('cognitive') norms of the author's time period.[109] In this text – '*the* significant forerunner of all the major examinations of the genre' produced afterwards – Suvin argues that SF is 'an

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[107] Csicsery-Ronay Jr., 'Science Fiction/Criticism', pp. 43-59 (pp. 51-52).

[108] Eric Rabkin, *The Fantastic In Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); Gary K. Wolfe, *The Known and the Unknown: The Iconography of Science Fiction* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1979); Mark Rose, *Alien Encounters: Anatomy of Science Fiction* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1981). A later structuralist analysis – in spite of its title – of the SF genre is Carl D. Malmgren, *Worlds Apart: Narratology of Science Fiction* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991).

[109] Darko Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979). This work introduced a number of ideas that remain central in SF criticism: cognitive estrangement (one of the most important terms in SF studies), the novum, and SF's genetic link with utopia. Two important later books by Suvin are *Victorian Science Fiction in the U.K.: The Discourses of Knowledge and Power* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1983) and *Positions and Presuppositions in Science Fiction* (Kent, OH: The Kent University Press, 1988).

epistemological genre inherently critical of bourgeois ideology, and an inciter of social enlightenment.'[110]

The 1970s and 1980s saw a more complex and wide ranging engagement with SF (especially the new and highly popular subgenre of cyberpunk), which, broadly speaking, can be divided into three categories: poststructuralist/postmodernist, Marxist, and feminist. As pioneered by Samuel Delany, poststructuralist SF criticism explores how readers must learn the conventions of the genre to engage with it in meaningful ways.[111] These critics have moved away from the literary-historical (e.g. the work of Brian Aldiss, I. F. Clarke, James Gunn, Robert Philmus, and Paul Alkon) and into the often dense and confusing theoretical-ideological. Marxist SF scholarship continues on from the work of Suvin and others who treat SF as the literature of cognitive estrangement. Finally, feminist SF criticism, as first articulated by Joanna Russ in the early 1970s, 'proposes that the genre's future-forward orientation makes it useful for authors interested in how the relations of science, society, and gender change over time.'[112] Important work by non-academics such as Brian Aldiss, Brian Stableford and Samuel Delany have also reflected the convergence of the academic and popular traditions of SF criticism. This convergence is also visible in contributions to peer-review journals such as *Extrapolation* and *Science Fiction Studies* by professional writers, and essays by the academic community in *Science Fiction Eye*, an amateur review and criticism magazine, and the *New York Review of Science Fiction*.[113]

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[110] Csicsery-Ronay Jr., 'Science Fiction/Criticism', pp. 43-59 (p. 52). Veronica Hollinger, 'Contemporary Trends in Science Fiction Criticism, 1980-1999', *Science Fiction Studies*, 26, 2 (July 1999), pp. 232-262 (p. 233).
[111] See, for example: Samuel R. Delany, *The Jewel-Hinged Jaw: Notes on the Language of Science Fiction* (New York: Dragon Press, 1977) and Damien Broderick, *Reading by Starlight: Postmodern Science Fiction* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).
[112] Lisa Yaszek, 'Cultural History', in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. by Mark Bould, Andrew M. Butler, Adam Roberts, and Sheryl Vint (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 194-203 (p. 199).
[113] Hollinger, pp. 232-262 (p. 232).

Histories of SF

While it is difficult to separate histories of science fiction from the wider field of SF criticism, there have been a number of excellent historical studies of the genre.[114] As expected, all of them are 'partial and partisan – that is, each has its own interpretive purpose, its own limitations of scope, and its own ideological biases.'[115] Arguably, the first narrative to claim the title of an SF history is Sam Moskowitz's *The Immortal Storm* (1954), a study not about the genre per se, but of SF fandom.[116] This is a good example of how SF histories began, and have largely remained, in the popular tradition of SF scholarship. It was noted British author and critic Brian Aldiss who claimed the first historical overview of the genre in his *Billion Year Spree: The True History of Science Fiction* (1973).[117] This is one of the most comprehensive introductions to the field – although it is idiosyncratic in some respects and ill-advisedly totalising – and remains an important book, especially in the literary and cultural context it gives for SF since the days of Mary Shelley. A few years later, another figure situated in both the popular and academic traditions, James Gunn, published the next important book on SF and its history, *Alternate Worlds: The Illustrated History of Science Fiction* (1975), a balanced and intelligent survey aimed at the general reader.[118] According to Gary Westfahl, 'neither history of science fiction seemed either purely popular or purely academic, and both were perhaps stronger for that reason, suggesting that both traditions had

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[114] Note: few SF histories have been written by historians – Edward James is one of the few exceptions – as pointed out in Darren Jorgensen and Helen Merrick, 'Introduction: Making Science Fiction Histories', *Extrapolation*, 51, 1 (2010), pp. 5-12 (p. 9).

[115] Arthur B. Evans, 'Histories of Science Fiction', in *The Oxford Handbook of Science Fiction*, ed. by Rob Latham (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 47-58 (p. 47).

[116] Sam Moskowitz, *The Immortal Storm: A History of Science Fiction Fandom* (Atlanta: Atlanta Science Fiction Association Press, 1954). This history of fandom was later joined by those of Harry Warner, Jr.: *All Our Yesterdays: An Informal History of Science Fiction Fandom in the Forties* (Chicago, IL: Advent, 1969) and *A Wealth of Fable: An Informal History of Science Fiction Fandom in the 1950s* (Van Nuys, CA: SCIFI Press, 1992). Moskowitz also produced numerous biographical essays on science fiction writers, gathered into two volumes: *Explorers of the Infinite: Shapers of Science Fiction* (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing, 1963) and *Seekers of Tomorrow: Masters of Modern Science Fiction* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1965).

[117] Brian Aldiss, *Billion Year Spree: The True History of Science Fiction* (New York: Schocken Books, 1973). Later expanded and revised, with David Wingrove, as *Trillion Year Spree: The History of Science Fiction* (London: Gollancz, 1986).

[118] James Gunn, *Alternate Worlds: The Illustrated History of Science Fiction* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975).

much to gain from cooperation and interaction.'[119] These works, perhaps, pointed the way towards the convergence of the two traditions.

There were no more general histories of SF until the twenty-first century, but the 1980s and 1990s did see the publication of a number of good historical studies of science fiction, including work by Thomas D. Clareson, H. Bruce Franklin, Paul K. Alkon, Edward James, and Brooks Landon.[120] Clareson's *Some Kind of Paradise: The Emergence of American Science Fiction* (1985) was a historical and thematic survey with a specifically American focus, situating early American SF within the context of the impact of technological changes between 1870 and 1910. Franklin's *Robert A. Heinlein: America as Science Fiction* (1980) was a Marxist historical-materialist reading of Heinlein's career within the context of the American socio-political and cultural scene, making it more than just a single author study, while his *War Stars: The Superweapon and the American Imagination* (1988), continued his convincing study of the American cultural imaginary, charting the interchange between American cultural fantasies and the realities they engage with. It interweaves culture, literature, science, and history in its examinations of the ongoing American quest for the superweapon, real and imagined, and how this search for the ultimate defensive weapon has led to the development of increasingly lethal military forces and weapons (and the possibility of global annihilation). Alkon's *Origins of Futuristic Fiction* (1987) was an excellent history of early proto-SF, demonstrating how various forerunner modes of futuristic fiction (and aesthetic development of a style in which to write about the future) provided a basis for the development of SF as a specific genre during the nineteenth century. This work also provided a basis for Alkon's *Science Fiction Before 1900: Imagination Discovers Technology* (1994), which was an overview of pre-twentieth century SF. Also good was James' *Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (1994), an even-handed,

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[119] Westfahl, 'The Popular Tradition in Science Fiction Criticism, 1926-1980', pp. 187-212 (p. 211).

[120] Thomas D. Clareson, *Some Kind of Paradise: The Emergence of American Science Fiction* (Westport, CT, and London: Greenwood Press, 1985); H. Bruce Franklin, *Robert A. Heinlein: America as Science Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980) and *War Stars: The Superweapon and the American Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Paul K. Alkon, *The Origins of Futuristic Fiction* (Athens, GA, and London: University of Georgia Press, 1991) and *Science Fiction before 1900: Imagination Discovers Technology* (New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1994); Edward James, *Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Brooks Landon, *Science Fiction after 1900: From the Steam Man to the Stars* (New York: Routledge, 2002(1997)).

accessible and comprehensive history of SF, looking at science fiction culture as well as its works, with attention to British SF as well as its American counterpart. The final important work during this period, and a sequel of a kind to Alkon's *Science Fiction Before 1900*, was Landon's *Science Fiction After 1900: From the Steam Man to the Stars* (1997), a unique history of the genre constructed in the context of contemporary theory, with an awareness of issues around postmodernism, feminism, and the like.

After the deconstruction of monolithic versions of the genre and its history during the postmodernism-dominated SF criticism of the 1980s and 1990s, it has recently been the project of several books, as Darren Jorgensen and Helen Merrick write, to 'reconstitute the genre's history from out of these multiplicities, in overviews that attempt to think about generic identity from awry, as they return to a generic metanarrative with its multiplicity in mind.'[121] These include several ambitious, generously inclusive – in that they do not delimit the generic field – collections, such as *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, *A Companion to Science Fiction*, and *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*.[122] There have also been three recent critical histories of SF which attempt similarly inclusive summations: Roger Luckhurst's *Science Fiction* (2005), Adam Roberts' *The History of Science Fiction* (2007) and Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr.'s *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction* (2008).[123] Luckhurst's work was an excellent cultural history which locates SF's generic identity in a marginalisation from the literary mainstream and as a by-product of 'technologically saturated societies.'[124] Much of Luckhurst's work is based on primary documents, which are situated in the broader context of late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century scientific, political, and mainstream literary discourses. Roberts' critical history located SF in the conflict between Protestant and Catholic, but was largely ahistorical in its avoidance of connections between works of SF and the context in which they were written. Csicsery-Ronay Jr. took a

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[121] Jorgensen and Merrick, pp. 5-12 (p. 7).
[122] Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); David Seed (ed.), *A Companion to Science Fiction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005); and, Mark Bould, Andrew M. Butler, Adam Roberts, and Sherryl Vint (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 2009).
[123] Roger Luckhurst, *Science Fiction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005); Adam Roberts, *The History of Science Fiction* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2008).
[124] Luckhurst, p. 3.

different approach, turning the science fiction noun into an adjective, the 'science-fictional,' to describe it as a series of future-oriented tropes. This was an outline of the genre, which provided a great deal of history at same time. Along with the recent generic histories by Luckhurst, Roberts and Csicsery-Ronay Jr., recent years have also witnessed several 'alternative national histories', on Australian, Brazilian, East German, and Japanese SF.[125]

Theory and Methodology

This thesis presents a cultural and literary history of the military SF subgenre and the United States during the twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries. The methodologies and tools providing its foundations are strongly interdisciplinary, derived from both historical and literary scholarship. The three most important theoretical approaches comprise insights derived from cultural history, the history of ideas, and the literary New Historicism.

This thesis is based on a distinction between *literary* history – reading texts for themselves – and literary *history* – reading texts as historical documents to be explored for what they say about contemporary society and culture. This historical approach to military SF, rather than a literary approach utilising historical methods, is appropriate for three reasons. First, the emphasis is placed on what the military SF works reveal about the events and attitudes of their times of publishing, and not on the close-reading and (hermeneutic) interpretation of the works themselves. Second, the literary criticism involved in this literary history supplements the

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[125] Jorgensen and Merrick, pp. 5-12 (p. 8). Important works chronicling the emergence and development of national SF traditions include: Darko Suvin, *Russian Science Fiction 1956-1974: A Bibliography* (Elizabethtown, NY: Dragon Press, 1976); J. P. Glad, *Extrapolations from Dystopia: A Critical Study of Soviet Science Fiction* (Princeton: Kingston Press, 1982); Brian Stableford, *Scientific Romance in Britain, 1890-1950* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1985); Robert Matthew, *Japanese Science Fiction: A View of a Changing Society* (London: Routledge, 1989); David Ketterer, *Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); Nicholas Ruddick, *Ultimate Island: On the Nature of British Science Fiction* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993); Russell Blackford, Van Ikin, and Sean McMullen (eds.), *Strange Constellations: A History of Australian Science Fiction* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999); Jean-Marc Lofficier, *French Science Fiction, Fantasy & Pulp Fiction* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2000); M. Elizabeth Ginway, *Brazilian Science Fiction: Cultural Myths and Nationhood in the Land of the Future* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2004); Christopher Bolton, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., and Takayuki Tatsumi (eds.), *Robot Ghosts and Wired Dreams: Japanese Science Fiction from Origins to Anime* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2007); Rachel Haywood Ferreira. *The Emergence of Latin American Science Fiction* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2011).

historical contextualisation of the texts and the investigation of the interactions between the texts and their cultural milieu. The works' formal properties are not the main concern, nor is their quality as literature. Third, scholarship based on historical data can be better challenged and supplemented than literary scholarship which relies on general theses that can neither be proved nor disproved (such as the importance of material conditions in Marxism, or power in Foucauldian poststructuralism). While this thesis is focused on the historical approach to the subject, it is not overly concerned with maintaining a distinction between history and literature as separate disciplines. It recognises that the study of literature and history converge substantially, and that not only does history affect literature, but literature informs history.[126] Furthermore, this study directly and explicitly engages with an ongoing discussion about historical methodology: the perceived problematic of utilising fiction as historical primary evidence.[127]

Cultural History

The first important – indeed, the dominant – methodology contributing to this thesis is cultural history. Cultural history involves looking at popular culture traditions and cultural interpretations of historical experience, and has an interest in the values held by particular groups in particular times, as inscribed in 'texts.'[128] For the purposes of this thesis, 'culture' can be understood as 'the constant process of producing meanings of and from our social experience', and includes values, beliefs, attitudes, shared social meanings, and representations of the world; 'popular culture', in simplest terms, is culture widely favoured by many people, the culture 'of the people', as opposed to elite culture.[129] Cultural history is the result of a 'cultural turn' (or 'linguistic' or 'semiotic' turn) in the social sciences during the

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[126] For a good discussion of the similarities between New Historicism and cultural history, see Sarah Maza, 'Stephen Greenblatt, New Historicism, and Cultural History, or, What We Talk About When We Talk About Interdisciplinarity', *Modern Intellectual History*, 1, 2 (2004), pp. 249-265.

[127] There is ample literature on this problematic, including René Wellek's *Theory of Literature* 1949), Northup Frye's *The Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), and Fredric Jameson's *Archaeologies of the Future* (2005).

[128] The dramatic success 'of culturalist approaches has led many to suspect that we are all cultural historians now' – and the approach continues to open up new avenues of enquiry for scholars. Brian Cowan, 'Intellectual, Social and Cultural History: Ideas in Context', in *Intellectual History*, ed. by Richard Whatmore and Brian Young (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 171-188 (p. 188).

[129] John Fiske, *Reading the Popular* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p. 1.

1970s and 1980s, resulting from works by Hayden White, Clifford Geertz, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault, among others. This turn in cultural studies has resulted in a degree of overlap between historical and literary studies – including 'the application of techniques of literary analysis to other cultural materials' and, for literary studies, literature 'studied as a particular cultural practice and works are related to other discourses.'[130] This approach acknowledges that fiction has always been a cultural artefact which provides useful material for researchers.[131] According to Anna Green there are three characteristic features of cultural history: its focus upon human subjectivity and the creative dimensions of the human mind, including the ways in which human beings make sense of their world; a holistic approach to culture that seeks to identify collective modes and systems of thought; and, an interpretive, hermeneutic, method of analysis with an emphasis on contextual meaning, and a relativist approach to historical truth.[132] Added to this is the poststructuralist use of language as a metaphor – with symbolic actions framed as texts to be read or languages to be decoded – and an interest in representations, which has been significant to the conceptualisation of a cultural approach to history.[133] This thesis is not following on from a specific tradition or stream of cultural history, instead using a variety of techniques and methods to examine sources previously ignored and marginalised: this thesis makes the reasonable assumption that all forms of writing, all modes of cultural production, are to some extent revealing of extant discourses, rhetorics, and cultural concerns of their period of production.

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[130] Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 46.

[131] Beverly Southgate writes that 'fiction represents and actually embodies some of the widely accepted social mores and intellectual presuppositions of its age; and so it often provides evidence… for the time in which it was actually written.' Beverley Southgate, *History meets Fictions* (Great Britain: Pearson Education, 2009), pp. 7, 8.

[132] Anna Green, *Cultural History* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 4. Much cultural historical thought is derived from anthropologist Clifford Geertz's – semiotic but not structuralist – "interpretive theory of culture", wherein culture is 'an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols', and culture is grasped through the interpretation of signs and signifying practices but does not depend on a structure or universal system of signification. Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2004), p. 36.

[133] Lynn Hunt, 'Introduction: History, Culture and Text', in *The New Cultural History*, ed. by Lynn Hunt (London: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 1-22 (p. 16).

History of Ideas

The second important methodology contributing to this thesis is the history of ideas. The history of ideas is concerned with the production, diffusion, expression, development, reception, preservation, and change of human ideas over time, as expressed in social and political institutions, and philosophical, scientific, religious and literary works. It is closely related to intellectual history, which involves 'understanding how ideas originate and evolve in specific historical contexts' and 'tracing their histories within the broader histories of the societies and cultures which they have helped to shape, and which have also shaped them.'[134] This thesis' approach is informed by the two senses of 'context' in which to situate the ideas being studied. The first type of context is in the vein of the so-called 'Cambridge School' of the history of ideas, which pays attention to the 'languages' of thought and contextualises ideas through using less well-known texts as a means of shedding light on the 'classics.' It consciously questions the extent to which it is possible to distinguish classic texts from the many texts that their subjects were aware of and engaged with in their historical context.[135] In this case, the less well-known subgenre of military SF is used to explicate hegemonic or 'classic' twentieth century discourses. Furthermore, the study of 'peripheral' literary figures – such as the authors of military SF – helps expand our understanding of discursive moments, an understanding that is not possible through a focus on canonical texts, as explained by Marilyn Butler.[136] The second type of context is wider, and involves historical contexts which are not textual – such as the social orders and cultural conventions that can be uncovered by the historian.[137] This recognises the complex interactions between ideas and society, and recognises the ways in which the social orders – and relevant ideas – are represented. Given its interdisciplinary nature, there are close links between the history of ideas and both cultural history and literary criticism (especially New Historicism).[138] For example, one concept

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[134] Brian Young, 'Introduction', in *Intellectual History*, ed. by Richard Whatmore and Brian Young (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 1-7 (p. 2).

[135] Cowan, pp. 171-188 (pp. 173, 183).

[136] Marilyn Butler, 'Repossessing the Past: The Case for an Open Literary History', in *Rethinking Historicism: Critical Readings in Romantic History*, ed. by Marjorie Levinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), pp. 64-84.

[137] Cowan, pp. 171-188 (p. 183).

[138] As shown in several chapters of Richard Whatmore and Brian Young (eds.), *Intellectual History* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

utilised by historians of ideas is *Geistesgeschichte*, a German term often translated as 'history of spirit' or 'history of mind', but which can also, according to Peter Burke, be rendered as 'history of culture', and involves the practitioner 'reading' specific paintings, poems, novels, 'as evidence of the culture and the period in which they were produced.'[139]

New Historicism

The third important methodology contributing to this investigation of literary works and history is New Historicism. New Historicism is derived from the scholarship and thinking of Stephen Greenblatt, Louis Montrose, and Catherine Gallagher and their followers: following the assumption that literary works are the 'material products of specific historical conditions' and functional components of social and political formations, such works must be read and interpreted in their biographical, social, cultural and historical contexts.[140] It is interested in history as represented and recorded in written documents, in history-as-text and history-as-discourse, and rejects both the autonomy of the author and the autonomy of the literary work, seeing literary texts as absolutely inseparable from their historical contexts. This re-contextualisation of a text within a particular milieu is the most productive aspect of New Historicism. The readdressing of the relationship between text and historical context was conducted in the light of 'an anthropological and post-structuralist understanding of culture in which the notion of a single worldview or historical context had come to seem increasingly untenable, and in which art and society had come to be seen as related institutional practices.'[141] New Historicists tend to view the past as consisting of diverse, often conflicting and contradictory, configurations of beliefs, values and trends, rather than dominant systems of explanation and epochal trends.[142] New Historicism constantly interrogates the relationship between history and literature rather than making dogmatic assertions. However, this thesis goes beyond New Historicism's tendency to look at a static

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[139] Burke, pp. 7-8.

[140] John Brannigan, *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism* (London and New York: MacMillan Press, 1998), p. 3.

[141] Abigail Williams, 'Literary and Intellectual History', in *Intellectual History*, ed. by Richard Whatmore and Brian Young (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 49-66 (p. 59).

[142] Brannigan, p. 31.

history, without change and without consequences, and traces movements in the subgenre across time and in the rhetorics, tropes, and material conditions it engages; it has a firmly diachronous historical approach as opposed to New Historicism's synchronous approach. Finally, New Historicism and the notion of culture as text 'vastly expands the range of objects available to be read and interpreted' including 'literary works regarded as too minor to deserve sustained interest and hence marginalized or excluded entirely from the canon' or 'texts that have been regarded as altogether non-literary.'[143] Science fiction texts were for a long time such marginalised works; marginalised especially by literary scholars who traditionally have maintained distinctions between canonical or 'high' literature, and 'low' or genre literature.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the thesis' approach to science fiction and military SF, defined the terms, overviewed previous SF scholarship, and discussed methodologies around literary history and cultural history.

This thesis approaches the science fiction literary genre as a 'family of resemblance' as outlined by Paul Kincaid and adopted by John Rieder, characterised by 'estrangement' from consesnsus reality, fictive 'novum' or 'nova', 'cognitive logic', and a generic 'megatext.' This chapter then examined the origins of the military SF subgenre and offered a preliminary description of military SF as a form of 'formula fiction', as theorised by John G. Cawelti. It argued that military SF is a hybrid of the future war story and the space opera, and could be defined as a subgenre of science fiction in which military organisations, personnel, operations, settings, technology, and culture play a significant role in the narrative, and in which the narrative is interested in authentic details and realistic depictions of military action, military lifestyles, and the military viewpoint.

This chapter also examined the scholarship of SF criticism and histories of SF, and the theoretical assumptions underlying this thesis. Science fiction criticism has two distinct 'traditions': the 'popular' tradition that began in the 1920s, and the

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[143] Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practising New Historicism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 9.

'academic' tradition that began in the 1940s. These converged near the end of the 1970s, and since then SF has generated an extensive and diverse critical commentary, embracing a range of interpretive methodologies and theories. Likewise, there have been various historical studies of the SF genre, embracing a range of approaches, although none similar to this thesis.

Finally, the chapter finished with a discussion of the key theoretical and methodological approaches adopted by this thesis: cultural history, the history of ideas, and New Historicism. All are concerned with the relationship between literature and history, history as represented in literature and the use of literature (even peripheral literature) as historical artefacts, cultural interpretations of historical experience, and the way culture, ideas, views, and attitudes are expressed in literary works.

This discussion of definitions, science fiction criticism, and methodology established a framework for both constructing the history of the military SF genre and for using that 'archive' in an examination of U.S. cultural history, beginning in the early-twentieth century.

CHAPTER TWO

Reconnaissance Phase: Proto-Military SF and Precursor Texts, 1871-1950s

Military SF is science fiction in which military organisations, personnel, operations and technology play a significant role in resolving the story's plot, and which includes a well-realized military environment and an understanding of the military viewpoint and military culture. This thesis maintains that Robert A. Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* and Gordon R. Dickson's *The Genetic General*, both published in 1959, serve as the primary exemplars of the subgenre. However, this is not to say that there were no works before the late-1950s relevant to this study. As has been seen, military SF combines the tropes and attitudes of space opera, which developed in the 1920s and 1930s, with the older subgenre of future war fiction, which originated in the 1870s. This chapter will examine the historical contexts of these two subgenres: future war stories in the first section, space opera in the second section. It is argued that both of these precursor subgenres accept tasteless, genocidal war and mass slaughter as responses to nation-state (or inter-species) rivalry, and that this acceptance can be linked to the nationalist, colonialist, racist, and Darwinian discourses of the historical periods. This thesis maintains that military SF emerged during what are termed the 'Golden Age of Science Fiction' and the beginning of the 'Age of Militarisation' in the U.S., and the third section of this chapter will explore several near- or proto-military SF works written during the decades before 1959, and investigate how their use of military authenticity distinguish them from earlier works.[1] In addition, it will show how these 'proto-military SF' texts display the 'militaristic' and 'antimilitaristic' streams, drawing on Darko Suvin's 'two souls or stances' within SF, that characterise military SF.

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[1] In regards to the terms 'precursor' and 'proto-military SF': This retrospective (or anachronistic) labelling of texts as military SF is no different from a similar labelling of texts that constitute 'science fiction' by scholars, who use a term – not invented until the 1920s – for, depending on the critic, works from the nineteenth century by H. G. Wells, Jules Verne, and Mary Shelley, or possibly even earlier.

Future War Fiction and I. F Clarke

One of the major precursor subgenres of military SF is the future war story, which developed in Britain, and elsewhere in Europe, during the mid- to late-nineteenth century. The standard history of future war literature is I. F. Clarke's *Voices Prophesying War*, first published in 1966 and later expanded after the end of the Cold War. It remains one of the core texts of SF historical scholarship. Clarke not only offered the first comprehensive survey of pre-World War One future-war narratives but also broke new ground in SF scholarship by analysing primary texts against the backdrop of social, cultural, and political discourses and technological development. Explicitly addressing the relationship between literature and society, he writes that his 'account of the origins and development of these imaginary wars' is also 'a history of the various European attitudes to war itself', and that the stories 'show in an often striking manner all those moods and habits of mind' that range from the nationalistic and aggressive attitudes to war in the period before 1914 to later horrified forecasts of war's threat to humankind.'[2]

European Future War Fiction

The first phase of the future war genre began, contends Clarke, when it was essentially created by Lieutenant Colonel Sir George Tomkyns Chesney, with his novella *The Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a Volunteer* (1871), which, by combining the 'methods of the realistic narrative to the practice of the military assessment' produced a 'full-scale story of imaginary warfare.'[3] *The Battle of Dorking* is an account of the invasion and conquest of Britain by an unnamed country (based on Germany), narrated by a veteran addressing his grandchildren fifty years afterwards, lamenting Britain's idleness is the face of the technological advancement and militarism of its foreign enemies.[4] It produced numerous replies

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[2] I. F. Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars, 1793-3749*, 2nd edition (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 2.

[3] Clarke, p. 29. This future war genre was anticipated, but not created, by works like Hermann Lang's (probably a pseudonym for a British writer) *The Air Battle: A Vision of the Future* (1859), in which tectonic cataclysms have destroyed the British Empire and fragmented the United States, and five thousand years in the future the great powers are the black and mixed-race empires of the Sahara, Madeira and Brazilia, with their respective "aerial" fleets.

[4] George Chesney, 'The Battle of Dorking', *Blackwood's Magazine*, 109 (May 1971), pp. 539-572. Published as a book the same year: George Chesney, *The Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a Volunteer* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1971).

in kind, founding a subgenre that remained prolific until the outbreak of World War One in 1914. Clarke writes that Chesney helped to launch a new type of 'purposive fiction' deliberately shaped to present a military or naval forecast, or to teach a political lesson, in which

> the whole aim was either to terrify the reader by a clear and merciless demonstration of the consequences to be expected from a country's shortcomings, or to prove the rightness of national policy by describing the course of a victorious war in the near future. The strong or weak points of a situation – moral, or political, or naval, or military – were presented in a triumphant or in a catastrophic manner according to the needs of the propaganda.[5]

The subject-matter of the stories is not the behaviour of recognisable protagonists, rather 'it is the nation, the enemies of the nation, the new instruments of war, and the future greatness of the fatherland.' Chesney's formula was well suited to a period of 'increasing nationalism' and 'incessant change in armaments', and was soon adopted by writers in Europe (in particular, France and Germany) and the United States to their own versions of the next-great-war.[6] According to H. Bruce Franklin, with the United States' Civil War (1861-1865) and the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), modern technological, industrial warfare burst upon the world, and the 'literary expression of this fateful period in the history of warfare was a new genre – fiction that imagines future wars.'[7] John Rieder points out the correlation – during the last three decades of the nineteenth century – between the high-tide of England's ascendancy as an imperial power, as well as increasing imperial competition, and the growth in the publication of future war narratives.[8] David Seed also notes the contributory factors of the expansion of the popular press and confrontations between imperial powers during this time.[9]

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[5] Clarke, p. 33.
[6] Clarke, pp. 107, 29.
[7] H. Bruce Franklin, *War Stars: The Superweapon and the American Imagination* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 19.
[8] John Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), p. 125.
[9] David Seed, 'Introduction', in *Future Wars: The Anticipations and the Fears*, ed. by David Seed (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), pp. 1-8 (p. 4).

The second and major phase of the literature of imaginary warfare began in the 1880s when the 'middle-class exchange' between the service writers and the readers of the monthly reviews and *The Times* became 'an open market in which distinguished admirals competed and sometimes cooperated with enterprising journalists for the attention of the general reader.' These new stories, and the shape they took, were the result of the 'increasingly powerful forces of mass journalism, mass literacy, and the mass emotions of extreme nationalism', and represent a 'raw and frequently brutal epoch' of future war fiction: in many cases they abandoned Chesney's cool tone and controlled emotion in favour of 'excited language, crude emotionalism, and an often foolish idealization of the nation as the sole source of justice and supreme arbiter in human affairs.'[10] The authors rarely went beyond jingoistic or terrified considerations of the dangers of the current situation, projecting the existing late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century clash of nationalistic interests into the near-future. Though the identity of the invader varied, all of them emphasised the notion that the nation was vulnerable. Within this phase, the stories ranged from thoughtful military forecasts to hysterical narratives of villains intent on destroying humanity but all displayed a far greater interest in the details of armed conflict than any previous works: 'War in all its fascination and terror was one theme that finds its way into even the most purposive and political tales of future warfare.'[11] Examples of works of this period include: Hugh Arnold-Forster's *In a Conning Tower* (1888); Frank R. Stockton's *The Great War Syndicate* (1889); Capitaine Danrit's (pseudonym for Émile A. Driant) *La Guerre de Demain* books (1889-1893); William Le Queux's *The Great War in England in 1897* (1893) and *The Invasion of 1910* (1906); F. G. Burton's *The Naval Engineer and the Command of the Sea* (1896); August Niemann's *The Coming Conquest of England* (1904); and, probably the most well written, H. G. Wells' *The War in the Air* (1908).

Clarke discerns a feedback-loop between the rampant nationalism of European countries and the nationalistic future war stories produced in the decades leading up to World War One, and writes that there is no doubt that 'the authors of many tales of future warfare shared in the responsibility for the catastrophe that overtook Europe.' Future war stories, from 1871 (and especially in the 1880s) to the long-

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[10] Clarke, p. 57.
[11] Clarke, p. 58.

expected outbreak of war in 1914, were so focused on the next-great-war that they failed to display any interest in peace, 'except by way of conquest and the domination of other peoples', and, ironically, were distinguished by 'a complete failure to foresee the form a modern war would take.'[12] The future war stories of this period show that until 1914 most Europeans, including intellectuals and writers of future war fiction, believed that war was good and could be enjoyed, maintained a romantic attitude to war, and failed to anticipate the scale and duration of the next-great-war. Everyone, from the head of government to the average newspaper reader, was convinced that war was inevitable, and, once that idea was lodged in people's minds, it almost became a self-fulfilling prophecy. In Clarke's view authors such as Danrit, Le Queux and Niemann helped raise the temperature of international disputes, while many others 'played their part in helping to sustain and foment the self-deception, misunderstanding, and downright ill will that often infected relations between the peoples of Europe.'[13]

The belief in a short war that was good for the nation, and the nation's racial stock, and which would provide a final settlement of world politics – a war to end war – died on the battlefields of Verdun and the Somme, and the pre-war acceptance of these myths 'generated a violent backlash when it was realized all the destruction and slaughter had been for nothing.'[14] In addition, Frederic Krome writes, the 'experience of mass slaughter and physical destruction, meanwhile, challenged conventional methods of describing war, whether as actual conflict or the tale of the war to come.'[15] Practically, these changes in attitude resulted, after 1918, in a temporary lull in the output of future war stories and an abrupt change in style for those that were produced. The post-World War One writers examined by Clarke – mostly European, and especially British – turned from the 'nationalistic ready-for-anything style' that had been characteristic of the many tales of 'The Next Great War', rejected the old doctrine of inevitable conflict, and, for the most part, 'maintained a common front against the dangers of war and, in particular, against

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[12] Clarke, pp. 115, 64.
[13] Clarke, pp. 112, 115.
[14] Brian Stableford, *Historical Dictionary of Science Fiction Literature* (Lanham, MD, and Oxford, UK: The Scarecrow Press, 2004), p. 126.
[15] Frederic Krome, 'Part Three: The Inter-War Years and the Rise of the Airmen', in *Fighting the Future War: An Anthology of Science Fiction War Stories, 1914-1945*, ed. by Frederic Krome (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 103-111 (pp. 104-105).

the immense destructiveness of modern weapons.'[16] After the experience of World War One, far fewer people were interested in predicting what a second world war might be like; the short answer – dreadful – seemed obvious. According to Brian Stableford, when British speculative war fiction was revived in the 1930s, its 'bitterly pessimistic tone' helped to create very different expectations of World War Two.[17] In contrast, future war stories in the United States maintained a much different attitude to war and its weapons.

American Future War Fiction

After developing in Britain and spreading throughout Europe, future war fiction migrated to the United States, where American authors began contributing their own works to the literature. Although Americans produced fewer such tales prior to 1914, the future war and invasion story was still relatively well known prior to the United States' entry into World War One. H. Bruce Franklin demonstrates that between 1880 and the U.S.'s 1917 entry into World War One, narratives of future wars 'exerted a powerful – and fateful – influence on America's cultural imagination', and that the literature 'expressed and helped to shape the apocalyptic ideology prominent in America's wars from 1898 through the waning years of the twentieth century', and, it may be argued, into the twenty-first century. In this popular fiction 'the emerging faith in American technological genius wedded the older faith in America's messianic destiny, engendering a cult of made-in-America superweapons and ecstatic visions of America defeating evil empires, waging wars to end all wars, and making the world eternally safe for democracy.'[18] Charles E. Gannon agrees, stating that this 'superpower tendency' – 'a fascination with advanced weaponry and its battlefield applications' – is reflected in American science fiction from the late-nineteenth century onwards.[19]

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[16] Clarke, p. 131.

[17] Stableford, *Historical Dictionary of Science Fiction Literature*, p. 126. For example Sydney Fowler Wright's trilogy, starting with *Prelude in Prague* (1935), exploring the rearmament of Germany and its attempted rise to hegemonic dominance in Europe.

[18] H. Bruce Franklin, 'How America's Fictions of Future War Have Changed the World', in *Future Wars: The Anticipations and the Fears*, ed. by David Seed (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), pp. 32-49 (p. 34). Franklin, *War Stars*, p. 20.

[19] Charles E. Gannon, *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines: Technomilitary Agenda-Setting in American and British Speculative Fiction* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), p. 113.

As discussed by Susan Matarese, the American version of the future war story includes a collection of novels that 'depict the United States as a benevolent superpower presiding over a stable, harmonious, and secure world order through its monopoly over the forces of destruction.'[20] These works included Frank Stockton's *Great War Syndicate* (1889), John Bachelder's *A.D. 2050: Electrical Development at Atlantis* (1890), Thomas and Anna Fitch's *Better Days* (1891), James Galloway's *John Harvey* (1897), Stanley Waterloo's *Armageddon* (1898), S. W. Odell's *Last War* (1898), and Simon Newcomb's *His Wisdom* (1900). In his introduction to the 1976 reprint of the American utopia and future war story *Armageddon* (1898), the SF scholar Richard Powers points out a 'permanent and distinguishing feature of the *American* future story' when compared to its European counterpart: while the European version typically depicted the *defeat* of the author's nation due to military unpreparedness and lack of political courage or strategic vision on the part of its leaders, in the American version, the United States is never defeated, instead using its possession of a weapon or weapons of infinite power to outlaw war, secure international peace, and provide effective deterrence against would-be international aggressors.[21] These fictional narratives came at the time of the emergence of a coherently militarist U.S. state, at the end of the nineteenth century, when the Spanish-American War launched the modern period of U.S. imperialism and an increasing interest in nationalism, propelled by ideas around social Darwinism. These was also the beginning of the U.S.'s struggle to reconcile its imperialistic urges with its ideals about democracy and liberty.

Of significance to American future war invasion narratives and, as seen later, space opera stories involving genocidal war, was the discourse of 'Yellow Peril.' A century of scientific – and racist – thought culminating in social Darwinism and the eugenics movement had concluded that race was an integral and significant concept within biology, with important social and sociological consequences. Yellow Peril discourse of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries names a pervasive current of fear and anxiety that ran through the U.S. and other Western imperial powers. Expressed in the writings of scientists, politicians, and popular culture creators, the

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[20] Susan M. Matarese, *American Foreign Policy and the Utopian Imagination* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010), p. 52.
[21] Richard Powers, 'Introduction', in Stanley Waterloo, *Armageddon: A Tale of Love, War, and Invention* (Boston: Gregg Press, 1976), quoted in Matarese, p. 52.

Yellow Peril described the perceived looming threat of 'hordes' of nameless, indistinguishable Asians who, having been exposed to Western technologies, might one day (soon) overrun a West weakened by its own complacency.[22] The most popular invader in the routinely racist and xenophobic American future war story was a form of the Yellow Peril. American future invasion narratives were, arguably, more racially-biased than the primarily nationalistic stories of Europe.[23] In Roy Norton's *The Vanishing Fleets* (1908) and John Giesy's *All for His Country* (1915), for example, Japanese fleets cross the Pacific undetected and surprise an unprepared America.

A prime exemplar is Philip Francis Nowlan's *Armageddon 2419 A.D.,* originally published as 'Armageddon 2419 A.D.' (1928) and 'The Airlords of Han' (1929), and upon which the 1930s Buck Rogers comic strips were based. In this narrative, Tony Rogers wakes from nearly five centuries in suspended animation, and leads future Americans – 'a hunted race in their own land, hiding in the dense forests that covered the shattered and levelled ruins of their once magnificent cities' – in a Second War of Independence against Mongolian Han Airlords who dominate the Earth and its skies from great airships.[24] Nowlan's vision of the future 'was an extension and culmination of nineteenth-century Yellow Peril stories', a future that was 'literally Armageddon, realised as the final war between the white and yellow races of the world' whose only resolution was 'the ultimate eradication' of the Asiatic enemy.[25] Rogers' goal was to 'blast the Mongolian Blight from the face of

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[22] Such Yellow Peril imagery would fuel anti-Asian racism in the United States into the second half of the twentieth century, intensified by four American wars in Asia – against Filipinos in the Philippine-American War (1899-1902), Japanese in World War Two (1939-1945), North Koreans and Chinese in the Korean War (1950-1953), and Vietnamese in the Vietnam War (1955-1975).

[23] Edward James, *Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 22. David Drake, 'Excitement! Adventure! Science Fiction! My Personal look at Space Opera and Military SF', in David Afsharirad (ed.), *The Year's Best Military SF and Space Opera* (Riverdale, NY: Baen Books Books, 2015), pp. 9-15 (p. 11).

[24] Philip Francis Nowlan, *Armageddon 2419 A.D.* (New York: Ace Books, 1962), p. 10. This repetition of the War of Independence is an example of a common trope of military SF, the 'metaphorical invocation of hallowed battles', of specific historical images, in order to frame war as justified, reasonable, inevitable, winnable, and heroic. Steffen Hantke, 'Military Culture', in *The Oxford Handbook of Science Fiction*, ed. by Rob Latham (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 329-339. (p. 335).

[25] John Cheng, *Astounding Wonder: Imagining Science and Science Fiction in Interwar America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), p. 160. Nowlan (under the pseudonym Frank Phillips) also wrote "The Onslaught from Venus" (*Science Wonder Stories*, September 1929), a first-person account by a member of the Supernatural Commission of the Caucasian League's Air Guard who, captured by the invading Venusians, first studies their civilisation and then, escaping, helps destroy it. Venusians, who seem quite human except for their dead-white skin colour, are, like the

the Earth', and, after the Emperor of the Hans is killed, this comes to pass: 'their remaining cities were destroyed and their population hunted down, thus completing the reclamation of America and inaugurating the most glorious and noble era of scientific civilization in the history of the American race.'[26] Explicitly invoking social Darwinist and Yellow Peril discourse, at the end of the story it is discovered the Han were alien-human hybrids, that the Han's 'abilities were the products of natural evolution, not social development': defeat of these enemy Asians was a resolution to Rogers's adventures, a 'triumph of social themes' expressed by Nowlan's hero, and 'in his imagined racial future', a form of evolution.[27]

After World War Two and Hiroshima tales of future warfare went through another period of popularity and the largest output came from the United States, rather than from Europe as during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Clarke attributes this change in distribution to national conditions after World War Two:

> The worse the experience of war, it seems, the less the eagerness to contemplate another one. The Americans knew nothing of air bombardments, invasion and occupation by the enemy, hunger, and concentration camps. They came out of the war knowing that the United States was the major world power and that, for as long as they had sole rights in the atomic bomb, they could look forward to maintaining their dominant role throughout the globe.[28]

The United States came late into both World Wars and its territory was virtually untouched by their effects – and, in some views, the U.S. actually benefited materially and economically from World War Two – and as a result American science fiction maintained a much more positive attitude to war.[29] The Americanisation of future war fiction was also related to the Americanisation of the science fiction genre as a whole. By the 1950s American SF was reprinted all over the world, in the original and in translation, and SF had become identified as an American product. Edward James ascribes this development to the post-war cultural

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Hans, totally evil, incapable of even considering coexistence and their complete extermination is thus a necessity.
[26] Nowlan, pp. 96, 189.
[27] Cheng, p. 160.
[28] Clarke, p. 166.
[29] Stableford, *Historical Dictionary of Science Fiction Literature*, pp. 126-127.

hegemony of the United States: American cultural influence increased dramatically after World War Two, as a result of U.S. economic predominance and involvement in global affairs, the prestige the U.S. won for itself in the struggle against the Axis and the Communist Bloc, and the 'vigour and originality of American culture, which offered an apparently democratic alternative to people whose own cultures had often been elitist and dismissive of popular culture.'[30] The originality and productivity of so many exceptional writers in the U.S. provided reason for the second half of the twentieth century to be seen as the 'American epoch' in the history of the future war story.[31] Concurring, Gannon proposes that American future war narratives, initially influenced or informed by British works, had become a 'distinct and separate literary phenomenon' during the early-twentieth century, 'more extensive, technology-oriented, and, ultimately, more enduring.'[32] It was this greater focus on advanced weaponry and far-reaching speculation that encouraged the emergence of military SF from the older future war subgenre.

Space Opera

The second important precursor subgenre in the development of military SF is space opera, which produced several proto-military SF works during the heyday of pulp SF, that is, the early- to mid-twentieth century. As seen in Chapter One, 'space opera' is a term used for romantic, large-scale, adventure SF narratives. Treating these works – early space opera – as pseudo-military SF texts risks blurring the boundaries between the subgenres but this is inevitable with something as artificial as generic categorisation, especially when this thesis approaches military SF as a hybrid form combining elements of the future war story and the space opera. Alternatively, perhaps, the origins of military SF are congruent with the origins of space opera, with the latter retaining the romantic elements at the expense of the military authenticity of the former. The most important of these precursor works were the texts situated within Edmond Hamilton's Interstellar Patrol series, Jack Williamson's Legion of Space series, and E. E. 'Doc' Smith's Lensman series, all of which depict interstellar conflict.

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[30] James, p. 72-73.
[31] Clarke, p. 166.
[32] Gannon, p. 113.

Like pre-World War One British future-war narratives, interbellum U.S. space opera represented the notion that war was the great simplifier of issues, that war was exhilarating and spectacular, and that war had clear distinctions between good and bad, right and wrong, aggressor and victim. The subgenre was dependent upon a peculiarly American conception of war, grounded in idealism, optimism, technological power, and a simplified morality.[33] The interplanetary and interstellar warfare depicted in the era of the pulps was 'spectacular in design, colourful and cheery in execution, war without values' and, to later readers, seems naïve and tasteless.[34] Anti-war themes were a relatively minor element in this pulp fiction of the 1930s.[35] There was little interest in future war stories that predicted the next terrestrial world war: conflicts set in distant times and against strange aliens took pride of place for a while. In these texts wars of annihilation and genocide are acceptable methods of dealing with (clearly malevolent) alien threats.

The representation of the alien in military SF is a key concern in this thesis. Central to these narratives is the conflict between humans and nonhumans; the stories are permeated by the ancient understanding of 'us versus them.' These alien threats can be understood using the concept of the Other, as first elaborated in Edward Said's seminal study *Orientalism* (1978). The premise of this theory is that people define who they are – their identity – by first looking at who others are and then by focusing on the differences between the two. This drawing of boundaries between Self and Other – binaries of difference that usually include a relationship of power, of inclusion and exclusion – are a key element in 'the process of identification… especially in the case of national identity.'[36] Much of U.S. identity and nationalism is formed in opposition and criticism directed at an 'Other', and U.S. foreign policy

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[33] In 1942, anthropologist Margaret Mead published *And Keep Your Powder Dry*, a study of the way in which American character and values might shape the future conduct of the war. Americans fought best, Mead observed, when they believed that the other side had wantonly provoked them and left them no alternative to war, that the struggle was between antagonists of roughly equal strength, and that their cause was just and selfless. Margaret Mead, *And Keep Your Powder Dry* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971). Discussed in Walter LaFeber, Richard Polenberg, and Nancy Woloch, *The American Century: A History of the United States since the 1890s*, Sixth Edition (Armonk, NY, and London: M. E. Sharpe, 2008), p. 225.

[34] Steven Eisler, *Space Wars: Worlds and Weapons* (London: Octopus Books Limited, 1979), p. 44.

[35] Paul A. Carter, *The Creation of Tomorrow: Fifty Years of Magazine Science Fiction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), p. 124.

[36] Tim Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2002), p. 24.

is animated by the Other, which provides an overarching purpose.[37] Thus, U.S nationalism (and exceptionalism) is not only about self-exaltation, but also about denigration, and demonization, of the Other. Difference is made concrete in space opera and military SF through depiction of the alien: the Alien is a representation of the cultural and racial Other.[38] As Patrick Parrinder and Mark Rose suggest, 'it is not possible to imagine something utterly alien but only to conceive of something as alien by contrast or analogy with something already known' and 'the choice of alien features is always significant.' Aliens in SF 'always possess a metaphorical dimension.'[39] In addition, drawing on Keith Thomas' work observing the modern sensibility that assigned human values to animals and classified them within a hierarchy of associations, John Cheng writes that many aliens encountered in science fiction were attributed hostility and menace through their forms and characteristics. As Cheng reflects, hostile aliens 'more likely resembled terrestrial insects, reptiles, or worms than mammals and had scales, chitin, or exterior membranes instead of fur or skin'; these creatures 'were more likely to be predators than plant eaters, and their quick display of extraterrestrial tooth and claw suggested that a natural competition for the "survival of the fittest" applied across galaxies, dimensions, and possibly the universe.'[40]

The precursors to military SF investigated – in particular, the series written by Hamilton, Williamson, and Smith – were produced during the Great Depression and the heyday of pulp science fiction. The pulps – so-called because they were printed on inexpensive pulpwood paper – began when the children's magazine *Golden Argosy* went to an all-fiction format (called simply *Argosy*) in 1896, came of age in the 1920s, and peaked in the 1930s. They largely replaced dime novels and cheap libraries as the primary vehicles for inexpensive popular fiction in the United States in the early-twentieth-century. Relying on sales, not advertising revenues, after World War One the pulp industry 'shifted from publishing general

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[37] David Ryan, '9/11 and US Foreign Policy', in *American Thought and Culture in the 21ˢᵗ Century*, ed. by Martin Halliwell and Catherine Morley (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), pp. 49-63 (pp. 56-57).

[38] Ursula K. Le Guin, 'American SF and the Other', in *The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction* (New York: Perigee Books, 1979), pp. 97-100 (p. 98).

[39] Mark Rose, *Alien Encounters: Anatomy of Science Fiction* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 77-78. Patrick Parrinder, 'The Alien Encounter: Or Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Le Guin', *Science Fiction Studies*, 6, 1 (March 1979), pp. 46-58 (p. 52).

[40] Cheng, p. 149. See, Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World* (New York: Pantheon, 1983).

all-fiction magazines to producing chains of genre-specific fiction titles, relying on specialization and diversity to attract readers.'[41] Pulps emphasised adventure and drama, while avoiding the mimetic mundane; privileged plot over characterization; exploited the 'exotic', whether racial, sexual, socioeconomic, or geographic; made repeated use of common tropes, motifs, and plot devices; lacked literary experimentation; and maintained clear-cut moral stances, with good usually triumphing over evil.[42] During this period – between the collapse of the Wall Street Stock Market in October 1929 and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 – most Americans endured harsh material conditions. The U.S. went into an economic depression along with Europe but, after coming through World War One without suffering any kind of domestic damage, optimism was far better conserved in the United States. In addition, according to Brian Stableford, the

> pulp fiction industry was not badly hit by the crash, and the escapist fervor of its product enabled it to exploit the situation. In fact, the ultra-cheap magazines grew even more popular as other sectors of the economy languished, and their publishers did their very best to exploit the situation by intensifying competition with one another, recklessly expanding the number of titles they produced and inventing more new genres in some profusion.[43]

The science fiction pulps of the 1920s and 1930s, which can be seen as an expression of a 'new common culture, growing in place of one that had been shattered', were produced for a lower middle or working class – often immigrant - 'entirely without privilege' and gave a whole stratum of the American public 'a sort of unified viewpoint, a voice.'[44] Thomas M. Disch states that these pulps were written to provide a 'semi-literate audience with compensatory fantasies.' He links the SF reader's fascination with 'fantasies of powerless individuals... rising to positions of commanding importance' to the (pulp-era) reader's prevailing sense of

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[41] Cheng, p. 8.

[42] Jess Nevins, 'Pulp Science Fiction', in Rob Latham (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Science Fiction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 93-103 (p. 93).

[43] One of the products of this rapid expansion and diversification was *Astounding Stories of Super-Science*, which would help foster the military SF subgenre. Brian Stableford, 'Science Fiction Between the Wars: 1915-1939', in *Anatomy of Wonder*, 5th edition, edited by Neil Barron (Westport, CT, and London: Libraries Unlimited, 2004), pp. 23-44 (p. 32).

[44] Brian Aldiss and David Wingrove, *Trillion Year Spree: The History of Science Fiction* (New York: House of Stratus, 2001), p. 248-49.

himself of 'being undervalued and meanly employed.'[45] Brian Aldiss and David Wingrove agree that 'all the successful pulps used strong, tough, all-action heroes with whom the underprivileged could identify.'[46] The pulps promoted the idea of some innate superiority waiting to get out and win a war against an alien Other – an idea both engrossing and toxic, perhaps contributing to the war of annihilation theme's popularity.

The Interstellar Patrol, the Legion of Space, and the Lensmen

From its earliest iterations the space opera – perhaps starting with *The Struggle for Empire* (1900) by British author Robert Cole – has had a proto-military SF character, and this is obvious in space opera works by Edmond Hamilton, Jack Williamson, and E. E. 'Doc' Smith.[47] Both Williamson (born John Stewart Williamson) and Smith (Edward Elmer Smith) served in the U.S. Army during World War Two: Williamson as an Air Force weather forecaster, rising to the rank of Staff Sergeant, and Smith in an explosive arsenal. The first of these space operas were the works of Hamilton's Interstellar Patrol series, beginning with 'The Sun-Stealers' (*Weird Tales*, February 1929).[48] These six stories, written over a short period of time, are concerned with the Interstellar Patrol, a quasi-military force maintained by the galactic government of the multi-species Federation of Stars, perhaps a hundred thousand years in the future. The second important space opera relevant to the emergence of military SF is Williamson's Legion of Space series, published in

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[45] Thomas M. Disch, *On SF* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), pp. 9-10.

[46] Aldiss and Wingrove, p. 249.

[47] Thomas D. Clareson writes that Robert William Cole's *The Struggle for Empire: A Story of the Year 2236* (London: Elliot Stock, 1900), which he calls 'the single most important British novel at the turn of the century', is concerned with 'the first notable example – in book form, at least – of those innumerable galactic wars between embattled humanity and rapacious alien hordes which grew into the so-called space opera.' The novel – set in the early twenty-third century – details a cosmic Pax Britannica which becomes engaged in a war with 'a race of men' from a planet of the star Sirius. Clareson argues that Cole's work is the 'high tide of a vision that shaped British and American science fiction in the late decades of the [nineteenth] century', because it extended the future war formula to a cosmic stage and 'voiced the dream of the Anglo-Saxon race triumphant throughout the galaxy.' Thomas D. Clareson, *Some Kind of Paradise: The Emergence of American Science Fiction* (Westport, CT, and London: Greenwood Press, 1985), pp. 113, 212, 213.

[48] Other Interstellar Patrol stories: 'Within the Nebula' (*Weird Tales*, May 1929), 'Outside the Universe' (*Weird Tales*, July-October 1929), 'The Comet-Drivers' (*Weird Tales*, February 1930), 'The Sun People' (*Weird Tales*, May 1930), 'The Cosmic Cloud' (*Weird Tales*, November 1930). All but 'The Sun People' and 'Outside the Universe' were collected in *Crashing Suns* (New York: Ace Books, 1965); all stories were collected in *The Star-Stealers: The Complete Tales of the Interstellar Patrol* (Royal Oak, MI: Haffner Press, 2009).

Astounding during the 1930s, and heavily inspired by Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*, a historical novel first serialised in 1844. This series, which includes 'Legion of Space' (*Astounding*, 1934), 'The Cometeers' (*Astounding*, 1936) and 'One Against the Legion' (*Astounding*, 1939), chronicles the successes of the elite soldiers of the Legion of Space, who defend the Earth and the (American) colonies of the thirtieth century solar system against a combination of human traitors and 'the horrifying racial others', the Medusae and the Cometeers.[49] The third, and most important, space opera series that helped usher in the advent of military SF is Smith's Lensman series, also published in *Astounding* in the 1930s.[50] The Lensmen are young men and women from assorted species who serve in the Galactic Patrol, a combination military force and interstellar law-enforcement agency – a concept apparently originating with Hamilton's Interstellar Patrol series or Roman Frederick Starzl's Interplanetary Flying Patrol series – charged with the defence and preservation of Civilisation. The Lensmen are a 'physical and mental elite who will act as guardians of the universe, assuring that order and goodness prevail.'[51] All three series are thematically interested in the racial characterization of evil and the acceptance of necessary genocide.

The narratives of these space operas are driven by encounters, and confrontations, with malevolent alien Others. Each of the Interstellar Patrol stories, for example, presents the Federation of Suns' conflict with a villainous alien species. While the struggles are invariably Darwinian in nature – the villains are under existential threat and attack because it is the only way for their own species to survive – the enemies of the Federated Suns are still clearly depicted as the evil, racialized Other.

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[49] Roger Luckhurst, *Science Fiction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), p. 65. Also of interest is Williamson's three-part serial, 'Legion of Time' (*Astounding*, May-July 1938), in which fighting men are 'plucked from the disasters of war – the Western Front, the naval battle of Jutland in 1916, the defense of Paris in 1940 (which, at the moment of writing, had not yet happened) – and recruited into the most foreign of all imagined legions': Travelling by time machine 'to the point where alternate world-lines diverge from a moment of choice, they must do battle in order that a good (democratic and Utopian) future may prevail over an evil (despotic and reactionary) one.' Carter, p. 111.

[50] Lensman stories: 'Triplanetary' (*Amazing Stories*, January-April 1934), 'Galactic Patrol' (*Astounding*, September 1937-February 1938), 'Grey Lensmen' (*Astounding*, October 1939-January 1940),'Second Stage Lensman' (*Astounding*, November 1941-February 1942), and 'Children of the Lens' (*Astounding*, November 1947-February 1948). The four stories published in *Astounding* formed the original series, but 'Triplanetary' was rewritten in novel form in 1948 and integrated into the series, and another novel, *First Lensman* (1950), linking the revised novel chronologically to the others was written in the 1950s.

[51] Thomas D. Clareson, *Understanding Contemporary American Science Fiction: The Formative Period, 1926-1970* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), p. 19.

They are also invariably depicted as hideous and horrific in appearance, despite the fact the Interstellar Patrol itself is composed of beings vastly 'unlike in form.'[52] Among the enemies encountered are: the grotesque and terrible 'globe-men' of the dying sun Alto who sought to collide their cooling star with humanity's; the horrible 'tentacle-creatures' on their gigantic dark star, who came from the depths of space to steal the Sun; the 'nebula-creatures' from the Orion Nebula, described as 'creatures of surpassing strangeness and horror' and 'formless beings of weirdness unutterable'; and the eyeless creatures of darkness, inhabitants of the lightless cosmic cloud, who planned the conquest of the galaxy.[53]

Williamson's Legion of Space confronts two inarguably malevolent and hostile alien species in as many books, the Medusae of Barnard's Star and the Cometeers. Both enemy forces are presented as irredeemably evil. The Medusae are described as 'infinitely horrible', rousing 'primeval horror', with shining eyes 'veiled with ancient wisdom, baleful with pure evil.'[54] They are also an ancient – old when the Earth was young – and 'efficient race', highly scientific, cold and emotionless intelligences, 'more like machines than men.'[55] The Cometeers – invading the Solar System with their captive sun and its swarm of a hundred and forty-three planets – are portrayed as evil and terrible creatures, 'supernally powerful and completely evil', motivated by a hunger for the life force of sentient beings.[56]

Likewise, the enemies of the Galactic Patrol – starting with the Boskone of the First Galaxy, later the Eich and the Edoreans – are simplistically malign cultures and species. As has been pointed out by numerous scholars, the saga of the Lensmen presents a universe of binary opposites and dichotomies, with a plot based around a 'titanic struggle between good and evil' and between the 'great moral

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[52] The Interstellar Patrol includes tentacled Arcturians, plant-men of Capella, metal-bodied Antarians, crustacean-people of Spica, insect-men of Procyon, bird-like Sirians, spider-shapes from Mizar, octopus-beings from Vega, and humans of 'Sun 828.' Edmond Hamilton, 'Within the Nebula', *The Star-Stealers: The Complete Tales of the Interstellar Patrol* (Royal Oak, MI: Haffner Press, 2009), pp. 91-131 (p. 109).

[53] Edmond Hamilton, 'Crashing Suns', *The Star-Stealers: The Complete Tales of the Interstellar Patrol* (Royal Oak, MI: Haffner Press, 2009), pp. 1-52 (p. 21); Edmond Hamilton, 'The Star-Stealers', *The Star-Stealers: The Complete Tales of the Interstellar Patrol* (Royal Oak, MI: Haffner Press, 2009), pp. 53-90 (p. 72); Hamilton, 'Within the Nebula', pp. 91-131 (p. 109); Edmond Hamilton, 'The Cosmic Cloud', *The Star-Stealers: The Complete Tales of the Interstellar Patrol* (Royal Oak, MI: Haffner Press, 2009), pp. 369-398 (p. 387).

[54] Jack Williamson, *The Legion of Space* (London: Sphere Books, 1977), pp. 131, 37.

[55] Williamson, *The Legion of Space*, pp. 67-68, 131.

[56] Jack Williamson, *The Cometeers* (London: Sphere Books, 1977), pp. 95, 134.

metanarratives' of Totalitarianism and Democracy, and with 'allegorical overtones from the wars then raging on small, green Earth, with the West cast as Civilization and the Nazi New Order functioning as Boskonia.'[57] Boskonia – an interstellar 'pirate' culture – are called 'the scum of space', their count of hates and crimes 'long, black, and hideous.'[58] According to the paragons of good, the Arisians, Boskone is a 'despotic, degrading, and antisocial culture… based upon greed, hatred, corruption, violence, and fear' and opposed to liberty.[59] As pointed out by Paul A. Carter, still 'more Nazi in outlook' are the Eich creatures the Galactic Patrol has to fight in 'Grey Lensman', published during the opening months of World War Two.[60] Racially prejudiced against all 'warm-blooded oxygen-breathers', this species nevertheless earns a grudging respect as a foe of Civilisation, because although evil 'dictators of the harshest, sternest, and most soulless kind… with an insatiable lust for power and conquest', the Eich are also described as 'brave', 'organizers par excellence', 'creators and doers', and courageous enough to follow their convictions to the bitter end.[61] The good and evil dichotomy of the conflict in the Lensman series reaches its highest level in the battle for control of the entire universe, between the benevolent Arisians, self-declared guardians of civilisation, and the malevolent and implacable Edoreans, beings who consider plundering entire universes to be not only acceptable but required.

As a corollary to their depiction of evil and threatening alien Others, the texts of 1930s space opera present merciless, ferocious, total war – indeed, genocide itself – as the appropriate response to these enemies of (Americanised) humankind. These works celebrate the guilt-free extermination of entire races. This echoed the reorientation among American intellectuals in the late-1930s, many of whom now

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[57] Clareson, *Understanding Contemporary American Science Fiction*, p. 18. Andy Sawyer, 'Space Opera', in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. by Mark Bould, Andrew M. Butler, Adam Roberts, and Sherryl Vint (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 505-509. (p. 509). Carter, *The Creation of Tomorrow*, p. 189.

[58] E. E. 'Doc' Smith, *Galactic Patrol* (New York: Pyramid Books, 1968), p. 115.

[59] For the Arisians, and Smith, 'liberty – of person, of thought, of action – is the basic and the goal' of Civilisation, 'and with which any really philosophical mind must find itself in accord.' E. E. 'Doc' Smith, *Galactic Patrol* (New York: Pyramid Books, 1968), p. 121. Joe Sanders shows that Smith characterizes Evil as 'unthinking, unrestrained exercise of selfishness, ego, in the exercise of power' and beliefs of racial superiority, while Good is the 'recognition of diversity, especially racial and sexual differences' and the acceptance of the independence of other beings. Joe Sanders, *E. E. "Doc" Smith* (San Bernadino, CA: Borgo Press, 1986), p. 51.

[60] Carter, *The Creation of Tomorrow*, p. 128.

[61] E. E. 'Doc' Smith, *Grey Lensman* (St Albans: Panther Books Limited, 1973), pp. 186, 107, 156. Discussed in Carter, pp. 128-129.

fervently renounced pacifism and denounced moral relativism in the struggle against totalitarianism. Furthermore, this extermination was accomplished with weapons of great destructive power. This is a future war story trope which became a staple of science fiction during this period, and was related to the 'cult of the superweapon', as discussed by H. Bruce Franklin (see Chapter Five), which imagined stunning new weapons that enabled the nation to usher in a Pax Americana by destroying its enemies or making war too hellish to be waged.[62]

Hamilton's Interstellar Patrol stories had a defining role in this pulp narrative acceptance of spectacular genocidal conflict as a response to alien contact. The stories share a common structure: the Federation of Suns is threatened by an outside alien force, the Interstellar Patrol investigates that force, and then the personnel of the Patrol achieve (usually genocidal) victory over their enemies. During their attempted conquest of the Milky Way, the serpent-people migrate en masse to their bridgehead in the Cancer Cluster just outside the galaxy, and final victory over them is achieved by the super-science destruction of the cluster – the whole swarm of suns sent crashing into each other, all the worlds around them destroyed – 'annihilating forever all the serpent-hordes that had massed upon them.'[63] The entire species of the creatures of darkness – aboard captured starships preparing to invade the outside galaxy – is extinguished when their fleet is 'sent smashing into the surface of the mighty magnet-world', leaving a vast plain of wreckage… that marked the annihilation of their race and of all their tremendous plans!'[64] Finally, when the thinking machines came upon their dark stars in order to steal new suns, the Federation retaliated by sending a hundred of its own dark stars, fitted with propulsion-apparatus, to 'wreak all the destruction in their power upon the machines' galaxy', a process involving the 'smashing of suns' and destruction of countless inhabited worlds.[65]

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[62] The "cult" originated as a distinct phenomenon between 1880 and World War One in future war fiction. Franklin, *War Stars*, p. 5.

[63] Edmond Hamilton, 'Outside the Universe', *The Star-Stealers: The Complete Tales of the Interstellar Patrol* (Royal Oak, MI: Haffner Press, 2009), pp. 133-291 (p. 288).

[64] Hamilton, 'The Cosmic Cloud', pp. 369-398 (p. 397).

[65] Edmond Hamilton, 'Corsairs of the Cosmos', *The Star-Stealers: The Complete Tales of the Interstellar Patrol* (Royal Oak, MI: Haffner Press, 2009), pp. 399-426 (p. 424.). However, some of Hamilton's other work, such as 'A Conquest of Two Worlds' (*Wonder Stories*, February 1932), takes a critical view of the ethos which guides much of the Interstellar Patrol series, with a young Earthling siding with the doomed resistances of the Martians and Jovians.

Also representative of this attitude is the Legion of Space's reaction to the Cometeers, 'universal marauders', roving from star to star, pillaging planets and feeding upon the life they find.[66] Human civilisation in Williamson's series – a Supreme Council of planets, seated at Green Hall – is predicated on 'the terrible power' of AKKA, an ultimate weapon capable of destroying any physical matter, which is placed in the hands of a single trusted individual, generation after generation.[67] Upon the arrival of the Cometeers, in the second book of the series, the Council issues a resolution to destroy the intruder with AKKA, a motion supported by John Star (the protagonist of the first book); another character, Jay Kalam, Commander of the Legion, convinces the Council to rescind the order, at least until the Cometeers' hostile intentions are clear. John Star justifies the annihilation of the intruders based on the rationale that their 'science must be immensely ahead of our own' and 'their hostility is as certain as their power.' Based on the law of survival dominant on Earth and 'everywhere in the System', the Cometeers 'can't be our kinsmen, in any degree – they may be something we couldn't recognize as life at all… Logically, they must be our enemies.'[68] Star proves correct. The climax of the novel comes when Robert Star – son of John Star – activates the weapon that kills all the Cometeers.

As an enemy of Smith's Galactic Patrol, and menace to Civilisation, the Boskonians could only be overcome in one way: in what had to be a war of extinction, without the possibility of surrender or leniency.[69] This is emphasised in *Gray Lensman*, in which the 'strife between Civilization and Boskonia' in

> no respect resembled the wars between two fundamentally similar and friendly nations which small, green Terra knew so frequently of old. It was a galaxy-wide struggle for survival between two diametrically opposed, mutually exclusive, and absolutely incompatible cultures; a duel to the death in which quarter was neither asked nor given; a conflict which… was and of stern necessity had to be one of ruthless, complete, and utter extinction.[70]

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[66] Williamson, *The Cometeers*, p. 122.
[67] Williamson, *The Legion of Space*, p. 27.
[68] Williamson, *The Legion of Space*, p. 21.
[69] Smith, *Galactic Patrol*, p. 134.
[70] Smith, *Grey Lensman*, p. 26.

This attitude had previously been presented in Patrolmen Kinnison and vanBuskirk's massacre of the Overlords of Delgon. The two men 'if not joyously, at least relentlessly, mercilessly, and with neither sign nor sensation of compunction' killed the slave-masters, with Smith justifying their actions by writing that 'this unbelievably monstrous tribe needed killing, root and branch – not a scion or shoot of it should be allowed to survive, to continue to contaminate the civilization of the galaxy.'[71]

As John Rieder has discussed, this kind of genocidal winner-takes-all war – also observable in American Yellow Peril stories – was quite common in the pulp SF milieu of 1926 onwards, in which 'total extermination of the enemy is enacted as a resolution of conflict' in numerous texts:

> The writers published in *Amazing Stories*, *Weird Tales*, *Science Wonder Stories*, *Wonder Stories*, and *Astounding Stories* imagine extraterrestrial invaders who try to wipe out humanity, human colonizers of other worlds who try to eliminate resistant natives, underground civilizations who want to take over the surface and exterminate the present inhabitants in the process, feminists from the fourth dimension who want to destroy all males, genocidal race wars and class wars, and even a war to extermination between Pedestrians and Automobilists. It is as if competition for resources admits no half-way solutions, and the "struggle for life" has to be enacted with absolute finality in every situation.[72]

Such 'common place extravagance' in science fiction conflicts, Rieder argues, was both a reaction to the horrors of modern, industrialized warfare that were exposed by World War One and a holdover from the era of 'genocidal or near-genocidal consequences of colonial expansion', ideas about which remained influential, particularly in America where the West – and its settlement – retained such a conspicuous place in the popular imagination. He also believes the 'scientific discourse about race and of powerful, widespread racist ideologies', prominent during the period from 1870 to the 1930s, likewise had much to do with

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[71] Smith, *Galactic Patrol*, p. 74.
[72] Rieder, pp. 141-142.

colonialism. [73] Darwin's colonialism and evolutionary assumptions about technology, progress, race, gender, and the frontier were encoded into the SF genre. The ideological basis of colonial practice is central to much SF, and encounters with aliens are often modelled on historical encounters between colonial powers and 'natives.' Power is centred in a colonialist paradigm – indebted, generally, to American settler colonial fantasies, such as American Exceptionalism and manifest destiny – and power is located in maverick space cowboys, with aliens as the Other ('Indians') at the frontier who are the target of genocidal violence.[74] Greg Grewell also locates the 'combative' master-plot of humanity's journey into space and encounters with aliens in SF's status as a sort of colonial fantasy, part of the colonial tradition.[75] This is unsurprising, perhaps, as these space opera stories came from authors who had grown up in the American heartland or the western territories – for example, Williamson in Texas, and Smith in Idaho – and transposition of the American Wild West on the solar system and beyond is evident in the earliest works of space opera; the term 'space opera' itself is derived from the Western literary tradition. Even in the proto-military SF narratives of the 1940s and 1950s, when military realism and verisimilitude began to play a greater role, this simplification of conflict, with the dualistic opposition of forces and total war approach, continued.

The Birth of Military SF (1939-1959)

Military SF developed – went through its emergent phase – during what has been called the Golden Age of Science Fiction, traditionally accepted as occurring between 1938 and the 1950s.[76] According to historian Edward James the year 1938 was important to SF because this was

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[73] Rieder, pp. 141-142, 97.

[74] American Exceptionalism is the idea that the United States has a unique history, a unique mission to transform the world, and a unique position of superiority over other nations. It has long been the ideological underpinning of – and justification for – the American empire and all of its military adventures. Related, manifest destiny was a term coined in 1845 to justify the annexation of Texas, Oregon, and California, and, simply defined, meant that God had willed the continental expansion of the United States. It later came to mean the unique virtue of the American people and their institutions, and the mission and destiny to spread these institutions to the rest of the world.

[75] Greg Grewell, 'Colonizing the Universe: Science Fictions Then, Now, and in the (Imagined) Future', *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (2001), pp. 25-47 (p. 28).

[76] Although some scholars argue that the Golden Age ended with, or not long after, World War Two in 1945. For example, Paul A. Carter, 'From the Golden Age to the Atomic Age: 1940-1963', in

when some of the great writers of modern American sf began to appear, when new ideas about what sf actually should be began to emerge, when new motifs and ideas which were to dominate sf for a long time began to be explored in detail, when standards of writing began to improve, when the level of scientific accuracy increased, and when John W. Campbell, Jr., became a long-time editor of *Astounding*.[77]

Adam Roberts offers a 'thumbnail definition' of the Golden Age as the period when the genre was dominated by the sorts of stories that appeared in Campbell's *Astounding* between the late-1930s and the 1950s: 'idea-fictions' rooted in recognisable science with heroes 'solving problems and overcoming enemies, 'expansionist humano-centric (and often phallo-centric) narratives', and 'extrapolations of possible technologies and their social and human impacts.'[78] Campbell sought to appeal directly to 'a mature and sophisticated readership and as such determined that the stories he published would be similarly adult.'[79] All of these elements of 'idea-fictions' were often incorporated into 'military' plotlines as the subgenre developed. Campbell – who harboured some blatantly authoritarian and racist views, which he was not shy about – had a heavy influence on the attitudes of what would become military SF.[80] Likewise, his preference for stories in which human beings proved themselves superior to other intelligences – what Paul A. Carter has called a 'projection out upon the universe of Campbell's own American superiority complex' – both continued attitudes already visible in 1930s space opera, and encouraged those attitudes in 1940s proto-military SF and 1950s military SF.[81] Campbell's human chauvinism influenced the presentation of aliens

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Anatomy of Wonder, 5th edition, ed. by Neil Barron (Westport, CT, and London: Libraries Unlimited, 2004). pp. 45-58 (p. 46).

[77] James, p. 55.

[78] Adam Roberts, *The History of Science Fiction* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 195. Gary Westfahl, on the other hand, argues that Campbell did not *create* the Golden Age; 'rather, he noticed it, responded to it, and helped it along.' Gary Westfahl, *The Mechanics of Wonder: The Creation of the Idea of Science Fiction* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998), p. 256.

[79] Mike Ashley, *The Time Machines: The Story of the Science-Fiction Pulp Magazines from the Beginning to 1950* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), p. 108.

[80] Two infamous editorials in *Astounding*, reprinted in Jerry Pournelle's *Imperial Stars* (1986), layout his beliefs. First, 'Constitution for Utopia' (May 1961), in which he outlined his 'pragmatic' belief that only the wealthy should be able to vote. Second, 'Race Riots' (January 1965; later renamed 'The Barbarians Within'), in which he attributed violence to genetics and declared 'barbarian' as a genetic type, following the Civil Rights riots. Jerry Pournelle (ed.), *Imperial Stars, Volume 1: The Stars at War* (Riverdale, NY: Baen Books, 1986).

[81] Carter, *The Creation of Tomorrow*, p. 77.

in SF well into the 1960s. Finally, this possibly contributed to the continuing Manichaean structure of conflict – the dualistic opposition of good and evil, light and dark, white and black – in proto-military SF.

The historical-cultural context of this period also contributed to the proto-military SF portrayal of conflict. In his book *In The Shadow of War*, an assessment of the militarization of society and what it meant to the polity and the culture, Michael S. Sherry uses the term 'Age of Militarization' for the historical process the U.S. entered in the 1930s, by which 'war and national security became the consuming anxieties and provided the memories, models, and metaphors that shaped broad areas of national life.' He recognises that the term is a creative oversimplification, that militarization 'did not define or cause everything that happened' but simply 'loomed large and persistently enough to give unity to a half-century of history.'[82] He also examines the 'peculiar currents of American militarization', dominated as it was by civilian elites and their values: compared to the 'atavistic kind' of militarism supposedly displayed by the Japanese and the 'regimented, totalitarian version' demonstrated by the Germans, America's technological virtuosity (even 'technological fanaticism') in warfare 'did not seem like militarism at all.'[83]

Also an important effect of the historical-cultural context was the rebirth of the American superiority complex as a result of World War Two: the 'good war', often understood to be the least morally ambiguous war of the twentieth-century, in which the U.S. and its allies triumphed over German Nazism, Italian fascism, and Japanese militarism – establishing the nation as a superpower whose actions would help determine the fate of the rest of the world. For the U.S., the decades following the World War Two were 'prolific breeders of myth': the great military victories of the war, scientific-technological developments, unparalleled prosperity at home, and the new position of world leadership, 'bred a national euphoria, even hubris in some, capable of the boast that America could do anything.' Among these myths was the old one about national invincibility and national innocence, the idea that Americans 'won their wars – all of them, so they believed – and fought them all for righteous

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[82] Michael S. Sherry, *In the Shadow of War: The United States Since the 1930s* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. x-xi.
[83] Sherry, pp. 80-81.

purposes.'[84] This was mirrored in military SF, even as, according to Brooks Landon, other parts of the SF field displayed 'questioning and frequently apocalyptic pessimism' in the years following World War Two and Hiroshima.[85] Likewise, the Manichaean structure was also a result of World War Two and the start of the Cold War. The established hero/villain – Democracy and Totalitarianism, followed by West and East – structure prevalent in the geo-political order informed a similar 'us versus them' structure in narratives. The Other remained important in science fiction and American foreign policy.

Proto-Military SF Texts

The works examined from the late-1940s and 1950s are fashioned with a realism when dealing with military themes, and an understanding of the military environment and military personnel, missing from the earlier generation of space opera. This includes a better understanding of military hierarchy and discipline, of the way the military and combat changes a person, of tactics and strategy, as well as logistics, appropriations, and military bureaucracy, and of the military-civilian divide and relations between the services and the public. According to David Drake, the 1940s brought military SF stories 'which focused on how battles were fought, what sort of men became soldiers… and how soldiers interacted with civilian society'; he attributed this to World War Two.[86] In addition, unlike earlier space opera and future war stories, the proto-military SF narratives of this period display the two streams – militarism and antimilitarism – that characterise military SF. From its inception military SF contained the 'two souls or stances' Darko Suvin identifies within American science fiction, which can roughly be demarcated between 'militaristic' and 'non-militaristic.' The first stance is that

> mass slaughter, with all weapons available and regardless of the
> military-civilian divide, and a concomitant militarization of society are

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[84] James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974 (The Oxford History of the United States, Volume X)* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. xvii, 8.
[85] Brooks Landon, *Science Fiction after 1900: From the Steam Man to the Stars* (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. xiii-xiv.
[86] Drake, pp. 9-15 (p. 11.).

inevitable for the salvation of the commonwealth and should therefore

be encouraged in a spread between sad necessity and cynical glee.

The second stance, at the other extreme, is that 'while dangers and lures of mass warfare and militarism are real and have deep systemic roots, they ought to be resisted in all possible ways' before the commonwealth is lost anyway, or 'corrupted into something not worth saving.'[87]

Interestingly, one of the conclusions of I. F. Clarke's study is that in the post-World War Two nuclear age 'the tale of future warfare has little attraction for the imagination, since fiction cannot say more than is already known about the terror of the hydrogen bomb.'[88] This declaration is obviously erroneous, as evidenced by the quantity and popularity of military SF during the late-twentieth and early-twenty first centuries, but may suggest one reason why military SF has displaced or incorporated the older future war story. Military SF can jump the speculative hurdles presented by Cold War issues around nuclear proliferation, superpower rivalry, and atomic war.[89] In regards to what this thesis considers military SF, furthermore, Clarke is largely dismissive of the literature. He writes that the further future war narratives move away from the 'traditional task of immediate admonition and earnest warning, the less they have to do with the most probable shape of future war' and that 'there is no place left for them in the world we know.' The 'tales of interplanetary warfare', with their 'modern jargon of blaster guns, power field, atomic weapons, and space-ships' employ the 'martial language of a future that has no more than an occasional and allegorical connection with the conditions of our times.' He is contemptuous of these stories because, as he sees it, 'the old tale of future warfare becomes a ritual game in which it cannot possibly matter to the reader how many millions are snuffed out', in which 'the realities of our world – nuclear weapons, the Cold War, the cauldron of the Near East – dissolve into

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[87] Darko Suvin, 'Of Starship Troopers and Refuseniks: War and Militarism in U.S. Science Fiction, Part 1 (1945-1974: Fordism)', in *New Boundaries in Political Science Fiction*, ed. by Donald M. Hassler and Clyde Wilcox (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 2008), pp. 115-144 (p. 122).

[88] Clarke, p. 78.

[89] Paul Brians, *Nuclear Holocausts: Atomic War in Fiction, 1895-1984* (Kent, OH, and London: The Kent State University Press, 1987), p. 2. Hantke, pp. 329-339 (p. 336).

reassuring patterns of a new age of discovery', and in which wars are 'so distant in time that they have no menace in them', providing 'tales of the heart's desire.'[90]

Notable militaristic proto-military SF from this period include works by Henry Kuttner and C.L Moore (Catherine Lucile Moore), Robert Heinlein, Keith Bennett, Malcolm Jameson, H. Beam Piper, and Andre Norton. Kuttner and Moore's 'Clash by Night' (*Astounding*, March 1943) is a moody story of the Free Companies, the mercenaries of the feuding undersea Keeps on Venus in the twenty-fifth century. The novella focuses on Brian Scott, a so-called 'Free Companion' who is a warrior for one of the competing undersea civilizations of Venus, and what he intends to be his last mercenary battle.[91] Heinlein's *Space Cadet* (1948) is his second juvenile novel, and became the basis for the first modern science fiction television serial, *Tom Corbett: Space Cadet*.[92] The story describes the gruelling process by which Matt Dobson – and other young men from all parts of the solar system – are forged into officers of the Interplanetary Patrol of the Solar Federation; a process that includes tests of endurance, loyalty, self-discipline, courage, intelligence, and integrity, dramatizing 'a personal ethic and pervasive social Darwinism', displaying how and why 'fit' types survive while the 'unfit' are discharged from service.[93] Bennett wrote 'The Rocketeers Have Shaggy Ears' (*Planet Stories*, 1950); it is what David Drake calls the only exceptional military SF story by a (probable) combat veteran before Joe Haldeman, Jerry Pournelle and Drake started writing in the late 1960s.[94] The short story follows a military patrol – the thirty survivors of a crashed ship, including the viewpoint character, Lieutenant Hague – marching back to base through the unexplored jungles of Venus, engaging native animals and people. Jameson's *Bullard of the Space Patrol* (1951) collects seven works of the popular series of 'Bullard' stories which Jameson, who had served as an officer in the U.S. Navy, wrote for *Astounding* between 1940 and his death in 1945. These stories –

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[90] Clarke, p. 196.

[91] 'Clash by Night' and 'Fury' (*Astounding*, May-July 1947) make up the Keeps Sequence.

[92] H. Bruce Franklin, *Robert A. Heinlein: America as Science Fiction* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 14. The same year also saw the broadcast of *Space Patrol* (1950-1955), depicting the thirtieth century adventures of Commander Buzz Corry and Cadet Happy Osborn of the United Planets Space Patrol.

[93] Franklin, *Robert A. Heinlein*, pp. 76-77.

[94] It is the only SF story with the by-line Keith Bennett, but three stories over the period 1951-1963 were credited to K.W. Bennett, who may be the same man. Bennett was a junior officer in the U.S. Army fighting in the Pacific, as speculated by Drake. David Drake, personal correspondence (email), 24 November 2015.

beginning with 'Admiral's Inspection' (April 1940, *Astounding*) – carry John Bullard of the Tellurian Space Force from his Lieutenancy on the *Pollux*, as captain of numerous warships during the conflict between the Earth Empire and its former colonies of Jupiter and Mars and later the war between the Federation of Interior Planets and the Jovian Empire, to the position of Grand Admiral in the Bureau of Spatial Strategy. Piper's *Uller Uprising* (1952), originally a short novel published as part of the very first shared-world anthology, is set on a remote world whose inhabitants – used as mercenaries and labourers on the hell-planet Niflheim – are rebelling against domination by Earth. Norton wrote *Star Guard* (1955) – discussed in Chapter Seven of this thesis – which has a plot that anticipates those of later military SF fiction: 'A group of mercenaries is hired to intercede in a conflict on a colony world, only to discover that they are caught in a trap, betrayed by their employers, and are on their own against both sides.'[95]

Other works from this period displaying a militarist sentiment range from light-hearted and minor short stories like 'Captain Brink of the Space Marines' *(Amazing Stories*, November 1932) by Bob Olsen and 'Stepsons of Mars' (*Astounding*, April 1940) by Ivar Towers (pseudonym for Cyril Kornbluth and Richard Wilson), to more significant narratives by Theodore R. Cogswell and Cordwainer Smith. Cogswell – who served as a volunteer ambulance driver in the Spanish Republican Army, 1937-1938, and a statistical control officer in the U.S. Army Air Force, 1942-1945 – wrote 'The Specter General' (*Astounding*, June 1952), which depicts a forgotten planetary outpost where a detachment of Imperial space marines, their empire having declined and then collapsed, keeps up appearances even as they forget how to use or repair their high-technology equipment. Smith (pseudonym for Paul Lineberger) – who worked in Army Intelligence and helped found the Office of War Information – wrote 'The Game of Rat and Dragon' (*Galaxy Science Fiction*, October 1955), in which cats serve military duty as 'partners' to human astrogators in a unique space war against invisible, insanity-inducing Dragons.

This period also included significant examples of antimilitaristic proto-military SF from Paul Carter, C.M Kornbluth and Judith Merril, Fritz Leiber, Philip K. Dick, and Harlan Ellison. In Carter's 'The Last Objective' (*Astounding*, August 1946),

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[95] Don D'Ammassa, *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction: The Essential Guide to the Lives and Works of Science Fiction Writers* (New York: Facts on File, 2005), p. 274.

written while he was in the U.S. Navy, two elderly officers, aboard one of the subterranean battlecruisers waging a generation-long nuclear war, choose to be blown up with the atomic bomb their ship carries after realising the futility of the war. The Asian enemy, evidently feeling similarly, has committed mass suicide by releasing a biological weapon which will destroy all life on Earth. Kornbluth and Merril (under the alias Cyril Judd) wrote 'Gunner Cade' (*Astounding*, March-May 1952), which takes place in a 'regimented militaristic future' and depicts how Cade, an 'indoctrinated mercenary soldier' for a totalitarian regime, is forced to think and act for himself and learn about the true nature of his world.[96] Leiber's 'The Foxholes of Mars' (*Thrilling Wonder Stories*, June 1952) 'documents war's psychotic effect upon one man' and the coming about of a 'galactic Hitler out of the rage of warfare.'[97] Dick's 'The Defenders' (*Galaxy Science Fiction*, January 1953) and 'Second Variety' (*Space Science Fiction*, May 1953) are both antimilitarist stories about automated warfare; the former optimistic and satirically presenting technology as a saviour, the latter pessimistic and depicting technology as a metaphor for the inevitability of war. In 'The Defenders' people have lived underground for eight years and left the atomic war to be conducted by automatic machinery, and they find that their robotic servants have decided that the war is pointless, and faked the progress of the war, focusing their efforts on the restoration and maintenance of the planet 'until such time as the human race shall have purged itself of its war madness and become fit to emerge and live in harmony.'[98] In 'Second Variety', on the other hand, the self-replicating and autonomous weaponry, the 'claws', continue the war after the United States-Soviet Union nuclear exchange, and have begun to evolve into new forms – from the basic 'churning sphere of blades and metal' into ones that appear human – and are infiltrating both the Soviet and American lines.[99] Ellison's 'Soldier' (*Fantastic Universe*, October 1957) is the story of a soldier fighting in Great War VII, who is struck by a radioactive beam

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[96] Mike Ashley, *Transformations: The Story of the Science-Fiction Magazines from 1950 to 1970* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), p. 19.

[97] 'Introduction', *The War Book*, ed. by James Sallis (London: Panther Books, 1971), p. 14. Suvin, pp. 115-144. (p. 123).

[98] Philip K. Dick, 'The Defenders', *Battlefields Beyond Tomorrow: Science Fiction War Stories*, ed. by Charles G. Waugh and Martin H. Greenberg (New York: Bonanza Books, 1987), pp. 509-528 (p. 523). Brians, p. 49.

[99] Philip K. Dick, 'Second Variety', in *The Best Military Science Fiction of the 20th Century*, ed. by Harry Turtledove, with Martin M. Greenberg (New York: Del Ray, 2001), pp. 29-65 (p. 33).

weapon and sent back in time to the 1950s, where he 'first wreaks havoc and then becomes an eloquent spokesman warning of future wars.'[100]

Conclusion

This chapter explored the origins of military SF – combining tropes, ideas, and attitudes of future war fiction, which originated in the 1870s, and space opera, which developed in the 1920s and 1930s – and examined proto-military SF texts which emerged during the 1940s and 1950s. At the same time, it investigated the historical-cultural contexts of the military SF subgenre's emergence, and how the rhetorics of these contexts contributed to the subgenre's adoption of certain tropes, ideas, and attitudes.

The future war fiction subgenre – 'created' by British writer George Tomkyns Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking* (1871) – became popular in Europe during the late-nineteenth century, a period of increasing nationalism and technological development. It later spread to the United States, although there it was more optimistic, displaying American faith in technology, superweapons, manifest destiny, benevolent superpower, and righteous war. This faith was also visible in the works of the other important precursor subgenre in the development of military SF: the space opera. Standard space opera representations of war – in works by authors such as Edmond Hamilton, Jack Williamson, and E. E. 'Doc' Smith – treated war as the great simplifier of issues, as spectacular and exhilarating, and having clear moral distinctions. This chapter argued that both of these precursor subgenres – future war and space opera narratives – accept spectacular, tasteless, genocidal war as the appropriate necessary a response to the threatening (racial, national, or alien) Other, and that this acceptance can be linked to the nationalist, colonialist, racist, and Darwinian discourses of the historical periods.

The chapter also asserted that military SF began its emergent phase during the Golden Age of Science Fiction, when the SF genre was dominated by John W. Campbell, and the beginning of the 'Age of Militarisation', Michael Sherry's term for the historical process the U.S. entered in the 1930s. Proto-military SF was fashioned with a realism when dealing with military themes and tropes, and begins

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[100] Brians, p. 193.

to display the two streams – militarism and antimilitarism – that characterise military SF. However, they tended to remain narratives promoting human (American) expansionism and superiority, racism and authoritarianism, and a Manichaean structure of conflict. This was also the result of the historical-cultural context: the United States had just gained victory in a 'good war' and embraced a 'national euphoria' and 'national hubris' about American righteousness and superpower. Confidence in American values, institutions, and superpower-status continued in the military SF of the late-1950s and early-1960s, as examined in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE

Initial Assault Phase: Early Military SF and the Start of Vietnam War, 1959-1965

Although a self-conscious, mature military SF subgenre did not develop until the 1970s, the subgenre did begin to emerge in the 1950s and, at the end of that decade, gained its first exemplars: *Starship Troopers* by Robert Heinlein and *The Genetic General* by Gordon Dickson, both published in 1959. An important reason for the emergence of military SF at this time, argues Brian Stableford, was that both Heinlein and Dickson deepened their use of military motifs to 'address serious consideration to the role of military forces, and warfare, in social evolution.'[1] Likewise, David Drake believes these two works defined the military Sf subgenre when they were published, and they epitomized the decades of military SF development that had come before.[2]

This chapter is constructed around the view that Heinlein and Dickson are the grandfathers of military SF and that their novels, *Starship Troopers* and *The Genetic General*, serve as prototypical military SF texts: that is, they feature elements of the subgenre such as main characters in the military, plots revolving around military actions and technology, and a focus on military culture and viewpoints. In addition, both novels 'portray the military serviceman as the epitome of not just military virtue but human development in general, with the represented structure of military society standing in as the ideal model for civilization.'[3] This chapter will primarily focus on Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*, and two works that explicitly respond to Heinlein's text and its vision of society and the military – Dickson's *Naked to the Stars* (1961) and Harry Harrison's *Bill, the Galactic Hero* (1965). However, it will also discuss Dickson's *Dorsai!* and other works which followed on from those of

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[1] Brian Stableford, *Historical Dictionary of Science Fiction Literature* (Lanham, MD, and Oxford, UK: The Scarecrow Press, 2004), p. 231.

[2] David Drake, 'Excitement! Adventure! Science Fiction! My Personal look at Space Opera and Military SF', in David Afsharirad (ed.), *The Year's Best Military SF and Space Opera* (Riverdale, NY: Baen Books, 2015), pp. 9-15 (p. 13.).

[3] Chad Andrews, 'Technomilitary Fantasy in the 1980s: Military SF, David Drake, and the Discourse of Instrumentality', *Extrapolation*, 56, 2 (2015), pp. 139-168 (p. 147).

Heinlein and Dickson, including texts by Norman Spinrad, Ben Bova, and Poul Anderson.

In a time when the general public's confidence in the integrity of American values and institutions remained high, and popular culture continued to reinforce an optimistic consensus vision of America, military SF 'served as a form of ideological recruitment for a project of empire.'[4] The main themes of this chapter will be the debate around post-World War Two militarism, the politics of militarism, and the militarisation of society. In particular the chapter will examine military SF's engagement with issues around democracy and military rule, anti-communism and the moral justifiability of war during the Cold War, and the start of the Vietnam War. Within these themes, the works of military SF published between the late-1950s and mid-1960s continue the dialogue in the subgenre about violence and warfare, and – one of the main themes of this thesis – between works of militaristic military SF and antimilitaristic military SF. However, this thesis argues that the attitudes continued to be predominantly right-wing and conservative.[5]

Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* and Dickson's *The Genetic General*

Despite his often controversial writing, Robert Heinlein is, as many critics have written, one of the most important figures in the science fiction genre, the most popular, and perhaps most influential, author of science fiction, and in many ways the quintessential American science fiction writer. He has also long been considered a representative of mainstream American culture.[6] In addition, his importance to

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[4] Steffen Hantke, 'Military Culture', in *The Oxford Handbook of Science Fiction*, ed. by Rob Latham (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 329-339 (p. 337).

[5] Many of these authors exemplified the type of SF authors Michael Moorcock castigated as 'bourgeois reactionaries… xenophobic, smug and confident that the capitalist system would flourish throughout the universe.' Michael Moorcock, 'Starship Stormtroopers', in *The Opium Generals and Others* (London: Grafton, 1984), pp. 279-295 (p. 279). Originally published in an anarchist fanzine in 1978.

[6] Neil Easterbrook, 'Robert A[nson] Heinlein (1907-88)', in *Fifty Key Figures in Science Fiction*, ed. by Mark Bould, Andrew M. Butler, Adam Roberts, and Sherryl Vint (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 96-101 (p. 96). Adam Roberts, *The History of Science Fiction* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 200. Darko Suvin, 'Of Starship Troopers and Refuseniks: War and Militarism in U.S. Science Fiction, Part 1 (1945-1974: Fordism)', in *New Boundaries in Political Science Fiction*, ed. by Donald M. Hassler and Clyde Wilcox (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), pp. 115-144 (p. 125). Carl Abbott, *Frontiers Past and Future: Science Fiction and the American West* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006), p. 88. Robert Scholes and Eric S. Rabkin, *Science Fiction: History, Science, Vision* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 56.

the military science fiction subgenre is often remarked upon.[7] The significance, popularity, and influence of Heinlein make him an important subject when studying military SF and American history, as has been recognised by previous scholars such as H. Bruce Franklin. Franklin shows how the Heinlein 'cultural phenomenon' presents crucial aspects of modern American ideology, beliefs, and imagination, and critiques those values through Heinlein's works.[8] George Slusser likewise calls Heinlein a 'national writer', one who 'carries into a new scientific century cultural and ethical patterns first conceived by nineteenth-century American thinkers and writers of "romance."'[9] Like many of the military SF authors who would follow him Heinlein was a military veteran, though he was not a combat veteran.[10] He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis in 1929, served on active duty on destroyers, a battleship, and then one of the world's first aircraft carriers, the USS *Lexington*.[11] However, in 1934, Heinlein was discharged from the Navy due to pulmonary tuberculosis and retired, on lifetime medical disability, as a lieutenant, junior grade. Heinlein's first published story, 'Life-Line', was printed in the August 1939 issue of *Astounding*, but his new writing career halted temporarily after the U.S. formally entered World War Two in December 1941. He returned to the employment of the Navy, spending the years 1942 to 1945 working as a civilian engineer in the Naval Air Material Center at the Philadelphia Navy Yard in Pennsylvania.[12]

Heinlein is well known for his 'right-wing, militaristic libertarianism', a political commitment at odds with his liberalism during the 1930s and 1940s, when he campaigned (unsuccessfully) for the Democratic nomination for the California

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[7] Charles E. Gannon, 'Imag(in)ing Tomorrow's Wars and Weapons', *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice*, 21, 2 (2009), pp. 198-208 (p. 198). Charles E. Gannon, *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines: Technomilitary Agenda-Setting in American and British Speculative Fiction* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), p. 197.

[8] H. Bruce Franklin, *Robert A. Heinlein: America as Science Fiction* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

[9] George Slusser, 'Heinlein's Fallen Futures', *Extrapolation*, 35, 2 (Summer 1995), pp. 96-112 (p. 96).

[10] Tom Shippey labelled him a 'wanna-be', and linked Heinlein's affectation of a combat veteran pose to the 'wanna-be phenomenon in post-Vietnam America', which shaped considerable elements in American popular and SF culture. Tom Shippey, 'Starship Troopers, Galactic Heroes, Mercenary Princes: the Military and its Discontents in Science Fiction', in *Histories of the Future*, ed. by Alan Sandison and Robert Dingley (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 168-183 (p. 174).

[11] Franklin, *Robert A. Heinlein*, p. 12.

[12] Franklin, *Robert A. Heinlein*, pp. 13-14. He tried to re-enlist after Pearl Harbor, but was rejected. Isaac Asimov, *I, Asimov: A Memoir* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), p. 76.

assembly and had connections with a radical left-wing group, Upton Sinclair's End Poverty in California ('EPIC').[13] Brian Aldiss and David Wingrove call him 'a right-wing libertarian of the frontiersman breed' and a 'champion of the freedom to *do* things' and 'of the strong and the competent.'[14] His libertarianism is sometimes interpreted as fascism, however, as Adam Roberts suggests, this 'misrepresents his particular brand of ideological reaction', his libertarianism resulting from a genuine hatred of bureaucracy, of whatever political leaning. [15] Everett Carl Dolman likewise writes that Heinlein is not a fascist but an idealist who believes the statement, from *Starship Troopers*, that 'the noblest fate that a man can endure is to place his own mortal body between his loved home and the war's desolation.'[16] This ideal would not have been unfamiliar in pre-World War One future war stories. Heinlein's complicated politics, as Chris Hables Gray writes, led to a complex mix of libertarian and patriotic impulses and attitudes, embracing liberal and conservative views of issues, ranging from anti-racism and sex-positivity to pro-military and pro-space militarization values.[17] One thing is clear, however: despite his libertarianism, the 'main thrust of Heinlein's SF in the Cold War years was to advocate the perpetuation and growth of the military-industrial complex.'[18] While Heinlein's worldview is not fascistic, like that of many right-wing science fiction writers, it draws from many of the same urges.

Starship Troopers was originally written as Heinlein's thirteenth juvenile novel for Scribner. Rejected by the editor for its excessive violence and inappropriateness for young readers, it was rerouted to an adult market and printed in *The Magazine of*

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[13] Roberts, p. 202. He made a swing to the right politically in the 1950s: during this period he married the conservative Republic Virginia Gerstenfeld and they travelled the world, a trip which greatly exacerbated Heinlein's demographic despair and xenophobia.

[14] Brian Aldiss and David Wingrove*, Trillion Year Spree: The History of Science Fiction* (New York: House of Stratus, 2001), p. 448.

[15] Roberts, p. 203.

[16] Everett Carl Dolman, 'Military, Democracy, and the State in Robert A. Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*', in *Political Science Fiction*, ed. by Donald M. Hassler and Clyde Wilcox (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), pp. 198-213 (p. 211).

[17] Chris Hables Gray, '"There Will Be War!"': Future War Fantasies and Militaristic Science Fiction in the 1980s', *Science Fiction Studies*, 21, 3 (November 1994), pp. 315-336 (p. 330, endnote 5). The complexity of Heinlein's politics is demonstrated by publications between 1959 and 1966. Ironically, while *Starship Troopers* (1959) was popular with right-wing militarists, his novel *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961) became 'a bible for some participants in the counterculture of the 1960s', and his anarchist libertarian *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* (1966) was also popular. H. Bruce Franklin, *War Stars: The Superweapon and the American Imagination* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 141.

[18] Thomas Disch, *The Dreams Our Stuff Is Made Of: How Science Fiction Conquered the World* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998), p. 165., quoted in Roberts, p. 202.

Fantasy and Science Fiction (October-November 1959).[19] 'Starship Soldier', as it was titled when first serialized, was then published as the novel *Starship Troopers* in December 1959.[20] Perhaps 'the most controversial SF novel ever written', the work is a militaristic anti-communist allegory and one of the earliest, and in many ways best, examples of military SF.[21] As Suvin argues, the novel became the 'ancestral text' of U.S. science fiction militarism (especially what this thesis labels militaristic military SF) and has 'inflected and to an important degree shaped the implicit and explicit debate ever since.'[22] *Starship Troopers* is an 'unsubtle though powerful black-and-white paean to combat life' and presents a 'sentimental view of what it is like to train and fight as an infantryman in a future war.'[23] It is structured as a *bildungsroman* (coming of age story), describing the military education of the narrator and protagonist, Juan 'Johnny' Rico, a youth who enlists in the Mobile Infantry, goes through boot camp and then officer candidate school (OCS), and serves the Terran Federation during the Bug War, fought against a race of intelligent insects. However, within this structure the novel is, as W. Keith Booker writes, 'didactic in the most literal sense', containing lectures, under the guise of high school teaching and officer training, about political, moral, and philosophical themes.[24] Refracted through a science fictional setting, these lectures are often preoccupied with issues surrounding the U.S. failure during the Korean War and relations toward the communist powers of the Soviet Union and China.[25]

Also significant, although not as influential or popular, is Gordon Dickson. Dickson was a Canadian-born writer resident in the United States from 1936, who served in the United States Army (1943-1946), and who began publishing SF in 1950. His

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[19] Brooks Landon suggests that the 'number of inconsistencies, if not outright contradictions' which run through the novel – in particular the conflict between Heinlein's celebration of military discipline and his advocacy of radical individualism - 'may stem in part from its odd status as a quasi-juvenile novel.' Brooks Landon, *Science Fiction after 1900: From the Steam Man to the Stars* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 67.

[20] The serialized version of *Starship Troopers* was severely cut during editing, and the book version was more complete and closer to Heinlein's intentions.

[21] Roger Luckhurst, *Science Fiction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), p. 136.

[22] Suvin, pp. 115-144 (p. 123).

[23] Suvin, pp. 115-144 (p. 124). Aldiss and Wingrove, p. 296.

[24] W. Keith Booker, *Monsters, Mushroom Clouds, and the Cold War: American Science Fiction and the Roots of Postmodernism, 1946-1964* (Westport, CT, and London: Greenwood Press, 2001), p. 52

[25] Tom Shippey writes that I. F. Clarke's dismissal of the 'ideas' of *Starship Troopers* as being merely the 'sentiments' of the Korean War 'underestimates the traumatic nature of that war for American patriots like Heinlein.' Shippey, pp. 168-183 (p. 169).

stories throughout the fifties and into the sixties 'revealed a unifying theme of humanity's ability to learn and grow… and create the next stage of transcendence.' [26] He is regarded by some as being radically conservative politically, even though most of his novels are permeated by the idea that humanity needs to develop ethically as well as technologically.[27] Dickson's most famous work is *Dorsai!,* also titled *The Genetic General.* 'Dorsai!' was originally published as a serial in *Astounding Science Fiction* a few months before 'Starship Soldier' was published in *F&SF*, then in book form as *The Genetic General* in 1960, and revised as *Dorsai!* in 1976. It was the first of an uncompleted twelve-volume series, the Childe Cycle, or, as fans inevitably called it, the Dorsai series.[28] The series was intended to trace the development of the human race over a millennium, from the historic past into the distant future, and the emergence of Ethical-Responsible Man: a synthesis of the Men of War (Dorsai), the Men of Philosophy (Exotics), the Men of Faith (Friendlies), and the scientists of Newton and Venus. The Dorsai stories represent the warrior-phase of this evolution of ethically responsible humankind. The novel, in episodic manner, follows the life and career of Donal Graeme, an ambitious Dorsai soldier. The Dorsai developed a mercenary culture, which exports its 'best fighting men' to fight wars between the other powers, in order to gain the capital necessary to survive on a resource-poor planet and to pay for the 'contracts of out-world professionals.'[29] The planet is the source of the greatest soldiers in the settled galaxy. Graeme turns out to be one of the supermen the human race is evolving towards, quickly rising from Force-Leader for the First Dissident Church on Harmony to Commander in Chief of the United Planetary Forces. He develops beyond the conventional *Bildungsroman* model of military heroes to become a genetic superman with astounding intellectual and physical abilities.

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[26] Mike Ashley, *Transformations: The Story of the Science-Fiction Magazines from 1950 to 1970* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), p. 115.

[27] Don D'Ammassa, *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction: The Essential Guide to the Lives and Works of Science Fiction Writers* (New York: Facts on File, 2005), p. 116.

[28] The Childe Cycle, Dickson's major literary project, was planned to include historical and contemporary novels as well as SF. Published works in the main military SF series include 'Dorsai!' (*Astounding*, May-July 1959; first published in book form as *The Genetic General* in 1960), 'Soldier, Ask Not' (*Galaxy*, October 1964; expanded as *Soldier, Ask Not* in 1964), 'The Tactics of Mistake' (*Analog*, October 1970-January 1971; *The Tactics of Mistake* 1971), *The Spirit of Dorsai* (1979), and *Lost Dorsai* (1980). In addition, Dickson wrote *Necromancer* (1982), a prequel to the Dorsai series, and *The Final Encyclopedia* (1984), *The Chantry Guild* (1988), *Young Bleys* (1991), and *Other* (1994), which carry the future history forward.

[29] Gordon R. Dickson, *Dorsai!* (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1988), p. 9.

Militarism

As Steffen Hantke writes, military SF from the 1950s and 1960s appears during a period that is transitional in three respects: shifting from pre-World War Two isolationism to aggressive global engagement, from demobilization to massive remobilization for the Korean War, and from a reliance on conventional military assets to the development of a nuclear arsenal. Given these massive realignments of US foreign policy and military strategy, it is reasonable to argue that 'military SF aided in the broader effort to enlist Americans in the project of the American Century by familiarizing them with the nation's new military technologies and strategies, the new global mapping of the American sphere of influence, and the attitudes that would legitimize and further this agenda within civil society.'[30] These, and the militarization of American society during the 1950s, could all be seen as ensuing from the Cold War, but according to Sherry, much of these changes 'sprang from well-springs deeper than the Cold War conflict': including exposure to global war and frightening weapons, the nation's attempt to exercise global power, 'anxieties about what America itself was becoming', and 'from older cultural traditions that shaped reactions to all of these developments.'[31] The narratives examined in this section were, predominantly, supportive of the United States' increasing militarism, but not exclusively so: the dialogue about militarism in military SF is examined using works by Robert Heinlein, Gordon Dickson, Ben Bova, Harry Harrison, Norman Spinrad, and Fritz Leiber.

As mentioned Heinlein's works during the Cold War often advocated the perpetuation and growth of the military-industrial complex and of American/Western militarism, with *Starship Troopers* being the most notable example. In *Heinlein in Dimension*, the first full-length critical study of Heinlein's works, Alexei Panshin denounced *Starship Troopers* as a 'militaristic polemic', a view that remains consistent among critics, with few exceptions.[32] The novel is

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[30] Hantke, pp. 329-339 (p. 335). However, research into the readership (the audience) of military SF would be beneficial for confirming this hypothesis.

[31] Michael S. Sherry, *In the Shadow of War: The United States Since the 1930s* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 157.

[32] Alexei Panshin, *Heinlein in Dimension* (Chicago, IL: Advent Publishers, 1968), p. 94. One such exception is Everett Carl Dolman, who argues that it is uncertain that the novel, and its Terran Federation, exemplifies or promotes militarism, but that, in fact, the military in the novel helps to establish and reinforce democratic values. Dolman, pp. 198-213.

primarily a 'celebration of militarism and a concerted attempt to indoctrinate readers into accepting this celebration': the storyline actively glamorises military life and glorifies the fighting man, and there are numerous didactic moments that attempt to give an explicit philosophical justification for government by veterans and militarism as a way of life.[33] In the words of H. Bruce Franklin, 'militarism – together with imperialism – is the novel's explicit message.'[34] As seen in the thesis Introduction, for the purposes of this study militarism involves, among other things, the maintenance of a large military establishment, predominance of military influence in state administration and policy, the belief in inevitable and necessary war, and the glorification of military ideals and virtues, especially when these are presented as civil virtues. All of these are evident in Heinlein's portrayal of the Federal Service, serving the veteran-ruled Terran Federation, in its war – inevitable because of population pressure and the will to survive – with the Bugs, and explicated in Rico's History and Moral Philosophy and Officer Candidates School courses.

During the course of the novel, Rico, serving primarily with 'Rasczak's Roughnecks' of the Third Regiment of the First Mobile Infantry Division, learns the nature and value of militarism. Rico's education takes place during a total war – in which treaties are meaningless and extermination of the enemy is the primary goal – with an implacable alien adversary, an 'artificially black-and-white moral framework' in which Heinlein's ideas and certainties are difficult to resist.[35] In addition, Heinlein's presentation of the Bugs – a completely inhuman enemy – contributes to the apparent moral clarity and moral simplicity of his work, in the same way such alien Others served a similar end in space opera and proto-military SF. In fact, in presenting a universe of competing, hostile species, Heinlein does not need to deal with the 'problem of peace' during the course of the story; war is a 'structuring premise not an issue to be speculated over' and the war against the Bugs is intended to be beyond debate.[36] Likewise, as discussed later, *Starship*

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[33] Booker goes on to explain it is a 'measure of the extremity of Heinlein's ideology' that Paul Verhoeven's satirical film adaptation *Starship Troopers* (1997) – in the process of lampooning the novel's militaristic vision and glorification of violence – 'does not exaggerate Heinlein's vision, but in fact mediates it.' Booker*, p. 51, 55.
[34] Franklin, *Robert A. Heinlein*, pp. 111-112.
[35] Roberts, p. 202.
[36] D'Ammassa, p. 359. David Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War: Literature and Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 36.

Troopers' militarism can be defended on the basis of advocating 'a justifiable defense' in the face of Communism.[37] Communism was viewed as an aggressive, militaristic, and threatening force; an aggressive military capacity was required for the security of the United States, thus contributing to militarism's position as a core feature of U.S. politics and society. In a way, then, while the novel does glorify the military, and the trappings of military existence, it does not exactly glorify war and its labelling as 'pro-war' is inexact.[38] On the other hand, the novel does see Rico develop from 'an undisciplined, unreflective civilian into not merely a battle-tested leader of men, but a war-lover.'[39]

Heinlein's novel acknowledges other viewpoints regarding militarism and the military, but only for the purpose of proving such views incorrect. For example, Rico's father has a low opinion of the Federal Service at the beginning of the book, as he makes clear:

> We've outgrown wars. This planet is now peaceful and happy and we enjoy good enough relations with other planets. So what is this so-called "Federal Service"? Parasitism, pure and simple. A functionless organ, utterly obsolete, living on the taxpayers. A decidedly expensive way for inferior people who otherwise would be unemployed to live at public expense for a term of years, then give themselves airs for the rest of their lives.[40]

Heinlein appears to be admitting that many people in America during the 1950s were not as supportive of the growing military-industrial complex as himself, and many worried about the threat of military professionals, about America becoming a 'garrison state', and about the utility of armed forces in the atomic era.[41] This military-industrial complex began during World War Two and escalated during the Korean War. The concept is derived from President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Farewell Address in 1961, in which he warned of a 'scientific-technological elite'

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[37] Rafeeq O. McGiveron, '"Starry-Eyed Internationalists' versus the Social Darwinists: Heinlein's Transnational Governments', *Extrapolations* 40, 1 (1999), pp. 54-70 (p. 54).

[38] Landon, p. 67. Gannon, *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines*, p. 250.

[39] Dennis E. Showalter, 'Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*: An Exercise in Rehabilitation', *Extrapolation* 16, 2 (1975), pp. 113-124 (p. 114).

[40] Robert A. Heinlein, *Starship Troopers* (New York: Ace Books, 1987), p. 23.

[41] Alasdair Spark, 'The Art of Future War: *Starship Troopers*, *The Forever War* and Vietnam', in *Fictional Space: Essays on Contemporary Science Fiction*, ed. by Tom Shippey (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1991), pp. 133-165 (pp. 143-144).

that would dominate public policy, and of a 'military-industrial complex' that would claim 'our toil, resources, and livelihood.'[42] During the course of the novel, however, Rico's father has a revelation. After Bueno Aires is destroyed by the Bugs, and Rico's mother is killed, Rico's father enlists in the Mobile Infantry. He admits to Rico that he had resented his son's military service because Rico 'had actually done something that I knew, buried deep in my heart, I should have done', but that he was proud of Rico becoming an officer.[43] He enlists because he 'had to prove to myself that I was a man. Not just a producing-consuming economic animal… but a *man*.'[44] The novel ends with son and father serving together as platoon leader and platoon sergeant.

Gordon Dickson's *Dorsai!* is less stridently militaristic – offering a more nuanced and perhaps critical perspective on militarism – and aspires to offer a serious commentary on the evolution and ethics of militarism; in addition, it is more focused on the individual soldier than the wider military establishment and militarised society. I. F. Clarke writes that the Dorsai books celebrate 'the exemplary virtues and evolutionary role of the professional warriors dedicated to the great advance through space.'[45] Charles E. Gannon similarly argues that the series is SF's 'most sustained and detailed rumination upon the evolution of the physiology and ethos of the professional soldier of the future.'[46] Dickson's works do not glorify and simplify war as does much of military SF, including *Starship Troopers*, and the Dorsai books present military activity as a necessary evil, essential to the preservation of the race, rather than a way of life. However, the military is still considered necessary. In the long run, the military aspects of human culture must be reunited with the artistic, humanistic, commercial, scientific and other aspects, in order for humanity to be strong enough and diverse enough to survive in a hostile universe.[47] This work, likewise, shares some of the pseudo-fascism of Heinlein – in this case, ideas of the state reigning supreme and the all-

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[42] Dwight D. Eisenhower, 'Farewell Address, 17 January 1951, <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/dwightdeisenhowerfarewell.html> [accessed 16 March 2016]. That the most celebrated general of World War Two would leave the White House with a warning about the military was remarkable, as was the prescience of the warning.
[43] Heinlein, p. 135.
[44] Heinlein, p. 165
[45] I. F. Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars, 1793-3749*, 2nd edition (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 179.
[46] Gannon, *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines*, p. 197.
[47] Dickson, *Dorsai!*, p. 190. D'Ammassa, p. 121.

powerful leader – with its civilisation based around 'great people' such as Project Blaine on Venus, Seven Holman on Earth, Eldest Bright on Harmony, Sayona the Bond on Kultis, and William of Ceta, and reaching its epitome in Donal Graeme, the 'intuitive superman.'[48]

Similarly, Ben Bova's *The Star Conquerors* (1959) and *Star Watchman* (1964) offer critical perspectives on militarism.[49] While not antimilitaristic they are cautious of its complacent acceptance. The narrator of the first novel is Alan Bakerman – properly Ahgh'lown B'khrom'mnin, raised by the alien Saurians – a young humanoid observer with Earth's Star Watch during the war against the mysterious Masters, and friend of Commander Geoffrey Knowland who leads the Terran Expeditionary Force which raids, invades, and finally conquers the Masters' empire. The ambivalent attitude to militarism is shown in two ways. The first is a warning from Councilman Hines of Venus, who raises legitimate concerns about rampant militarization during the Star Watch's planning of the defence of the Terran Confederation. He recognises that the plan to 'train every available man in the Confederation to fight the invaders' may be necessary, but is concerned about what it means to the 'fundamental concepts of our democracy.' He knows that the Star Watch envisions a long, difficult war 'with no foreseeable end', and requiring full-mobilisation of humankind, and his fear is that the military will become unreasonably influential in the Confederation, and after victory will 'imperil the very freedoms we are trying to defend.'[50] The second warning against militarism in this novel takes the form of the Komani, one of the client races of the Masters. This race, evolved from a feline species, were once enemies of the Masters, and 'fought a gigantic war' which the Masters did not win decisively although they nearly wiped the Komani out. The Masters did conquer them, however: the Komani

> devoted every ounce of their civilization to fighting their war, and when the war was over, they had nothing left except a generations-long tradition of fighting. So the Masters took what was left of them, and made them the shock troops of their galactic empire… They've done

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[48] Dickson, *Dorsai!*, p. 37, 279.
[49] Also in this series: 'The Duelling Machine' (*Analog*, May 1963; expanded as novel in 1969), written in collaboration with Myron Lewis. 'The Duelling Machine' is an early depiction of virtual reality allowing powers to fight wars through technology.
[50] Ben Bova, *The Star Conquerors* (Philadelphia and Toronto: The John C. Winston Company, 1959), pp. 88-89.

all the Masters' hardest fighting for thousands of generations now; the entire race knows nothing except war.[51]

They are slaves to their militarism. The ambivalence, however, comes because the Terrans are impressed with this Komani 'singleness of purpose', which is visible throughout their culture: their children have no toys except 'plastic swords and miniature replicas of guns', their art is confined to 'decorative metalwork for their weapons and armor', and their music consists almost entirely of 'battle sagas.'[52] There were hints of such a culture in 1960s (and later) America, with a culture of war displayed in novels, film, music, and toys, such as G.I. Joe launched in 1964.

The second novel in the series, Bova's *Star Watchman*, details the eponymous Star Watchman and Imperial Marines' struggle against a native uprising on the planet Oran VI, called Shinar by its inhabitants, a hundred years after the defeat of the Masters. It is more accommodating of militarism than *The Star Conquerors*. It acknowledges issues with militarism but presents it as – under certain circumstances, for example during war or in anticipation of war, and thus contributing to the 'purpose' of the military' – not unjustified. The protagonist, Star Watch Junior Officer Emile Vorgens, born into the Terran Empire but a native of a planet in the Pleiades star cluster, serves in the Empire's interstellar military arm. The Star Watch's successful war against the Masters had

> made the Terran Confederation – almost against its own will – the new masters of most of the galaxy. The problems of ruling such a vast territory had been solved only by the creation of the Empire. Now the Star Watch served to control the interstellar space routes. A subsidiary branch, the Imperial Marines, handled any planet-borne fighting that had to be done.[53]

Vorgens justifies the existence of the Empire and its subjugation of alien worlds in two ways. First, the nature of the Empire is justified by the difficulties with ruling such a vast territory. Talking to a native merchant and ex-revolutionary leader, Vorgens declares that no matter 'what the Empire has done on Shinar, the peoples ruled by the Terrans would be plunged into chaos and starvation if the Empire were

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[51] Bova, *The Star Conquerors*, p. 138.
[52] Bova, *The Star Conquerors*, p. 145.
[53] Ben Bova, *Star Watchman* (New York: Ace Books, 1964), p. 11.

destroyed.' He believes that while the Terrans 'may seem evil and arbitrary to you' they are 'also the carriers of law, of stability, of commerce and order, throughout more than half the galaxy.'[54] Second, the nature of the Empire is justified by its other perceived purpose, the extermination of the Others, 'a mysterious, almost-mythological force that destroyed humanity's first interstellar society a million years previously', if they return. While he is aware that the Empire is 'not the best way', Vorgens believes that 'it's the only way we have' and that, while the Terran's actions on Shinar are hard to accept, 'there is no alternative.'[55] There are distinct parallels to U.S. imperialism and foreign policy during the Cold War in response to the perceived existential threat of the Soviet Union and global communism, and the perceived global responsibilities of its newly-gained superpower status.

The most significant explicitly antimilitaristic military SF narrative responding to this idea of militarism is Harry Harrison's satirical *Bill, the Galactic Hero* (1965). In this novel Harrison (born Henry Dempsey) directly contests Heinlein's idealisation of warfare, masculinism, the military and militarism.[56] After leaving high school in 1943, Harrison was drafted into the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War Two, as a gunsight technician and as a gunnery instructor, becoming a sergeant by the end of the conflict. His war experiences left him a committed pacifist. He describes his novel as 'a piss-take on Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* and all those gung-ho military SF books.'[57] He transforms Heinlein's narrative 'into third-person picaresque', and 'parodies the military as systematised brutality.'[58] This novel – which Harrison, in an introduction, calls his 'own personal anti-war novel' – describes the recruitment of a farm-boy into the Space Troopers, his boot camp training, his active service during the Human-Chinger War, his accidental desertion from the military and subsequent imprisonment, and, finally, his

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[54] Bova, *Star Watchman*, p. 56.
[55] Bova, *Star Watchman*, p. 59.
[56] Originally published as 'The Starsloggers' (*Galaxy*, December 1964); expanded as 'Bill, the Galactic Hero' (*New Worlds SF*, August-October 1965). This classic novel became the basis of a sharecropping series (in the 1980s and 1990s), comprising a number of sequels, mainly co-written with other authors, of decreasing quality and little lasting interest.
[57] Interview by Michael Carroll, 'An Evening with Harry Harrison', *The Brentford Mercury* [fanzine], No. 7 (May 1996). Reprinted in slightly amended form in *Eurocon 1997 Programme Book*, October 1997, pp. 4-5.
[58] Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War*, pp. 37-38.

appointment as a recruitment officer.[59] Tom Shippey succinctly summarises Harrison's key points:

> utter derision of Heinlein's oligarchic views, total disbelief in the military virtues, utter contempt for the organisational rationalisations offered, complete conviction that beneath Heinlein's surface of sadistic hazing there is only a wish to haze sadistically.[60]

Bill is presented as a 'fighting fool' – a 'broad-shouldered, square-chinned, curly-haired chunk of electronic-cannon fodder – recruited into the Space Troopers under the influence of a 'tight-beam stimulator', 'ego-reducing drugs' and a 'programmed hypno-coil' while protesting he is 'not the military type.'[61] Bill embarks on a series of absurd misadventures and mishaps in which he demonstrates none of the heroic qualities associated with the protagonists of military SF, parodying 'the ventures of devoted warriors like Johnny Rico.'[62] Likewise, the Empire's war with the Chingers parodies Heinlein's Federation and its war with the Bugs, the justification for having 'to wipe them out' or else 'they'll wipe us out' unconvincing.[63] Harrison claims to write about the military's 'simplistic, fascistic point of view' and about the irony of 'fascism defending a democracy.'[64] This book, far from being the 'rather inconsequential farce' it is labelled by Darko Suvin, is founded on an entrenched suspicion of the military, and an intense hatred of war and the people who desire war.[65]

Other noteworthy antimilitarist works include Fritz Leiber's Hugo Award-winning *The Big Time* (1958) and Norman Spinrad's *The Solarians* (1966), although the former is not as strident and vitriolic as Spinrad's *The Men in the Jungle* (1967).[66] Leiber was a former episcopal minister, an actor, and a declared pacifist, and his *The Big Time*, a novel about a war of time-travellers, can be read 'as a morality play

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[59] Harry Harrison, *Bill, the Galactic Hero* (New York: ibooks, 2001), p. viii.
[60] Shippey, pp. 168-183 (p. 176).
[61] Harrison, pp. 5-6.
[62] David Seed, *Science Fiction: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 15. Thomas D. Clareson, *Understanding Contemporary American Science Fiction: The Formative Period, 1926-1970* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), p. 130.
[63] Harrison, pp. 12-13.
[64] Harrison, p. viii.
[65] Suvin, pp. 115-144 (p. 130).
[66] *The Big Time* was originally published as a serial, 'The Big Time' (*Galaxy*, March-April 1968), before becoming a novel in 1961.

condemning militarism.'[67] The narrator describes this Change War between the Snakes and the Spiders thus: 'Our Soldiers fight by going back to change the past, or even ahead to change the future, in ways to help our side win the final victory a billion or more years from now. A long killing business, believe me.'[68] The story takes place in a rest and relaxation base – the Place – between the changing timelines. Providing insight into the 'troubled state of the American mind', there is 'irony in the fact that fandom voted Hugos for *The Big Time* and *Starship Troopers* in successive years.'[69] *The Solarians* is based around Fleet Commander Jay Palmer's encounter with the eponymous Solarians who have left Fortress Sol to fulfil their 'Promise' to help the Confederation defeat the Duglaari Empire after three hundred years of war.[70] The idea of Fortress Sol reflects that of 'Fortress America', a term used both during the Second World War and in the Cold War to refer to the option of defending Canada and the United States against their enemies if the rest of the world were lost to them. The isolationist idea of fortifying North America and abandoning international involvements was rejected with the formation of NATO and the decision to permanently station troops in Europe. During their interactions the Solarians show Palmer the flaws in the Confederation's highly militarised government and society. Both of these works written by liberal authors – contrasting with the generally conservative and reactionary narratives of their contemporaries – are discussed in more detail later.

Veteranocracy and Democracy

Related to the militarism promoted, or criticized, by military SF works during this period is the depiction of militaristic and authoritarian government. The most strident, and well-known, work promoting such government is Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*, with its oligarchical government of veterans. Antithetical views of military rule and militarised governance are provided by Gordon Dickson in *Naked*

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[67] Thomas D. Clareson, *Understanding Contemporary American Science Fiction: The Formative Period, 1926-1970* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), p. 136.
[68] Fritz Leiber, *The Big Time* (New York: Ace Books, 1982), p. 8.
[69] Clareson, p. 136.
[70] Near the beginning of the conflict, humanity's home solar system isolated itself from the rest of civilisation and broadcast the Promise of Fortress Sol: 'We will turn inward and build for Man a fortress in his home system, an impregnable redoubt that will, when the time is right, send forth its hosts to destroy the might of Duglaar, completely and forever.' Norman Spinrad, *The Solarians* (New York: Paperback Library, 1966), p. 21.

to the Stars (1961) and Norman Spinrad in *The Solarians*, while authoritarian *antimilitaristic* government is challenged by Poul Anderson in *The Star Fox*.

This idea of militaristic government is epitomised by *Starship Troopers*' Terran Federation, an oligarchical government of veterans or, as Tom Shippey calls it, a 'veteranocracy.'[71] This book depicts a 'masculinist fantasy future society' which is in some ways horrifying but is presented by Heinlein as a utopia, in which military virtues are civil virtues, the franchise is held only by veterans of federal service, the world government is ruled by a military elite, and the ideal society has given rise to the ideal fighting force, the Mobile Infantry. To survive, society abandons democracy for harsh military hierarchy and rule by military veterans.[72] Brooks Landon proposes that Heinlein, the libertarian and confirmed anti-authoritarian in many of his works, here 'presents in authoritarian rhetoric no less than an ode to military authoritarianism.'[73]

Heinlein believes that soldiers possess more 'civic virtue' than do civilians and that full citizenship, including the right to vote and hold public office, should be granted only to those who have volunteered for a term of federal service. This postulation that military virtues are civil virtues is an important aspect of militarism. Heinlein advocates a kind of classical republicanism, in which individuals of a virtuous, participating citizenry serve for the common good, choosing the state over personal advantage or even personal survival.[74] Thus, the militarism celebrated by the novel is not of the totalitarian kind extant in the twentieth century – in Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia – but of the kind practiced in Sparta and Revolutionary North America. According to Major Reid, one of Rico's instructors in Officer Candidates School, rule by veterans of the military is the ideal political and social system because these veterans – 'every voter and officeholder' – have learned to place 'the welfare of the group ahead of personal advantage':

> Since sovereign franchise is the ultimate in human authority, we insure
> that all who wield it accept the ultimate in social responsibility – we
> require each person who wishes to exert control over the state to wager

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[71] Shippey, pp. 168-183 (p. 173).
[72] Luckhurst, p. 136.
[73] Landon, pp. 65, 68.
[74] Suvin reads it as 'a paradigm of U.S. classical republicanism gone sour in the age of imperial expansion.' Suvin, pp. 115-144 (p. 123)

his own life – and lose it, if need be – to save the life of the state. The maximum responsibility a human can accept is thus equated to the ultimate authority a human can exert.[75]

This citizenship is open to all, regardless of ethnicity, creed, religion, gender, or physical ability/disability, as long as a person demonstrates service to the state. A civilian, as opposed to a soldier (and citizen) does not accept 'personal responsibility for the safety of the body politic of which he is a member.'[76] As Adam Roberts writes, although Heinlein says his book celebrates state service rather than just military service, there is an element of disingenuousness in that *Starship Troopers* presents the reader with almost no characters other than military ones, and the 'tone is so gung-ho celebratory that not one reader in a thousand would see it as anything other than a paean to the military' and military rule.[77] The political scheme is devised in a way that makes alternate viewpoints weak and irrelevant.

Having learned this lesson of personal responsibility, Major Reid (and Heinlein) declares, the new ruling class also performs far better than any previous ruling class. This is because the military elite understand that the very nature of human beings – part of their evolved survival instinct – is to struggle for power through the use of force. The military rulers are described as the best and wisest rulers in human history: the civilian society this political system secures is one without wars within the human species, unprecedented 'personal freedom' and living standards for all, including the vast majority of the population which has never undertaken federal service. In addition, a society in which veterans are the only enfranchised citizens and hence its rulers is immune from revolution: such an armed uprising 'requires not only dissatisfaction but aggressiveness' and in the future of *Starship Troopers* all those aggressive, and brave, enough to fight are either volunteers employed in the Federal Service or honourably discharged veterans of that Service.[78] Furthermore, a veteranocracy, apparently, ignores one key to the suppression of militarism – that only civilians control the military – with Everett Carl Dolman asserting that since 'any resident can become a veteran, and all veterans can

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[75] Heinlein, pp. 144-146.
[76] Heinlein, p. 24.
[77] Roberts, pp. 202-203.
[78] Heinlein, pp. 144, 146.

remember their own former status as a resident', the possibility that veterans will transform society into one dominated by the military 'appears quite remote.'[79]

Military rule and virtue has resulted in a social system much improved from that of Heinlein's own United States. The establishment of the Terran Federation comes after a period, known as 'the Disorders', of high crime and a final near-apocalyptic confrontation between superpowers, which led to the collapse of existing social systems.[80] As Alasdair Spark suggests, the pathology Heinlein 'recalls' is typical of that 'expressed in the late 1950s and early 1960s by conservative organisations such as the John Birch Society, and right-wing politicians such as Barry Goldwater.'[81] The rampant crime, which began with 'juvenile delinquency', is blamed on the government's unwillingness to punish wrongdoers sufficiently. The unwillingness to punish using pain is, in turn, blamed on a 'pre-scientific pseudo-professional class' who called themselves 'social workers' or 'child psychologists', standard figures in right-wing demonology. The collapse of old institutions, such as the North American Republic, was the result of a culture suffering from, according to Heinlein, a 'greater sickness', where citizens glorified their mythology of 'rights' and lost track of their 'duties.'[82] Linking *Starship Troopers* to pre-World War One future-war stories, Spark argues that fears of 'national degeneracy were as detectable in 1950s America as in 1870s Britain.' However, Heinlein's 'fundamentalist society' has remedied these problems: parents use corporal punishment on their children, public flogging is a standard punishment, and serious criminals are hanged.[83] The conservative fear of the United States becoming effete – its material wealth and physical security being eroded by the ease and 'luxury' thereby created – in the face of the Red Threat is overcome.

This ideal society – based on Heinlein's principles – gives rise to the ideal fighting force: the Mobile Infantry, the elite military force designed to fight the perpetual wars necessary to fulfil humanity's manifest destiny in the galaxy. The background to Heinlein's imagined political system 'presupposes a post-Korean failure of democracy to cope with continued warfare against Asian Communists.'[84] As Spark

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[79] Dolman, pp. 198-213 (pp. 210-211).
[80] Heinlein, pp. 96, 90, 142.
[81] Spark, 'The Art of Future War', pp. 133-165, p. 147.
[82] Heinlein, pp. 93-94, 96.
[83] Spark, 'The Art of Future War', pp. 133-165 (p. 148).
[84] Shippey, pp. 168-183 (p. 172).

argues, in response to the perceived failings of the conscripted U.S. Army in the Korean War – in particular the breakdown of morale and self-discipline, and the failure to cope with continued warfare against Communist insurgencies and national liberation movements – *Starship Troopers* presents the Mobile Infantry as an example of a virtuous and effective elite military force.[85] This military force – in which 'everybody drops and everybody fights' – is composed of ideal citizen-soldiers.[86] Volunteers all, they are motivated by an (American) ideology as fundamental as Communism was imagined to be and indoctrinated with values of duty and responsibility far better than could a force of conscripts.[87] The Mobile Infantry is, in short, a 'galactic Special Force, an interstellar Green Berets', a fictional representation of the U.S. Army Special Forces John F. Kennedy promoted – and in some sense created – a few years later, and which became icons of the New Frontier.[88]

The first work presenting an argument against military government is Gordon Dickson's undeniable rejoinder to *Starship Troopers*, *Naked to the Stars*, with an Earth that is, like Heinlein's Terran Federation, unified under a heavily-militarised and veteran-dominated Government. This Government is one without equal voting rights – although the nature of the inequality is never made explicit, just comments on 'these Societies, these Equal-Vote, Non-Violence people' and mention of an extra vote for being a veteran – and whose 'way of getting along with other intelligent races' involves 'outkilling them.'[89] These two elements are related: soldiers learn the value of defending their 'hearth and family' and of responsibility, the virtue of which, as in Heinlein, qualifies them for government positions; when soldiers become veterans, 'while it may remain a fine thing to let the enemy attack before the soldier goes to war, it becomes the practical thing to go to war first.'[90] The main character, Lieutenant Cal Truant of the Armed Services, first accepts

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[85] Spark, 'The Art of Future War', pp. 133-165 (p. 144).
[86] Heinlein, p. 7.
[87] Heinlein abhors conscription, which does away with choice; for Heinlein there is no conflict between individualism and military discipline. Spark, 'The Art of Future War', pp. 133-165 (pp. 143-144).
[88] According to Franklin, John F. Kennedy, 'almost single-handedly created the Green Berets, designed their insignia, and defined their purpose and spirit'; the Army Special Forces had existed since 1952, but Kennedy turned them into the Green Berets. Franklin, *Robert A. Heinlein*, p. 116.
[89] Gordon Dickson, *Naked to the Stars* (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1990), pp. 7, 8, 22-23.
[90] Dickson, *Naked to the Stars*, pp. 3-4.

these militaristic ideas as dogma, but develops doubts during his time with the Contact Services on Paumon.

The second narrative warning of militarized and authoritarian governance is Norman Spinrad's *The Solarians*.[91] In this novel 'the chief business of the human race' is 'the war for survival' against the Duglaari (Doogs) and as a result the closest thing there is to a united human government is the Combined Human Military Command of the Confederation, a militarised and efficient institution. This government is given symbolic form in Pentagon City, the largest single building in the known Galaxy. A pentagon ten miles on a side and five hundred feet tall, the City is 'a kind of beloved monstrosity', the Human Confederation's 'monument to itself', the 'most massive and total shrine to the military mind that had ever been built.'[92] From the perspective of the Solarians, however, the City represents what is wrong with the Confederation, which has become too focused on military matters and warfare; it is ugly and functional but also a 'dead end.' Ortega, a Solarian, explains to Palmer that 'the more specialized a species becomes, the closer it is to extinction' and presents a fearful vision of the post-war Confederation:

> What happens when The War is over, assuming that the Doogs are wiped out? What then? Like a cheap imitation of the Duglaari Empire, the Human Confederation is specialized for war in every way: economically, scientifically, psychologically. Even religiously – the only "religion" of the Confederation is the myth of Fortress Sol; strictly a warrior's religion. The only thing holding the Confederation together is The War. There isn't even a Confederal government as such, just the Combined Human Military Command. It can't survive peace.[93]

Spinrad is suggesting that the military-industrial complex being developed by the United States in its pursuit of militarization and of the Cold War is a dead end. This was a fundamental aspect of Eisenhower's warning in his Farewell Speech: he enjoined Americans to 'guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence,

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[91] Spinrad had firm views about the connections between future war stories, militarism, and fascism: he later wrote *The Iron Dream* (1972), which explicitly links the clichés of pulp future war fantasies to Nazism and fascism, through the fictional SF works of an alternate timeline Adolf Hitler who emigrated to the U.S. in the 1930s.

[92] Spinrad, pp. 16, 17.

[93] Spinrad, p. 122.

whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex', warning that the 'potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.' Eisenhower also described the 'total influence' of this new system – 'economic, political, even spiritual' – suggesting the way it was becoming woven into the fabric of American life. [94] Such concerns about the military-industrial complex were especially significant in the 1960s which, by many measures, 'marked the apogee of America's post-1945 militarization.'[95]

Critical of authoritarian – but *insufficiently* militaristic – government is Poul Anderson's 'fix-up' *The Star Fox*.[96] Anderson – a U.S. writer of Scandinavian descent and one of the dominant figures in American science fiction, as well as a prolific writer of mystery novels, historical fiction, fantasies, and non-fiction – has strong libertarian political ideals and these ideas are espoused in this novel.[97] Such libertarian rhetoric is not unusual in the science fiction field: much U.S. SF 'showed libertarian leanings in the 1940s, encouraged by the radical pragmatism of John Campbell and Robert A. Heinlein', and became 'increasingly commonplace and strident during the 1960s.'[98] *The Star Fox* recounts the growing conflict between humanity and the Aleriona, in particular between the privateer Gunnar Heim and his Aleriona adversary, Cynbe. The novel espouses militarism in the same vein as Heinlein: the main character, Heim, disagrees with the ideas that humanity and the Aleriona 'have to inhabit the same cosmos' and war is 'unthinkable.'[99] When the aliens conquer the world of New Europe, the World Federation refuses to declare war. Heim decides to push the Federation into a just war, and to do so becomes a privateer. Heim, while being militaristic, opposes the global government of Earth, the World Federation with its Peace Control Authority: it is an 'instrument for a purpose' suited to Earth, which is too small for national sovereignty with nations living 'cheek to jowl' and where unification is required to prevent conflict, but not

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[94] Eisenhower, 'Farewell Address', 17 January 1951 [accessed 16 March 2016].
[95] Sherry, p. 241.
[96] A fix-up is a novel developed or "fixed-up" from stories previously published in magazines: in the case of *The Star Fox* 'Marque and Reprisal' (February 1965), 'Arsenal Port' (April 1965) and 'Admiralty' (June 1965), all originally published in *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*.
[97] *The Star Fox* was inducted into the Prometheus Award Hall of Fame by the Libertarian Futurist Society in 1995. In the same year, Anderson won the Prometheus Award for his novel *The Stars Are Also Fire* (1994).
[98] Stableford, pp. 200-201.
[99] Poul Anderson, *The Star Fox* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1965), p. 21.

to interstellar civilization in which 'we have more room.'[100] After the privateer *Star Fox* destroys the Aleriona ship at New Earth, and Earth finally goes into action and drives Aleriona into suing for peace, New Europe rings itself with 'defense machines' and declares its independence and sovereignty from the World Federation.[101] Heim explains that the Federation is required to maintain peace and order on heavily-populated and nationally-divided Earth, but that the 'universe is too big for one pattern', one government.[102] It is not clear if Anderson would disapprove of authoritarian militarised government – along the lines of Heinlein's Terran Federation, Dickson's Government, and Spinrad's Confederation – in the face of Earth-bound existential threats, like consensus reality's Soviet Union, but it is clear he is against unjustified expansionist, authoritarian governments.

This was not a new issue for Anderson: his heroes take on such a government in a previous book, *The High Crusade* (1960). In this narrative Sir Roger de Tourneville and his army of free companions during the Hundred Years' War encounter a scoutship of the alien Wersgorix Empire, kill most of its crew, and unintentionally set course for one of the Wersgorix's previously subjugated worlds. Sir Roger begins a crusade, gains allies among the Empire's client species, and conquers the Wersgorix Empire, establishing a feudal, English-speaking Catholic interstellar empire in its place. The humans disapproved of both the Wersgorix's expansionism – the subjugation or wiping out of native peoples and the settling of countless worlds – and authoritarianism.[103] In the Wersgorix Empire, under the law, 'all were equal, all free to strive as best they might for money and position', yet in practice it was 'a worse tyranny than mankind has known… each individual has no one to stand between him and the all-powerful central government… unable to protest any arbitrary decree of a superior.[104] This all-powerful central government is replaced by a libertarian-like feudal system in which subjects' political obligations and allegiances are private, voluntary and personal.

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[100] Anderson, *The Star Fox*, pp. 270-271.
[101] Anderson, *The Star Fox*, p. 269.
[102] Anderson, *The Star Fox*, p. 271.
[103] Poul Anderson, *The High Crusade* (New York: ibooks, 2003), pp. 16-17.
[104] Anderson, *The High Crusade*, pp. 68-69.

Anti-Communism

As well as witnessing the increasing influence of the military-industrial complex, the Korean War exacerbated the fear of communism and cemented the idea of an indivisible Communist Bloc, despite the evident tensions between the Soviet Union and China already manifest during the war. The proto-military SF works studied in the second half of the previous chapter and the military SF works studied in this chapter span what W. Keith Booker calls the 'long 1950s' (1946-1964), which encompasses 'the great period of American Cold War hysteria', beginning soon after World War Two and 'ending sometime around 1964, when nuclear and anti-Soviet paranoia in the United States began noticeably to decline.'[105] While Paul Carter argues that the 1950s in SF 'were a time of trenchant social criticism' and that – in a period of loyalty oaths, repression of popular media, enforced conformity, and blustering anti-Communist congressmen and senators – there was 'surprisingly little Red-fighting in the science fiction magazines', this was categorically not so in the military SF subgenre.[106] The allegorisation of this anti-communism and the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union is conspicuous in the treatment of Heinlein's Terran Federation and the Bugs, Spinrad's Human Confederation and Duglaari Empire, and Leiber's Spiders and Snakes.

Despite his well-documented libertarianism – and resulting calls for individualism and rejection of received thinking – Heinlein settled into 'a conventional Cold War stance' during the 1950s.[107] He defined nationhood 'oppositionally against the communistic forces he saw as threatening it.'[108] In addition, this stance mirrored the U.S. perception of the Cold War, as argued by David Seed, which was structured around key metaphors, 'like the analogy between the Soviet Union and dangerous predators.'[109] This can most clearly be seen in two of Heinlein's works. First, in *The Puppet Masters* (1951), in which American secret agents battle parasitic and communistic mind-controlling slug-like aliens from Titan. Second, and most

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[105] Booker, p. 3.
[106] Paul A. Carter, *The Creation of Tomorrow: Fifty Years of Magazine Science Fiction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), p. 140.
[107] Luckhurst, p. 101.
[108] Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War*, p. 33.
[109] Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War*, p. 1.

importantly for this thesis, *Starship Troopers*.[110] Though *Starship Troopers* is not quite as avowedly anticommunist as the earlier novel, the hostile universe in which the Terran Federation exists is a transparent allegorisation of the position of the United States in the 1950s, with the Earth surrounded by sinister enemies – in particular communistic enemies – who threaten to take away its wealth and freedom.[111]

Starship Troopers' Bugs – also known as the Arachnids – which Suvin called 'faceless pulp monsters of the anthill-communist stripe, fit only for slaughter', are, for Heinlein, stand-ins for the Communists of the Soviet Union and People's Republic of China in consensus reality.[112] Booker argues that the Bugs and their ideology are 'virtually identical to Western Cold War visions of communism and the Soviet Union, though their alienness considerably simplifies the Us vs. Them terms of the Cold War.'[113] In other words, 'political difference is thereby naturalised into the threatening alien.'[114] Rico describes the Bugs as 'arthropods who happen to look like a madman's conception of a giant, intelligent spider', but that their 'organization, psychological and economic, is more like that of ants or termites; they are communal entities, the ultimate dictatorship of the hive.' As extrapolations from Heinlein's conception of Communism, they have a communal society of faceless, mindless and inhuman creatures who have relinquished individualism. Heinlein makes the connection to communism explicit:

> Every time we killed a thousand Bugs at a cost of one M.I. it was a net
> victory for the Bugs. We were learning, expensively, just how efficient
> a total communism can be when used by a people actually adapted to it
> by evolution; the Bug commissars didn't care any more about
> expending soldiers than we cared about expending ammo. Perhaps we

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[110] Alexei Panshin illustrates the similarities between *The Puppet Masters* and *Starship Troopers*: 'The nature of the enemy is much the same: implacable and sharing a common mind. The nature of the fight is the same: all-or-nothing, total defeat or total victory. And… the nature of the solution is the same: man in the hairiest fighting animal in this end of the universe – tackle him at your own peril.' Panshin, p. 63.
[111] Booker, p. 53.
[112] Suvin, pp. 115-144 (p. 124). As early as H.G. Wells' *First Men in the Moon*, SF authors have conceived of intelligent communities – both human and non-human – with the same kind of rigid and communal organisational principles as ants or bees, and during the Cold War negative views of hive cultures became indelibly linked to fears of the perceived threat of communism.
[113] Booker, p. 53.
[114] Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War*, p. 37.

could have figured this out about the Bugs by noting the grief the Chinese Hegemony gave the Russo-Anglo-American Alliance; however the trouble with "lessons from history" is that we usually read them best after falling flat on our chins.[115]

Booker has interpreted this comparison – between the Bugs and the Chinese Hegemony – as showing that swarming 'hordes of Chinese are, for Heinlein, an even more vivid image of the ultimate communist nightmare than are the Soviets' and 'a virtual human equivalent to the Bugs.'[116] The Bug willingness to expend soldiers can be seen as a representation of the Chinese human-wave attacks of the Korean War. Heinlein's apparent praise for the Bug's communism in battle is not praise for communism, however. The effectiveness of Bug communism is only possible because the Bugs are adapted to it by evolution. The implication, then, is that communism is unnatural for human beings, who are by nature individualistic and controlled by self-interest, with no collective moral instinct. The focus on Chinese communism in Heinlein's description of the Bugs, furthermore, fulfills the familiar Yellow Peril 'stereotype of an Asian enemy, updated with Communist overtones during the Cold War.'[117] The perpetuation of the American treatment of the racial Other, as seen in Chapter Two's discussion of future war stories and space opera, is clearly evident. Finally, Heinlein directly attacks communism through a fictional lecture by Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Mr. Dubois, Rico's History and Moral Philosophy teacher. During a critique of Cold War Marxism, Dubois supposedly, uses 'kitchen illustrations' – the basic argument being that untalented cooks and great chefs can turn the same ingredients into meals of different quality and values – to 'demolish the Marxian theory of value', the fallacy 'from which the entire magnificent fraud of communism derives', and thus the entire ideological basis of communism.[118] As other critics have written, this argument 'is not only silly, but hopelessly naïve and ignorant in its presentation of Marx's theories.'[119]

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[115] Heinlein, p. 107.
[116] 'Robert A. Heinlein, *Starship Troopers* (1959)', in *The Science Fiction Handbook*, ed. by M. Keith Booker and Anne Marie Thomas (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 214-221 (p. 216).
[117] Spark, 'The Art of Future War', pp. 133-165 (p. 150).
[118] Heinlein, p. 75.
[119] Booker, p. 52.

The alien enemy in Norman Spinrad's *The Solarians,* the Duglaari, can also be read as a stand-in for Communism and/or the Soviet Union, and the war for survival between the Human Confederation and the Duglaari Empire as a science-fictional representation of the United States' view of the Cold War. The Duglaari, like Communists, 'may be mammals like us, they may breathe the same air and thrive in the same temperature range, but their minds work on totally different premises', and they have only one objective: to completely eliminate the human race (the Capitalist West).[120] As Palmer learns upon arrival on the Duglaari homeworld, the Duglaari have no individuals, instead the population is made of beings with identical personalities. Once again the fictional alien Other is representative of views of the consensus reality alien Other the U.S. faced in its Cold War: like Heinlein's Bugs, Spinrad's Doogs are communal, non-individualistic, and inhuman, evoking popular conceptions of communism. The capital city of the Duglaari Empire is one immense computer – known as the Council of Wisdom – and the computer serves as the Empire's government and has absolute control over the Duglaari. The computer's 'total, absolute, complete power' includes the selective breeding, indoctrination and training of the Doogs, resulting in the Duglaari all having identical personalities – the personality of the Council of Wisdom itself. Similar to the way many Americans viewed communism during the second half of the twentieth century, humanity in *The Solarians* view the Duglaari Empire as 'a thing insane', a 'malignant cancer', which must be destroyed 'for the sake of all sentient beings everywhere!'[121] This communism-as-cancer metaphor was a small but recurrent characteristic of far-right American discourse during the Cold War, especially in works like Robert Welch's *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society* (1961), as discussed by rhetorician Edwin Black in 'The Second Persona.'[122]

The Change War between the Spiders and Snakes of Fritz Leiber's *The Big Time* can also be read as allegorical of mid-twentieth century American views of communism and the Cold War. However, its treatment complicates the dichotomy between the East and the West, the United States and the Soviet Union, maintained by other works. According to Leiber's introduction to the novel, the two sides are

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[120] Spinrad, pp. 20-21.
[121] Spinrad, pp. 90-92.
[122] Edwin Black, 'The Second Persona', *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 56, 2 (April 1970), pp. 10-119.

called Spiders and Snakes 'to keep them mysterious and unpleasant, as major powers always are, inscrutable and nasty' and the Soldiers and Entertainers who – recruited from various periods of history – serve each side are unaware of the true nature or identities of their employers, and do not know how the war began or if it has an end.[123] The uncertainty of some of the characters is given voice by Bruce Marchant, an English lieutenant who fought in World War One and who attempts to lead a mutiny in The Place:

> It's the principle of the thing… It's this mucking inefficiency and death of the cosmos – and don't tell me that isn't in the cards! – masquerading as benign omniscient authority. The Spiders – and we don't know who they are ultimately, it's just a name; we see only agents like ourselves – the Spiders pluck us from the quiet graves of our lifelines… and Resurrect us if they can and then tell us we must fight another time-traveling power called the Snakes – just a name, too – which is bent on perverting and enslaving the whole cosmos, past, present, and future…[124]

The soldiers, the worlds, and the times involved in the Change War, in which the Snakes and Spiders do not directly fight each other, are like the nations influenced and funded by the superpowers during the Cold War; serving as 'proxies.' This metaphorical link between the Change War and the Cold War is emphasised with the focus on the void-dwelling Places and the fear of nuclear weapons, reminiscent of consensus reality's covert submarines and policy of, and concurrent fear of, Mutually Assured Destruction.

Fight for Survival

Concomitant with fictional representations of communism are fictional treatments of the Cold War, and justification of war between humanity and the alien Other. This section discusses all the major writers engaged with in this chapter: including those who are, using imprecise terms, 'pro-war' – Heinlein, Anderson, Bova, and Spinrad – and 'anti-war' – Dickson, Leiber, and Harrison. The former treat war as

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[123] Leiber, pp. 1-5 (p. 4).
[124] Leiber, pp. 27-28.

justified and – biologically – inevitable, and believe that 'total victory' should be pursued in wars against totalitarian enemies, while the former critique and denounce these ideas. The linking of war to evolution was very Campbellian, as outlined in John Campbell's editorial 'The Nature of Intelligent Aliens' (*Analog*, October 1967). According to Campbell, when an intelligent species becomes the 'unchallengeable most-dangerous-animal on the planet', it has no predator culling the species, so that species must become predatory on itself in order to evolve. Therefore, like humanity, any alien species 'will have in his history the long, long ages of war, covering the evolutionary stages between the time he first achieved absolute immunity to competing species, and the time he learned the evolutionary function of war, and developed a better substitute.'[125]

Following on from his treatment of Communists-as-Bugs, Heinlein gives rhetorically weighted voice to several ideas regarding war relevant to the United States during the Cold War, including that war is always inevitable and that the imperial expansion of humanity is a biological imperative. The basis of these ideas is Heinlein's stance, evident in his presentation of the Terran Federation and Mobile Infantry, as a social Darwinist – that is, the result of applying Darwinist survival of the fittest ideas to sociology, often connected to ideas of racial superiority, eugenics, and justified genocide.[126] Heinlein's military organisations can be described as social Darwinist democracies, as illustrated by Scholes and Rabkin: they are run 'by those who have proved themselves competent and courageous' and they can be cooperative 'because their aggressive behaviour is directed outward, at a common enemy.'[127] Likewise, Heinlein's ideal society is social Darwinist, in which people are free to rise to their 'natural' level of power, wealth, influence, and authority.[128] Furthermore, he feels that life should be a struggle for the survival of the fittest, although 'it is a Darwinism based on ideology rather than genetics.'[129] This pseudo-Darwinian vision of life and politics was intended to urge the U.S. – which, in the

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[125] John Campbell, 'The Nature of Intelligent Aliens', *Analog*, October 1967, quoted in Patricia Monk, *Alien Theory: The Alien Archetype in the Science Fiction Short Story* (Lanham, MD, and Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2006), pp. 189-90.

[126] Heinlein's position as a social Darwinist is discussed by Brian Aldiss, Peter Nicholls, Frank Rottensteiner, Dennis E. Showalter, Alexei Panshin and Robert Scholes and Eric S. Rabkin.

[127] Scholes and Rabkin, p. 56.

[128] Spark, 'The Art of Future War', pp. 133-165 (p. 136).

[129] K. A. MacDermott, 'Ideology and Narrative: The Cold War and Robert Heinlein', *Extrapolation*, 23, 3 (Fall 1982), pp. 254-269 (p. 256).

view of Heinlein (and many others), was becoming soft and complacent in the late 1950s – to seek greater military strength so that it could survive in a hostile world, especially in competition with ruthless foes such as Soviet or Chinese communists, and to remind Americans that some enemies can be defeated only by force.[130] Heinlein himself directly engaged with such right-wing views in two ways. First, in 1958, he attempted to organize a far-right pro-nuclear group, the Patrick Henry League, after learning that the U.S. might halt nuclear testing in the face of growing public scepticism and attempts to cool down mounting tension with the U.S.S.R. Second, in 1964, he campaigned for Barry Goldwater in his presidential race against Lyndon Johnson. Goldwater published *The Conscience of a Conservative* (1960) a manifesto that coincided with Heinlein's thinking at several points: hostility towards the Soviet Union, a rejection of the belief that material goods could 'convert' the Communists, and 'a sense of national betrayal by the compromises of the Eisenhower Administration.'[131]

Literary critic Rafeeq McGiveron defends the Terran Federation's militarism because – under pressure from the military aggression of the Bugs – Heinlein's Darwinistic message of struggle is not a celebration of meaningless expansion but advocacy of the defence of freedom: it espouses 'a justifiable defense rather than a rapacious offense.'[132] Like the United States and the Soviet Union, the two species of *Starship Troopers* understand that, with their irreconcilable differences and expansionistic tendencies, they must eventually come into conflict for resources. For this reason, like the United States with its Truman Doctrine – which promised support for democratic countries threatened by Soviet communism, and was a key part of the Cold War policy of 'containment' – both humanity and the Bugs know that they must limit the influence and territorial possession of the other or, if possible, 'conquer their potential future enemy now, before they have spread to other worlds with more resources.'[133] The novel justifies war as a social Darwinist

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[130] Booker, p. 51. 'Robert A. Heinlein, *Starship Troopers* (1959)', in The *Science Fiction Handbook*, ed. by M. Keith Booker and Anne Marie Thomas (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 214-221 (p. 215).
[131] Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War*, p. 35.
[132] McGiveron, pp. 54-70 (p. 54). Discussed in Leon Perniciaro, 'Shifting Understandings of Imperialism: A Collision of Cultures in Starship Troopers and Ender's Game' (unpublished MA thesis: University of New Orleans, 2011), p. 15.
[133] Perniciaro, p. 16. The Truman Doctrine originated from President Harry Truman's address before a joint session of Congress, 12 March 1947.

elaboration of the survival instinct applied to a larger scale, based on the premise of inevitable conflict between such groups whose living space is finite and whose population is constantly growing. Rico is taught that human beings have no instinct other than to survive and breed, and certainly no collective moral instinct, and 'proves' as a class assignment that 'war and moral perfection derive from the instinct to survive, thereby putting a stamp of approval on war.'[134] At its core, Heinlein's 'proof' of the inevitability of conflict rests on the idea that species survival is integrally bound to population pressure: as Rico is taught,

> All wars arise from population pressure… Morals – *all* correct moral rules – derive from the instinct to survive; moral behaviour is survival behaviour above the individual level – as in a father who dies to save his children. But since population pressure results from the process of surviving through others, then war, because it results from population pressure, derives from the same inherited instinct which produces all moral rules suitable for human beings.

His teacher warns that expansion is vital and that there are only two options for humanity, either 'we spread and wipe out the Bugs, or they spread and wipe us out – because both races are tough and smart and want the same real estate.'[135] This is the ideology of *lebensraum* or, more relevantly to the American context, manifest destiny. Furthermore, in his classes with Dubois, Rico is told that the doctrine 'violence never settles anything' is 'inexcusably silly', 'historically untrue' and 'thoroughly immoral', and that 'violence, naked force, has settled more issues in history than has any other factor, and the contrary opinion is wishful thinking at its worst.'[136] This depiction of war as an imperative appears to reflect the author's frustrations with Cold War diplomacy and the Eisenhower administration's dealings with the Soviet Union, as well as his disgust with those who would call for co-existence with the Soviets.[137] War conceived in this manner is also part of *Starship Troopers'* attempt to combat the 'collapse of the heroic war ethos' and the

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[134] Panshin, p. 91.

[135] Heinlein, p. 147. Landon proposes that the assumption that contact with alien species would inevitably (as a scientific given) lead to war, justifying imperialism and genocide, 'has appeared throughout the history of SF and is one of the genre's most troubling features'; this is especially true for works in the military SF subgenre. Landon, p. 70.

[136] Heinlein, p. 24.

[137] Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War*, p. 37. Booker, p. 52.

questioning of national purpose and identity that Tom Engelhart argues is a central concern of American popular culture from 1945 onward.[138] David Seed states that this is achieved, by Heinlein, by 'reinstating the role of the hero within the drama of national survival.'[139]

Similarly justifying war is Poul Anderson's *The Star Fox*, a novel with 'considerable antipacifist acrimony.'[140] It is based on the philosophy that some wars are necessary to prevent continued aggression: short-sighted officials in the World Federation unwisely seek appeasement with the alien, and threatening, Aleriona, but one man, Gunnar Heim, recognises the peril and acts on his own, becoming a privateer.[141] Senator Twyman, United States representative to the Parliament of the World Federation, declares war 'unthinkable' because of the close call of the 'Nuclear Exchange' and the risk of Earth's destruction during a war. Heim responds that the Exchange has made humanity 'irrational' on the subject of war – going as far as saying the Exchange and its aftermath 'rid us of those ideological governments' and that, in some ways, it was cleansing – and that interstellar war posed no danger to Earth, with its space defences.[142] Like the Cold War between the U.S. and Soviet Union, Heim sees war between humanity and the Alerion as ideological and involving no direct attacks on each other, instead fought indirectly – in the novel, as a 'space war'; in consensus reality, through 'proxy' wars in the Third World – and that such a war will eventually end in victory for humanity/the West. In addition, when told about the possibility of indemnity payments by Alerion for their conquest of New Europe, and plans for the exchange of ambassadors, cultural missions, and trade agreements, Heim says such a scheme 'ignores the nature of Alerion': he believes they will not 'respect our sphere any longer than it takes them to consolidate the one you want to make them a present of' and that they will use a few more years of peace to prepare for their 'next encroachment.'[143] Similar suspicion and distrust about the opponent's true motives and intentions was common in discussions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Anderson also

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[138] Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation,* revised edition (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), p. 10.
[139] Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War*, p. 36
[140] Suvin, pp. 115-144 (p. 129).
[141] The theme of one man recognising a danger and acting independently to prevent disaster is a theme that repeats itself frequently throughout Anderson's work.
[142] Anderson, *The Star Fox*, p. 21.
[143] Anderson, *The Star Fox*, pp. 23, 24.

justifies military conflict based on another consideration: Heim admonishes Twyman for being 'so obsessed with avoiding war' that he had 'forgotten every other consideration' including honour, finishing with the image of the colonists of New Europe 'taken to the hills' and 'waiting for us to come help them.'[144]

Ben Bova's *The Star Conquerors* and Norman Spinrad's *The Solarians* also offer perspectives on war and expansion. In Bova's novel the war between the Terran Confederation and the Masters began because the Masters realised that humanity was 'young and virile', and, given 'two or three more generations', would have attacked the Masters: 'We had to conquer and absorb you quickly, before you conquered us.'[145] When humanity fought back the Masters offered peace, in return for the Terrans being restricted to a territory a thousand light years in diameter. This was refused by Commander Knowland of the Terran Expeditionary Force for two reasons. First, because he realised the Masters would just absorb the Confederation within a few generations anyway, and that humanity could only seek peace when facing them as equals, 'strong enough to digest their culture without being absorbed into it against our will.' Second, he knew he could not place a limit on Terran expansion; 'We humans are an off type… we *must* expand… dynamic stability is built into our culture. If we stop expanding, we turn into passive lotus eaters.'[146] Spinrad's *The Solarians* is more ambivalent about the inevitability and justification of war, simultaneously championing war between humanity and the Doogs, while despairing of conflict between different members of humanity. The vast variations among humans, according to the inhabitants of Fortress Sol, 'worked largely *against* mankind, because the tendency was always for similar human types to cluster together in mutual hostility against the other human types', with the nation-state being the largest such grouping. The Solarians concluded that as the human race evolves 'the differences among its individual members become *greater*, not less' and that if the species continued to be organized on the basis of 'like clustering together' the human race would destroy itself. Therefore, they developed the Organic Group, 'a new basic unit, based not on the similarity of its members, but

[144] Anderson, *The Star Fox*, p. 23.
[145] Bova, *The Star Conquerors*, p. 212.
[146] Bova, *The Star Conquerors*, pp. 168-169.

on their *differences*' and their functional cooperation, and their whole civilization is 'stable and unified.'[147]

Two works, by Gordon Dickson and Harry Harrison, directly engage with Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* and the views about war it espouses; Fritz Leiber, writing before Heinlein, likewise presents differing views. The first of these texts, Dickson's *Naked to the Stars*, presents an expanding humanity which justifies its wars with aliens through concerns about species survival and population pressure. However, unlike Heinlein, Dickson goes on to critique this idea, and provides differing views toward Cold War policy, in the policy differences between Earth's Armed Services and Contact Services. Officially the Armed Services' purpose is 'to subdue the enemies of the human race', while the Contact Services' is 'to lay a basis for future peaceful co-existence with those former enemies.'[148] At the start of the novel, when protagonist Lieutenant Cal Truant serves in 4th Assault Wing of the Armed Services, during the Lethaunan Expedition, before his experiences in the Contact Services, he sees the advance of humanity as vital. He believes humanity must expand because of population pressures, the need for resources, and 'natural instincts', and that humanity would be 'committing racial suicide if we didn't keep on expanding.' Humanity must 'keep moving… keep winning and being the strongest', so as not to be vulnerable to 'the first more practical minded race that grew in our direction.'[149] However, by the end of the novel, Truant has developed a new perspective after his experiences with Contact Services during the Paumons Expedition.

Dickson critiques the easy dichotomy between humanity and the monstrous alien Other in Heinlein by having his human expansion – while Truant is with Contact – coming up against the inhabitants of Bellatrix, a 'red-skinned, hairless bunch of bipedal humanoids that're the closest thing to us we've yet run across.' As General Scoby of Contact Services explains, conquering this race, the Paumons, is particularly important because

> they are so damn much like us… Long as the races we were knocking
> over were covered with fur, or had prehensile noses, we could go on

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[147] Spinrad, pp. 55-56.
[148] Dickson, *Naked to the Stars*, p. 64.
[149] Dickson, *Naked to the Stars*, pp. 34-35.

calling them Pelties or Anteaters. We could shut our eyes to the fact that they had about as much brains, or probably about as much soul as we had. But an alien we got to call "Prog," now – that's getting a little like "God" or "Nigger." You're sort of straining to point up the difference.[150]

When the human soldiers show 'complacency' when dealing with the Paumons – each side treating the other as if they were 'half-civilized' – one general unsuccessfully attempts to foment tension between them by ordering the forced march of Paumons prisoners-of-war.[151] Later, under pressure from Truant and his control of a nuclear-armed starship, both sides agree to negotiate as equals and come to terms. Truant concludes that humanity 'mustn't lose sight of the fact that it's wrong to go up against each new race we meet with all guns blazing', that the 'only right way in the end is to go naked to the stars', without weapons, without militarism.[152] Conflict is the result of politics and ideology, which can be changed, not social Darwinist views about the inherent evolutionary function of war. The differing views presented by the Armed Services – with its ideology of expansion through conquest and military force – and the Contact Services – with its conception of diplomacy, negotiation, and cultural communication – are a commentary on the Cold War strategies of the superpowers, as they both attempted to expand their influence through military conflict and diplomatic engagement, as it started to occur in the 1960s. Dickson appears to favour the former approach. Dickson also offers alternatives to military conflict in *Dorsai!*: Donal Graeme bases his long military career around the prevention of the 'inevitable conflict' between the 'loose' societies (including the republican worlds of Old Earth and Mars, the Exotics, and the Dorsai) and the 'tight' societies (including the technological worlds of the so-called Venus Group and the fanatic worlds of Harmony and Association).[153] This interstellar conflict could result from interstellar civilisation's split between two different ideological/economic systems reminiscent of the different systems of the democratic United States and the autocratic Soviet Union during the Cold War.

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[150] Dickson, *Naked to the Stars*, pp. 35, 90.
[151] Dickson, *Naked to the Stars*, pp. 74-75.
[152] Dickson, *Naked to the Stars*, p. 115.
[153] Dickson, *Dorsai!*, pp. 203-205.

Likewise directly engaging with the views advocated in *Starship Troopers*, Harrison's *Bill, the Galactic Hero* parodies Heinlein's justification of interstellar war between humanity and the alien races it encounters in the wider galaxy. During boot camp, Bill is taught that his enemy, the Chinger, is a 'seven-foot-high saurian that looked very much like a scale-covered, four-armed, green kangaroo with an alligator's head.'[154] However, he soon finds out the truth when a fellow recruit, Eager Beager, turns out to be a Chinger 'spy.' Beager is a mechanical human-looking vehicle with a 'model control room with a tiny chair, miniscule controls, TV screens, and a water cooler' in his head, the perfect size for a seven-inch tall Chinger. When he confronts an officer about the nature of the enemy he is told, 'Seven inches, seven feet – what difference does it make… You don't expect us to tell the recruits how small the enemy really are… We gotta keep the morale up.'[155] Ironically 'Beager' had earlier explained humanity's hostility to the Chingers to Bill:

> The Chingers are the only non-human race that has been discovered in the galaxy that has gone beyond the aboriginal level, so naturally we have to wipe them out… If we don't wipe them out they'll wipe us out. Of course they say that war is against their religion and they will only fight in defense, and they have never made any attacks yet. But we can't believe them, even though it is true. They might change their religion or their minds some day, and then where would we be? The best answer is to wipe them out now.[156]

Later, on the planet Veneria, Bill once again encounters the Chinger spy, finding out he was a reluctant agent dragooned into it because of his speciality in studying alien life forms. During the conversation Bill realises he was taught to hate the Chingers; before he entered service he 'didn't give a damn about Chingers', and that the war of extermination being waged by humanity is just because 'there is no one else around to fight with.' He tells Beager that the war is the result of human nature and humanity's enjoyment of, and desire for, war. In response, the Chinger declares that 'No civilized race could *like* wars, death, killing, maiming, rape, torture, pain,

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154 Harrison, p. 12.
155 Harrison, pp. 41-42.
156 Harrison, pp. 12-13.

to name just a few of the concomitant factors. Your race can't be civilized!'[157] Harrison reverses the 'fight for survival' paradigm as seen in, for example, Heinlein and Bova; Harrison's humanity are the hostile alien Other that threatens the survival of the alien Chingers.

Another Cold War allegory in which conflict is less assuredly necessary than in the militaristic works of Heinlein, Anderson, and Bova is Leiber's *The Big Time*. Engaging with social Darwinist ideas of the time, Leiber's Change War is ostensibly – according to Ilhilihis the six-tentacled Lunan from a billion years in the past – a Darwinist/social Darwinist war, a kind of evolution into a new order of life, 'the ultimate synthesis' coming from the thesis/antithesis dialectic of the Snakes and the Spiders.[158] However, this is not confirmed, nor is it of any interest to the people fighting in the conflict. Adding to the atmosphere of cynicism – already apparent in the inscrutability and mystery of the two sides – about the Change War's aims and cause are the consequences of the conflict to the timeline of the Earth in *The Big Time*. Marchant explains that his dismay is not solely because of 'personal confusion' and the 'mess it's made of my spirit', or even the 'remaking of history' and the destruction of 'priceless, once-called imperishable beauties of the past.' Instead, it is because there was no guarantee that all these things were for the best: 'The Spiders assure us that, to thwart the Snakes, it is all-important that the West ultimately defeat the East. But what have they done to achieve this?'[159] As an example, one of the major alterations of history caused by the Change War was a victorious Nazi Germany during World War Two and the subsequent invasion of the United States. Despite the horror of much of humanity living under the oppressive and genocidal rule of the Nazis, in the context of the Change War this alteration to the timeline was incidental and of marginal importance, although it was believed to contribute, in a small way, to 'the ultimate victory of the Spiders and the West over the Snakes and Communism.'[160] The alteration to the timeline for the 'greater good' of the Change War alludes to the neo-colonial interventions of the United States for the greater good of the Cold War, an issue that would become more significant with the start of the Vietnam War.

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[157] Harrison, pp. 170-171.
[158] Leiber, pp. 165-166.
[159] Leiber, p. 28.
[160] Leiber, p. 18.

The Start of the Vietnam War

In the late-1950s and early-1960s United States intervention in Vietnam began and the first representations of what would become the Vietnam War are visible in military SF works of the period. However, engagement with Vietnam was not as enthusiastic as it would be in the 1970s. In the 1950s and early 1960s, American anxiety about the Cold War and nuclear holocaust far outweighed concern about events in Vietnam.[161] In addition, the Cold War ideology that pervaded society initially applauded America's early support of Vietnam. Even in the mid-1960s, the war was not an intense social issue, except among a small but vocal group of 'radical' dissidents.

The Vietnam War (also known as the American War in Vietnam, or the Second Indochina War) occurred in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia between November 1955 and April 1975. It has been called 'the longest and ultimately the most unpopular war in United States history.'[162] It was a tremendous military, political and diplomatic frustration to the United States because it was a different kind of war than what was expected. It was a guerrilla war with no fixed battle lines and a Vietcong enemy difficult to distinguish from the civilians the American soldiers were supposedly defending, all within a geographical and political environment that proved less responsive to American military power than hoped.[163]

The French War in Indochina, or the First Indochina War, began at the end of World War Two, when the Vietminh capitalised on the favourable circumstances to launch its revolution against the French colonial authorities. In March 1946, Vietnam was back in the hands of the French and the Vietminh began a guerrilla war against the French forces. The conflict continued until the surrender of the French to the Vietminh after the Battle of Dien Bien Phu and a cease-fire was arranged at the Geneva Conference of 1954, which temporarily partitioned Vietnam. The United

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[161] Christian G. Appy, *American Reckoning: The Vietnam War and Our National Identity* (New York: Viking, 2015), pp. 151-152.

[162] James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 597.

[163] David L. Anderson, *The Columbia Guide to the Vietnam War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 55. Gary R. Hess, *Vietnam and the United States: Origins and Legacy of War* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998), p. 93. Vietcong is the term for the National Liberation Front (NLF) commonly used by American officials, soldiers, and reporters, and most familiar to the public, which is why its use is retained in this thesis.

States had supported the French reconquest of Vietnam.[164] The Second Indochina War began around 1955 – when the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) Vietnam was established – and continued until the last American civil and military officials departed Saigon in April 1975. Violating the spirit and the letter of the Geneva Accords, in 1954 the Eisenhower Administration 'eased the French out of Vietnam, and used its resources unsparingly to construct in southern Vietnam a viable, non-Communist nation' that would stand as the 'cornerstone of the Free World in Southeast Asia.'[165] In early 1956, the United States assumed from France full responsibility for reorganising, equipping and training the South Vietnamese Army. That same year, with the support of the United States, the South Vietnamese government (the newly formed Republic of Vietnam) refused to participate in the national election called for by the Geneva peace treaty. North Vietnam (the Democratic Republic of Vietnam), recognising that the revolutionaries in the south were facing difficulties and that South Vietnamese leader Ngo Dinh Diem's oppressiveness had created a favourable climate for revolution, in 1959 authorised the resumption of armed struggle and took active measures to support it.[166] In December 1960, at Hanoi's direction, southern revolutionaries founded the National Liberation Front (NLF), a broad-based coalition organisation led by the Communists but designed to rally and hold together various non-Communist individuals and organisations disaffected with Diem. At about the same time, perceiving the strength of the insurgency and the inability of the South Vietnamese government and armed forces to deal with it, the United States shifted the emphasis of its military programs from conventional warfare to counterinsurgency.[167]

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[164] U.S. support reflected concern for French economic recovery in the face of the threat of communism in Western Europe, growing concern about Southeast Asia after the communist victory in China and the Korean War, frustration with the postwar global situation, and a U.S. desire to redress many of the 'postwar global dilemmas and frustrations of its military power, to confirm its symbolic credibility and the technical efficiency of its arms' through the neutralisation of the 'rising potential throughout the Third World for revolutionary nationalist regimes.' George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*, 3rd edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996), p. 12. Marilyn B. Young, *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1991), p. 27. Anderson, *The Columbia Guide to the Vietnam War*, pp. 26-27. Gabriel Kolko, *Anatomy of a War: Vietnam, the United States, and the Modern Historical Experience* (New York: The New Press, 1994), p. 7.

[165] National Security Council, "Review of U.S. Policy in the Far East," August 1954, *USVN*, Book 10, pp. 731-41, quoted in Herring, p. 49.

[166] Herring, pp. 62, 74.

[167] Herring, pp. 75, 76. Young, p. 70.

The year 1960 also saw the election of John F. Kennedy as President of the United States. The Kennedy administration remained essentially committed to the Cold War foreign policy inherited from the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, and was determined to prevent a communist victory in Vietnam. However, Kennedy was also against the deployment of American combat troops, believing that Diem and his forces must ultimately defeat the guerrillas on their own.[168] By late 1963, however, President Kennedy's advisors believed the situation in Vietnam was rapidly deteriorating and strongly urged him to take action. Already Kennedy had increased the number of American military advisors in Vietnam from around 900 to more than 16,000, to little effect.[169] In an attempt to turn the situation around, Kennedy signed on to a CIA-supported Vietnamese military coup against Diem (November 1963), who was overthrown and executed. South Vietnam entered a period of political instability, as one military government toppled after another in quick succession. It was President Lyndon B. Johnson who, between 1963 and 1965, transformed the U.S.'s limited commitment in Vietnam into involvement in a major war, as seen in Chapter Four.

Military SF and Early Vietnam

As mentioned, engagement with the Vietnam War, and issues around it, in military SF was not as enthusiastic as it would be in the 1970s. However, several works during the 1960s begin incorporating tropes and ideas representing such an engagement: such tropes included guerrilla-style opposition in a jungle battleground, locals as victims of international communism, misdirected U.S. pride in its superior technology, ill-prepared and unwilling allies, anti-Asian racism, a lack of understanding of, and questioning of, U.S. involvement, the sense that people back home are not behind the soldiers, and the frustrating effect of 'limited war' policies.[170]

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[168] Although Kennedy did send U.S. Army Special Forces to Vietnam in 1961.

[169] David Farber and Beth Bailey, *The Columbia Guide to America in the 1960s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p. 37.

[170] However, as argued by Philip K. Jason, while the popular view is that the Vietnam War was a 'unique enterprise', an examination of Korean War fiction 'goes a long way towards demythologizing the uniqueness of Vietnam by offering striking parallels and by placing the Vietnam experience in a larger context of Asian misadventure.' He found narratives from both periods shared a number of motifs. Philip K. Jason, *Acts and Shadows: The Vietnam War in American Literary Culture* (New York and Oxford: Roman & Littlefield, 2000), p. 121.

Ben Bova's *Star Watchman*, for instance, reflects his anti-colonial ambitions, serving as a representation of how 'how rebellion might lead, in the long run, to a growth of freedom and a better world.'[171] The planet Shinar can be read as a cosmic 'Vietnam': as Clanthas, native merchant and ex-revolutionary leader, explains, all the revolutionaries 'want is for Shinar to be left in peace', they do not want to be a 'cog in your Empire' or 'vassals of the Komani', yet the Terrans and the Komani 'are fighting over us, turning our own world into a battleground. No matter who wins, we will lose.'[172] Also reflecting the war in Vietnam, the main character, Vorgens, realizes the war on Shinar had become a war of attrition: 'The best we can say is that we've accomplished a stalemate. Our objective is peace. We have perpetual fighting. That's failure.' He believed that the war 'has lost its meaning. We are fighting each other now simply for the sake of fighting.'[173] Barry Malzberg's (writing as K.M. O'Donnell) 'Final War' (*The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, April 1968), written in February 1965 and rejected by *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Playboy* and *The Kenyon Review* before being accepted by *F&SF* in 1968, pre-figures the absurdity many Americans saw in Vietnam. The story follows a unit of American soldiers in an unspecified war: the war is pointless – 'On Thursdays, Saturdays, and Tuesdays, the company moved East to capture the forest; on Fridays, Sundays, and Wednesdays, they lost the battles to defend it' and requests for instructions from H.Q. result in advice to 'continue as previously.' Meanwhile, the soldiers are bombed by their own aircraft, a sergeant writes his memoirs of four wars and eight limited engagements, and a private slowly loses his sanity.[174] Earth's conquest of the Paumons in Gordon Dickson's *Naked to the Stars*, likewise, depicts a Vietnam-style conflict: the Expedition did not achieve a bloodless conquest of the planet because the Paumons learned 'not to fight head-on battles against the vastly superior equipment of the Expedition' and began operating in guerrilla groups. The Expedition suffered severe losses, though not as severe as the locals: 'At the end of

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[171] Bova, *Star Watchman,* p. 224. This is one of the few examples of military SF embracing the anti-colonial sentiments that Rob Latham examines in early-Cold War SF. Rob Latham, 'Prophesying Neocolonial Wars in 1950s American Science Fiction', in *Future Wars: The Anticipations and the Fears*, ed. by David Seed (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), pp. 130-143.
[172] Bova, *Star Watchman,* p. 148.
[173] Bova, *Star Watchman,* pp. 202, 219.
[174] Barry Malzberg (as K.M. O'Donnell), 'Final War', in *Final War and Other Fantasies* (New York: Ace Books, 1969), pp. 9-41 (pp. 9-10). Ironically, Malzberg did not consider the story concerned Vietnam at all. Alasdair Spark, 'Vietnam: the War in Science Fiction', in *Science Fiction, Social Conflict and War*, ed. by Philip John Davies (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 113-131 (p. 121

six months they had received three sets of replacements for the Combat Services; their casualties were over seventy-five thousand. Estimates of Paumons casualties put those at over two million dead and wounded.'[175] In Harry Harrison's *Bill, the Galactic Hero*, Bill is accidentally shipped to a prison labor camp on the planet Veneria, 'a fog-shrouded world' of 'eternal mists' and 'bottomless black lagoons', a world caught up in the Human-Chinger War. The local inhabitants – the Venians – fight on the side of the Chingers: 'it is *their* planet and they are but murder out there in the swamps. They hide under the mud and they swim under the water and they swing from the trees and the whole planet is thick with them.'[176] Operating as unconventional fighters, with no 'proper' organization, they have held the humans off for three years, restricting them to no more than one hundred square miles of territory. Poul Anderson's *The Star Fox*, on the other hand, does not comment on the Vietnam War, rather its focus is the peace movement. The book, being anti-pacifist, is also anti-Peace Movement. The main character is reproving of the media's reporting of the desire for peace, doubting if 'world opinion was being correctly reported.' [177] Anderson also makes a scathing comment on the anti-Vietnam War movement in his introduction of a pacifist group named World Militants for Peace: after a retired Admiral – an outspoken opponent to 'appeasement of Alerion' – is beaten by a group of men, the founder of World Militants for Peace releases a statement that he 'has only gotten a taste of the very violence he advocated' and that the WMP exists 'to fight for sanity, to give atavism its deathblow, by any means required. We make no threats. But let the militarists beware.' The Militants have members in the governments and make attempts to stop Heim's privateering against the Alerion.[178]

Conclusion

This chapter investigated early military SF between 1959 and 1965. It was constructed around the view that Robert Heinlein and Gordon Dickson are the grandfathers of military SF and their novels *Starship Troopers* and *Dorsai!*, both

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[175] Dickson, *Naked to the Stars*, p. 87.
[176] Harrison, pp. 160, 161-162.
[177] Anderson, *The Star Fox*, pp. 24-25.
[178] Anderson, *The Star Fox*, pp. 54, 130.

published in 1959, serve as prototypical military SF texts, defining the military SF subgenre and summing up the decades of development that came before. It primarily focused on the heavily militarist, social Darwinist, and anti-communist *Starship Troopers*, and two works that explicitly respond to Heinlein's text and its vision of society and the military – Dickson's *Naked to the Stars* (1961) and Harry Harrison's *Bill, the Galactic Hero* (1965). However, it also discussed *Dorsai!* and other works which followed on from those of Heinlein and Dickson, including texts by Poul Anderson, Ben Bova, Fritz Leiber, and Norman Spinrad.

Using Heinlein's novel as a starting point, and continuing the dialogue between militaristic military SF and antimilitaristic military SF, this chapter examined the debate around a number of themes, including: post-World War Two militarism and the military-industrial complex, the militarization of society (in particular issues around democracy and military rule), anti-communism, and the moral justifiability or necessity of war during the Cold War. This examination linked the texts to the historical-cultural context of the early Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, during the increasing dominance of what President Eisenhower called the 'military-industrial complex', and during the early years of the U.S.'s intervention in Vietnam.

The first section, discussing broad attitudes toward militarism, clearly showed how Heinlein epitomizes the militaristic stream with a novel that praises militarism, advocating growth of the military-industrial complex, celebrating military virtues, promoting war as inevitable, and depicting a military-ruled utopia. This chapter argued that this kind of rhetoric was dominant in the military SF subgenre during this period – although with notable authors, such as Harrison, contesting it – and that this reflected the consensus vision of U.S. popular culture. The examination of the other three key themes – veteranocracy and democracy, anti-communism, and the fight for survival – also reflected this dominant rhetoric, with some contestation. Heinlein presents militaristic and authoritarian government as the solution to problems espoused in right-wing rhetoric of the 1950s, including fears of 'national degeneracy' in the face of the Red Threat – represented by the Bugs, a clear stand-in for hostile and malignant communism – and presents war as justified, inevitable, and necessary in the face of such a threat. Other authors do, however, offer contrary cultural attitudes. For example, Dickson in *Naked to the Stars* and Spinrad in *The*

Solarians negatively depict militaristic polities, Leiber in *The Big Time* (1958) complicates the dichotomy between the United States and the Soviet Union, and Dickson and Harrison critique and denounce views of inevitable and necessary conflict.

The period this chapter explored sees the beginning of the American intervention in Vietnam, and showed how the first representations of this intervention are visible in military SF. However, the most significant engagement between science fiction and Vietnam did not come until the late-1960s and the 1970s, as seen in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

Breakthrough Phase: Soldier Alienation in Vietnam Era Military SF, 1966-1980

H. Bruce Franklin writes about how the Vietnam War 'has created and continues to create an astonishing body of imaginative literature, much of it written by veterans of the war, full of invaluable, often painful, insights into the kinds of fantasies that have obscured or deformed our understanding of America's effects on Vietnam and Vietnam's effects on America.'[1] The self-conscious, mature phase of the military SF subgenre began in the early- to mid-1970s, at the peak of the Vietnam War's significance to SF and American culture.[2] This chapter argues that one of the major themes of Vietnam-era military SF, especially in the the popular antimilitaristic works of this period, is the alienation suffered by the soldier during and after their service in the military. This chapter covers the period between 1966, when the American war effort was at its peak and the divisions over it were evident, and 1980, the year Ronald Reagan was elected the 40th President of the United States, and looks at the theme of soldier estrangement through an analysis of a number of works. The focus is on two antimilitaristic military SF novels, Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War* (1974) and Stephen Goldin's *The Eternity Brigade* (1980), but other novels and short stories – both of the antimilitaristic and militaristic streams of military SF – will be considered.[3] The estrangement of the soldier takes several forms: the alienation felt as alien invaders of a foreign land, alienation from the enemy, alienation from the civilian world, and alienation from humanity itself.

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[1] Franklin's core thesis in this work is that America's war in Indochina 'cannot be separated from American science fiction, which shaped and was reshaped by the nation's encounter with Vietnam' and that 'the war cannot be fully comprehended unless it is seen in part as a form of American science fiction and fantasy.' H. Bruce Franklin, *Vietnam and Other American Fantasies* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), pp. 3, 151.

[2] Tim Blackmore believes Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War* (1974) was the 'herald' of a mass of SF concerned with military issues. Tim Blackmore, 'Warbody: Joe Haldeman's Killer SF' (unpublished PhD thesis: York University, 1994), p. 419, f. 1.

[3] The late-1960s and 1970s, as well as seeing the antimilitaristic works of Haldeman and Goldin and the like, is the main period of, in the words of Darko Suvin, 'very numerous aggressive, war-mongering and/or militaristic concoctions by Niven, Pournelle, Saberhagen, and… David Drake.' Darko Suvin, 'Of Starship Troopers and Refuseniks: War and Militarism in U.S. Science Fiction, Part 2', *Extrapolation*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (2006), pp. 9-34 (p. 15).

The Continuing Vietnam War

Between 1963 and 1965, U.S. President Johnson 'transformed a limited commitment to assist the South Vietnamese government into an open-ended commitment to preserve an independent, non-Communist South Vietnam' and by July 1965 the U.S. was engaged in a major war on the Asian mainland.[4] From 1965, when the conflict in Vietnam was Americanised, until 1973, when direct U.S. military involvement ended, Vietnam policy was the central political issue in the U.S. and, to the American leaders and public, the war 'became a virtual obsession.'[5] The turning point for this escalation was the August 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Incident – two alleged engagements between the U.S.S. *Maddox* and North Vietnamese torpedo boats – and the resulting retaliatory air strikes and passage of the Gulf Of Tonkin Resolution by Congress on 7 August 1964. The Congressional resolution authorised Johnson to take 'all necessary measures to repel any armed attacks against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression' and served as a de facto declaration of war.[6]

In early 1965 the United States began bombing North Vietnam based on the reasoning that Hanoi had the power to stop the war and would do so if the U.S. made it too costly for them to continue, and within a few days 'the administration had moved from reprisals to a continuing, graduated program of air attacks against North Vietnam.'[7] With the beginning of the air war, the North made the decision to send regular combat troops to the South. The expanded air war also provided the pretext for the introduction of the first U.S ground forces into Vietnam. On 8 March 1965 two battalions of U.S. Marines were dispatched to South Vietnam to protect the Air Force base at Da Nang, and by December 1965 this initial deployment had increased to nearly 200,000 personnel in-country.[8] By mid-1965, the tactical debate over whether to bomb the North, intensify the war in the South using U.S. troops, or concentrate on pacification of the countryside had been resolved – the Johnson

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[4] George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*, 3rd edition (New York: McGraw-Hill., 1996), p. 121.

[5] Gary R. Hess, *Vietnam and the United States: Origins and Legacy of War* (New York: Twayne, 1998), p. 157.

[6] Herring, pp. 135-136.

[7] Marilyn B. Young, *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1991), p. 122. Herring, pp. 142-143.

[8] Herring, p. 145.

administration 'decided to pursue all three, since no single tactic held the promise of victory.'[9] However, within two years, the optimism of 1965 had given way to 'deep and painful frustration': by 1967, the United States had nearly half a million combat troops in Vietnam, struggling to win a war of attrition based on 'search and destroy' missions, and was spending more than two billion dollars per month on the war.[10] The war was fought not in North Vietnam but in the South, against the Vietcong and North Vietnamese soldiers who had gained control of large areas of the South Vietnamese countryside.

The turning point in America's involvement in Vietnam was the Tet Offensive, beginning on 31 January 1968: a massive, coordinated NLF assault against the major urban areas of South Vietnam.[11] Tet – 'the most important and most complicated event of the Vietnam War' – was aimed at weakening the Saigon regime, exacerbating differences between South Vietnam and the United States, and, most importantly, influencing a change in policy in the U.S.[12] While there were hopes, but not expectations of a 'decisive' victory, 'the more modest hope, that a successful offensive would halt and perhaps even reverse the steady escalation of the American war machine, was fulfilled', and it had a profound impact on domestic support for the conflict.[13]

After the severe Vietcong losses during the Tet Offensive and the decreasing public support for the conflict, President Richard Nixon began troop withdrawals from Vietnam. The plan – articulated in July 1969 as the 'Nixon Doctrine' – was to limit the role of U.S ground troops and build up the South Vietnamese Army, so that they could take over the defence of South Vietnam.[14] The new policy was also known as 'Vietnamization.' At the same time, the war reached its 'peak of intensity and

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[9] Young, p. 149. As well as its own direct intervention, the United States encouraged its SEATO allies to contribute troops: Australia, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines agreed to send troops, while major allies, notably NATO nations Canada and the United Kingdom, declined the troop requests.

[10] Herring, p. 160.

[11] Including thirty-six of forty-four provincial capitals, five of the six major cities, sixty-four district capitals, and fifty hamlets, as well as numerous airfields, munition dumps, and other military and economic facilities, the U.S. Embassy, the presidential palace and the headquarters of South Vietnam's general staff. Herring, p. 206. James William Gibson, *The Perfect War: Technowar in Vietnam* (Boston and New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986), p. 164.

[12] Gabriel Kolko, *Anatomy of a War: Vietnam, the United States, and the Modern Historical Experience* (New York: The New Press, 1994), pp. 303-304.

[13] Young, pp. 216-217.

[14] Although American airpower would still play a crucial role in the continuing conflict. Young, p. 240.

horror' with the post-Tet 'pacification campaigns' – such as Operation Speedy Express in the Mekong Delta which resulted in over 10,000 Vietnamese dead, perhaps over half of whom were civilians – and the atrocities of the 'secret war' – involving B-52 bombings and Special Forces raids against North Vietnamese base camps in Cambodia.[15] In addition, in February 1971 the South Vietnamese Army launched Operation Lam Son 719, aimed at cutting the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos; the operation was a fiasco, with half the South Vietnamese troops captured or killed, and represented a clear failure of Vietnamization.

After a final massive Christmas bombing campaign, which destroyed much of the remaining economic and industrial capacity of North Vietnam, the warring parties returned to the negotiating table.[16] In January 1973 the Paris Peace Accords were signed. This treaty officially ended direct U.S. involvement in Vietnam but did not bring peace to Vietnam: the U.S. turned over its bases, munitions, and equipment to its allies, and billions of dollars in small arms, tanks, trucks, artillery, and other war items were shipped to the South Vietnamese Army. Meanwhile, North Vietnamese troops remained in the south, the Vietcong's Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) was accorded a position of status, and the major question over which the war had been fought – the political future of South Vietnam – was left to be resolved later.[17] The Paris Peace Accords merely 'established a framework for continuing the war without direct American participation', with North Vietnam still seeking unification of the country on its terms and South Vietnam struggling to survive as an independent nation.[18] The Vietcong resumed offensive operations in late 1973 and in May 1974 negotiations between North Vietnam-PRG and the Republic of Vietnam broke down. When North Vietnam mounted a final major offensive in the spring of 1975, South Vietnam collapsed with stunning rapidity. The last U.S. diplomatic, military and civilian personnel were evacuated from Saigon on 29 April 1975, and the following day the Vietnamese People's Army entered Saigon and quickly overcame all resistance, captured key buildings and installations, and accepted the surrender of the President of South Vietnam. In July

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[15] Noam Chomsky, 'Visions of Righteousness', in *The Vietnam War and American Culture*, ed. by John Carlos Rowe and Rick Berg (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 21-51 (p. 35).
[16] Herring, pp. 180-181.
[17] Gibson, p. 421. Herring, p. 282.
[18] Herring, p. 285.

1976, North and South Vietnam were consolidated to form the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and the 30-year conflict came to an end.[19]

The Vietnam War and Military SF

Galaxy Anti- and Pro-War Advertisements

Even while the New Left emerged – out of civil rights, peace, and anti-imperialism activism – in the 1960s, the post-war consensus around patriotism, anti-communism, and conservatism held. Although much serious war fiction and poetry by the mid-1960s had already begun to denigrate traditional patriotic ideals, these ideas were still very much alive in the popular culture of the Cold War. As within the larger literary culture, SF reflected this divide. One of the most revealing – and famous – events in the history of science fiction was the publication of two advertisements regarding U.S. involvement in Vietnam in the June 1968 issue of *Galaxy Science Fiction* magazine.[20] Vietnam had considerable influence on American science fiction in the 1960s and 1970s, and the 'most complete demarcation of opinion' came with these twin advertisements.[21] One of the advertisements – 'We the undersigned believe the United States must remain in Vietnam to fulfil its responsibilities to the people of that country' – was signed by seventy-two pro-war SF writers, and the other – 'We oppose the participation of the United States in the war in Vietnam' – by eighty-two anti-war SF writers. Both lists included some of the best and most popular SF authors of the time. The contrasting composition of the two statements is interesting, with the 'hawks' almost exclusively made up of traditionalist and 'hard SF' writers, and the 'doves' including most of the liberal wing of SF and almost all those who described themselves as members of the

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[19] While Vietnam has often been called a "limited war", this term is misleading: at its peak in 1969, over 550,000 American soldiers were stationed in Vietnam. A total of 11.7 million Americans served in the armed forces during the nearly ten years of heavy American involvement in the war, 2.1 million of whom went to Vietnam, 1.6 million of whom saw combat, and 58,000 of whom were fatalities. James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 598.

[20] *Galaxy*, June 1968, pp. 4-5. Also published in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* (March 1968), but the conflict was made more explicit in *Galaxy* with its placement of the two advertisements on facing pages.

[21] Alasdair Spark, 'The Art of Future War: *Starship Troopers*, *The Forever War* and Vietnam', in *Fictional Space: Essays on Contemporary Science Fiction*, ed. by Tom Shippey (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1991), pp. 133-165 (p. 153).

American 'New Wave.'[22] Unsurprisingly, in terms of authors relevant to this thesis – those who have written works of military SF – the majority signed the advertisement supporting U.S. government policy: they included Robert A. Heinlein, Poul Anderson, Edmond Hamilton, Jack Williamson, Fred Saberhagen, Reginald Bretnor, Joe Poyer, Larry Niven, and Jerry Pournelle. However, among those opposing U.S. involvement were Harry Harrison, Mack Reynolds, Fritz Leiber, Theodore Cogswell, Norman Spinrad, and Kate Wilhelm. This debate over militarism within the SF field achieved, according to Michael M. Levy, the 'ultimate irony' at the 1976 World Science Fiction Convention in Kansas City, where Haldeman's *The Forever War* received the Hugo Award for Best Novel in the same weekend that the convention's guest of honour, Heinlein, was 'booed for, in essence, arguing that nuclear war was inevitable and might in fact improve the species.'[23]

Haldeman's *The Forever War* and Goldin's *The Eternity Brigade*

The two most significant works examined in this chapter are Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War* and Stephen Goldin's *The Eternity Brigade*, both of which use powerful metaphors for soldier alienation. Haldeman's Hugo-, Nebula- and Locus-Award-winning winning *The Forever War* is a fix-up that follows the soldier-hero William Mandella of the United Nations Exploratory Force (UNEF) during a mistaken war with the alien Taurans, a war which lasts over a millennium but during which, due to the time-dilation effect of faster-than-light travel, Mandella ages only a decade or so.[24] It remains the most popular example of antimilitaristic, or broadly

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[22] As H. Bruce Franklin writes, the pro-war list 'reads like a roll call of champions of superscience and supermen, of manly and military virtue', while the anti-war list 'includes almost the entire vanguard of an emerging kind of science fiction, opposed to technocracy, militarism, and imperialism', the so-called New Wave. What came to be known as the New Wave, adapting French cinema's *nouvelle vague*, was a reaction against genre exhaustion and a generational shift away from classic writers who began to write before World War Two (Asimov, Bester, Bradbury, Clarke, Heinlein, Sturgeon), and had its origins in works by British socialists and Marxists. Never quite formalized and often repudiated by its major exemplars, the New Wave aimed to be closer to the 'literary mainstream', embracing experimentation and a greater focus on psychology and the soft sciences, and rejecting linear exposition and happy endings, scientific rigor, and the U.S.'s cultural hegemony over the SF field. Franklin, p. 152.

[23] Michael M. Levy, 'The New Wave and After, 1964-1983', in *Anatomy of Wonder*, ed. by Neil Barron, 5th edition (Westport, CT, and London: Libraries Unlimited, 2004), pp. 59-72 (p. 61).

[24] The short stories that would become *The Forever War* began with 'Hero' (*Analog*, June 1972). Mike Ashley thinks that 'Hero' is arguably 'one of the most important stories published during [Ben] Bova's editorship' of *Analog* and 'of great significance in Bova's first year as it allowed him

'liberal', military SF, and is often placed in direct contrast to works like Robert Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* (1959).[25] The novel is a military *bildungsroman* in which Haldeman transposes his Vietnam experience – he was drafted, serving as a combat engineer – onto a science-fictional, interstellar setting, and 'fantasizes and extrapolates America's longest war into a 1,143-year intergalactic combat instigated by generals and politicians, waged for profit, and conducted as a devastating fiasco from beginning to end.'[26] The novel is, according to Brenda Boyle, a 'science fiction rendition of the Vietnam War', the most significant SF work to touch on Vietnam, and, as H. Bruce Franklin remarks, 'perhaps the biggest bestseller of all novels about the Vietnam War', certainly in terms of SF, with sales of well over a million copies.[27]

While being aware that, as Darren Harris-Fain writes, 'it would oversimplify Haldeman's accomplishment in the novel to reduce it to a metaphor for American involvement in Vietnam', Haldeman himself has called it 'an extended metaphor on Vietnam', and, elsewhere, said that the novel operates on a 'metaphysical level as a discussion of Vietnam, war and its effect on American society, with special reference to the situation of returned veterans.'[28] Haldeman uses the science-fiction

to stamp his individuality on the magazine'; the decision displayed his independence from the editorship of John W. Campbell, who supported the war in Vietnam and had rejected the story when Haldeman had first submitted it to *Analog*. Bova supported three writers who proved to be central to the military SF subgenre: Joe Haldeman, Jerry Pournelle, and Orson Scott Card. Mike Ashley, *Gateways to Forever: The Story of the Science-Fiction Magazines from 1970 to 1980* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), pp. 18-20.

[25] Most discussions of *The Forever War* contrast it with Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* – with which it shares a number of tropes, including hive-minded aliens, powered armour, a period of basic training, the soldier-hero's first combat mission – seeing it as a response to the enthusiastic militarism of the earlier novel. See, Spark, 'The Art of Future War', pp. 133-165, which examines the intertextual and contextual relations between the two novels, and the striking similarities and differences between them. In fact, Haldeman was not consciously responding to Heinlein: in an interview Haldeman says that he had already written seventy pages before someone pointed out that he had 'stolen the plot, all of the characters, all of the hardware from *Starship Troopers*' and that before then the similarities had not occurred to him. Rather than *The Forever War* being a response to *Starship Troopers*, Haldeman thought the differences were the result of the authors' expression of 'a reasonable way to fight a certain kind of war with a certain kind of population backing it', with his own 'type of population' being closer 'to what I see as a 1970's reality, and his closer to what he sees as a 1940's reality.' Darrell Schweitzer, 'An Interview with Joe Haldeman', *Science Fiction Review*, February 1977, pp. 26-30 (p. 26)., quoted in Joan Gordon, *Joe Haldeman* (Marcer Island, WA: Starmont House, 1980), p. 33.

[26] Franklin, p. 165.

[27] Brenda M. Boyle, *Masculinity in Vietnam War Narratives: A Critical Study of Fiction, Films and Nonfiction Writings* (Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland & Company, 2009), p. 78. Franklin, p. 164.

[28] Darren Harris-Fain, *Understanding Contemporary American Science Fiction: The Age of Maturity, 1970-2000* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), p. 56. Joe Haldeman, 'Vietnam and Other Alien Worlds', in *Fights of Fancy: Armed Conflict in Science*

trope of time dilation resulting from interstellar travel as a powerful presentation of the alienating effects of warfare in terms of both the cultural and psychological alienation of soldiers. Interstellar travel is accomplished via collapsar jumps, in which a starship can travel between stellar-mass black holes. However, while the actual jump takes zero time, travelling to and from the collapsars at near-lightspeed induces severe relativistic effects and results in time dilation, meaning journeys that subjectively seem like months to the soldiers take decades or even centuries to those in the (objective) outside universe.[29] In the time the soldiers have fought a single battle there is the chance everyone they know on Earth has grown old and died, and the society they know has changed beyond recognition. Thus, the peculiar physical laws of the universe turn the ongoing war into a perfect metaphor for the novel's central statement about soldier estrangement, which was germinated out of the alienation Haldeman experienced upon his homecoming from Vietnam.[30]

Inspired in part by *The Forever War*, Goldin's *The Eternity Brigade* similarly follows a soldier-hero, Jerry Hawker, who – through advances in technology – inescapably spends thousands of years fighting in uncountable wars, his personality placed in computer storage and his body reconstructed for each war and after each death. Goldin, who worked for the U.S Navy as a civilian space scientist before becoming a full-time writer, originally published the idea as a short story, 'But As a Soldier, For His Country' (*Universe 5*, November 1974), but finding it shallow and nihilistic, and reading *The Forever War*, went back to the story and added additional layers to the character and narrative. The heavy influence that Haldeman had on Goldin shows the resonance that *The Forever War* achieved in the 1970s. Goldin also uses a science-fictional trope as a metaphor for soldier alienation. Hawker, a veteran U.S. Army soldier in the late-twentieth century, volunteers for an Army project involving the cryogenic freezing of soldiers. As the recruiter

Fiction and Fantasy, ed. by George Slusser and Eric S. Rabkin (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1992), pp. 92-102 (p. 102.). Haldeman, letter 13 June 1978, quoted in Joan Gordon, *Joe Haldeman*, (Mercer Island, Washington: Starmont House, 1980), p. 32. In common with many writer-veterans, Haldeman's expression of Vietnam came first in a largely autobiographical novel, *War Year* (1970), but he soon turned to SF because he felt it offered the means to make a statement which mainstream war novels could not. Joe Haldeman (ed.), *Body Armor 2000* (New York: Ace Books, 1986), p. 4., quoted in Alasdair Spark, 'Vietnam: the War in Science Fiction', in *Science Fiction, Social Conflict and War*, ed. by Philip John Davies (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 113-131 (p. 125).

[29] Joe Haldeman, *The Forever War* (New York: Eos/HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), p. 8.

[30] Steven Eisler, *Space Wars: Worlds and Weapons* (London: Octopus Books Limited, 1979), pp. 44-45.

explained 'the United States was badly prepared for the African Wars', the peacetime gap between Vietnam and Africa meaning experienced jungle fighters were not available: 'when the multiple crises hit us in Africa and it was time to fight, our troops… had to relearn the entire art of fighting in a hostile environment against guerrilla forces – and the lessons were costly ones.' The solution to the problem of how to keep enough trained soldiers on hand during peacetime, without letting their skills deteriorate – and without having to feed, shelter and clothe them during years of peace – is 'freezing our best soldiers at the end of one war and reviving them to fight in the next.'[31] After the first – ostensibly one-off – eleven-year period of suspended animation, and their involvement in a Chinese civil war, the soldiers are given the option to continue with the sleeper program. Several wars later the cryogenic program is replaced with one in which the soldiers' 'life patterns' are recorded and stored inside a computer until they are needed, at which time they are resurrected. [32] Another soldier, Green, soon realises the implications of this technology:

> Now that they've got us recorded, they can resurrect us any time they like. If we die in battle, they can still bring us back for the next war – or even later in the same battle – and we'll never know anything is wrong. Even if we quit the program or desert, they can just create another one of us to take the place of the one who left – and that new one will never know that the old one left. They've got us by the balls, now, and they've got us forever. We're slaves… We may be immortal, in a funny sort of way, but we're still slaves.[33]

Much like Haldeman's Forever Warriors these soldiers – who fight innumerable wars upon hundreds of worlds over untold thousands of years – can never return to the home they remember. Exaggerating from the plight of consensus reality Vietnam veterans, who struggled to settle back into civilian life, veterans of the sleeper program are made irredeemably into something else, unable to return to civilian life even if they wanted to.

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[31] Stephen Goldin, *The Eternity Brigade* (New York: Fawcett Gold Medal Books, 1980), pp. 25-26, p. 28.
[32] Goldin, pp. 120-121.
[33] Goldin, p. 139.

Alienation from the Enemy

The first type of alienation examined in this chapter is the soldier's alienation from the enemy. As seen in Chapter Two, the 'Other' as an enemy has always been a perhaps indispensable part of military SF, as has the 'alien' serving a metaphorical purpose in narratives. Likewise, such Othering can be important in consensus reality warfare, such as during the Vietnam War: something heightened in Vietnam due to the nature of that conflict, with American impersonal technowar, cultural remoteness from the Vietnamese, a lack of interest in seizing land or defending the civilian population, and with a fundamental goal to maximize enemy body count.[34] However, unlike the works discussed in previous chapters, this depiction of the hostile and evil Other no longer goes unexamined. The Othering of the enemy 'dehumanises' them in the thought-processes of the soldier: this dehumanising of the enemy is discerned in works by Joe Haldeman, Kate Wilhelm, Jerry Pournelle, David Drake, Stephen Goldin, and Harry Harrison.

According to H. Bruce Franklin, Haldeman's *The Forever War* extrapolated 'both kinds of extreme alienation experienced by U.S. veterans – first as alien invaders of a foreign land, then as aliens returning to what no longer seems their own society – into the experience of becoming both extraterrestrial invaders of alien planets and exiles in time and space from planet Earth.'[35] The former kind of alienation is apparent during the soldiers' first combat mission, when they encounter telepathic teddy bear-like natives and the mysterious Taurans. The most obvious figuration of the alienation between U.S. soldiers and the Vietnamese is *The Forever War*'s literal translation of the two sides into different species. This is an explicit exaggeration of the 'sophisticated and subtle denial of the actuality of the Vietnamese people' that Franklin sees at work in the labelling of them as 'unknowable', 'incomprehensible' or 'alien', in comparison to a white Anglo-American 'we.'[36] The nature of the Taurans – a species of clones with a collective consciousness and no individuality – also parallels contemporary notions of many Americans' assumptions about the Vietnamese: 'unknown and foreign' Others who 'act en masse because they have an unlimited source of bodies and care little for the

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[34] Michael S. Sherry, *In the Shadow of War: The United States Since the 1930s* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 268.
[35] Franklin, p. 165.
[36] Franklin, p. 32.

value of life.'[37] In addition, the enigmatic nature of the Taurans reflects the war in which the Vietnamese enemy – as well as the Vietnamese ally – was so little understood during the American presence there. The enemy was often a caricature in the American mind, something the novel makes clear when Mandella mentions that, to the people of Earth, 'the enemy was a curious organism only vaguely understood, more often the subject of cartoons than nightmares.'[38] This alienation from the alien enemy is exaggerated further in the novel with the 'hate conditioning' the human soldiers are imprinted with during their first campaign: before any human knows what a Tauran physically looks like, the soldiers have 'ridiculously overdone and logically absurd' images of bestial 'shaggy hulks' – which eat babies, rape women, and consume their enemies – implanted into their minds.[39] The enemy is 'Othered', dehumanised, a process that makes the enemy less than human and, thus, kill-able.

At the same time, Haldeman also complicates this dichotomy between human and alien: in the novel the

> boot camp transformation of civilians into master killers, the officers molded by military academies into battlefield Clausewitzs, the Herculean feats of production and logistics, and unrestrained technowar all lead nowhere but to a convergence of Terran society with the civilization Earth has defined as the enemy.[40]

The end of the war comes when humanity and the Taurans are so much alike that they can finally communicate with each other. Mandella returns to Stargate in the year 3138 A.D. – a little over two hundred years after the end of war – to discover the ultimate tragedy of the conflict: as the representative for Man – a posthuman collective consciousness spread across billions of clone-bodies – tells the last group of soldiers to return, 'I am sorry for what you've been through and wish I could say that it was for good cause, but as you will read, it was not.'[41] Like the U.S. soldiers returning from Vietnam, the Forever Warriors discover that their war is now perceived as shameful and the result of human stupidity; in the years after the

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[37] Boyle, pp. 78-79.
[38] Haldeman, *The Forever War*, p. 144.
[39] Haldeman, *The Forever War*, pp. 72-73.
[40] Franklin, p. 165.
[41] Haldeman, *The Forever War*, p. 271.

Vietnam War, likewise, the overwhelming majority of Americans polled in various surveys labelled the conflict a mistake, regardless of whether they viewed the war as just or unjust.[42] The clones that now make up the majority of the human race reveal that the 1143-year-long war was 'begun on false pretenses and only continued because the two races were unable to communicate' and that, once the two sides could finally talk to each other, 'the first question was "Why did you start this thing?" and the answer was "Me?"' This failure to communicate was only remedied when Man evolved; the Taurans had been natural clones for millions of years and had lost the ability to conceive of the individual let alone communicate with individuals.[43] It took humanity becoming more like the Taurans for the two sides to get through to each other.

Responding to earlier works of military SF – such as Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* – and influenced by the expanding Vietnam War, is Kate Wilhelm's *The Killing Thing* (1967) which subverts the tropes of the Heinleinian hero and Campbellian human superiority in its indictment of war and militarism. Captain Ellender 'Trace' Tracy serves in the Fleet of the World Group Government, a ruthless and brutal fighting force, subjugating the weak and savage humanoids encountered during humanity's expansion into space. The Fleetmen are taught that the aliens they encounter are 'animals, humanoids sometimes, but not like us… not people at all.'[44] In the course of human expansion the planets conquered each have 'something that makes it necessary for us to have it', whether it is minerals, drugs, or strategic location, and you 'can't hate a land, a planet, and that's all we want.' Aliens are dehumanised completely by the World Group, which sees the people on those planets as 'incidental to our purposes':

> We try to get them to co-operate with us. When we achieve this co-operation, there is no trouble. Some of them refuse to co-operate. They are like animals that have to be taught, and sometimes the lessons are hard, for us as well as for them. But we don't hate the animals that we

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[42] David L. Anderson, *The Columbia Guide to the Vietnam War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 4.
[43] Haldeman, *The Forever War*, pp. 173-274.
[44] Kate Wilhelm, *The Killing Thing* (London: Panther Books Limited, 1969), p. 50.

train; we are good to them once the training period is over. You only
hate your equals! Never inferiors.[45]

Trace's perspective on this treatment of the Other – which is reminiscent of the
remnants of American settler colonial fantasies about civilisation and savagery in
popular culture – is changed when he falls in love with a native of Mellic, after that
world in invaded. Furthermore, the Earthman's outlook is changed when the people
of Mellic request aid from the previously unknown 'Outsiders' – with their 'great
golden ships' and their perfect, beautiful, deathless bodies.[46] The Outsiders are
something that humanity can hate: they are technologically and biologically
superior, and give an ultimatum to the World Group: 'return to your homelands and
venture forth no more until you are welcomed to the other worlds, until you have
put aside your armaments, until you have replaced your generals with men of
peace.'[47] Humanity is positioned as the primitive Other.

Other military SF works take a different approach to the alienation between soldiers
and the enemy. For instance, Jerry Pournelle's *Falkenberg's Legion* explicitly links
views about the enemy – in particular the issue of distinguishing between the
'enemy' and occupied civilians – to the Vietnam War, particularly in the Arrarat
section, based on the short story 'West of Honor' (1976). Falkenberg's 501st Marine
Battalion is employed by Governor Swale to combat the Protective Association, a
collective of gangs terrorising hinterland farmers, and ordered to undertake a
'punitive expedition' against the Association. Falkenberg points out, however, that
the Association is an 'occupying power' which does not care if the Marines burn
the locals' farms and towns, and whose individual members are difficult to
distinguish from those who work the farms.[48] Wan Loo, a farmer in the area under
Protective Association control, explains that he will not throw away the uneasy
peace in the valley, even if it is 'the peace of submission', to help the Marines. The
farmers would rather have the Marines than the Association, but Marine
intervention would only be temporary whereas 'the Association is here forever.' He
explicitly links the situation to that during the Vietnam War. Loo's ancestors 'were
faced with the same problem on Earth' and they chose to support the West, and

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[45] Wilhelm, p. 84.
[46] Wilhelm, p. 84.
[47] Wilhelm, pp. 70, 125.
[48] Jerry Pournelle, *Falkenberg's Legion* (New York: Baen Books, 1990), p. 139.

'when the Americans, who had little stake in the war, withdrew their forces', his great-grandfather had no choice but to give 'up land his family had held for a thousand years to go with them': 'Do you think he would have chosen the American side if he had known that would happen?'[49] These people – symbolic of the Vietnamese – have their own homes and lives to consider, something often forgotten in narratives about American wars, which prioritise the soldier experience and often ignore that of the locals.

Harry Harrison, likewise, engages directly with the Vietnam experience. In Commando Raid' (1970) the central conceit is based around the effort not to alienate the "enemy." The M-16-toting American 'shock squad' soldiers raiding a village turn out to be members of the Aid Corp, invited into the country by the President and Parliament, their 'flitguns' filled with insecticide.[50] When a private clubs a village elder with his rifle, his Captain has him arrested and tells him:

> This is spaceship Earth and we're all aboard it together, trying to stay alive on it. The richest countries better help the poorest ones because it's all the same spaceship. And it's already almost too late. In Vietnam we spent five million dollars a head to kill the citizens of that country, and our profit was the undying hatred of everyone there, both north and south, and the loathing of the civilized world. We've made our mistakes, now let's profit from them… For far less than one thousandth of the cost of killing a man, and making his friends our enemies, we can save a life and make the man our friend. Two hundred bucks a head, that's what this operation costs… We are going to bring them about five percent of the "benefits" you enjoy in the sovereign state of Alabama and we are doing it from selfish motives. We want to stay alive. But at least we are doing it.[51]

This narrative continues Harrison's stern antimilitarism, already seen in his novel *Bill, the Galactic Hero*, and reiterates his hatred of war. Harrison left the U.S. in

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[49] Pournelle, p. 156.

[50] Harry Harrison, 'Commando Corp', in *Study War No More*, ed. by Joe Haldeman (London: Futura, 1979), pp. 113-123 (pp. 117, 121). Originally published in Harry Harrison, *Prime Number* (New York: Berkeley, 1970).

[51] Harrison, 'Commando Corp', pp. 113-123 (pp. 122-123).

1974 partly because of 'dissatisfaction with life in a country that could commit the crimes of Vietnam and not be ashamed.'[52]

David Drake offers the ultimate tragedy of dehumanising the 'enemy' – or, rather, the Other in general – through the depiction of an – accidental – reprise of the genocidal conflicts common in pulp-era space opera. In 'Cultural Conflict' (1979), one member of a combat car platoon on Squire's World, frustrated with lack of action and preparing to pull out of their firebase after a peace treaty is signed, shoots and kills one of the reptile-like natives. These natives are seen as animals by the humans, but prove to be sentients who call themselves the Folk. The Folk interpret the attack as an act of war and a battle begins between them and the retreating platoon. The tragedy culminates with the unintended destruction of the Folk's Nest by the human soldiers, which kills all the Mothers of the Folk. The story ends with the landing boat arriving to pick up the soldiers and 'the thirty thousand living males of the Folk [surging] from the Trees.'[53] While the ending is ambiguous regarding the fate of the soldiers it does make clear that humanity's misunderstanding of the natives has resulted in genocide (xenocide). The story 'shows the stupidity of humans… when they manage to wipe out the dominant intelligence on a planet without realizing it.'[54]

Interestingly Stephen Goldin, whose work is so heavily influenced by Haldeman, nearly reverses Haldeman's ideas. In *The Eternity Brigade* Hawker and his comrades are closer to enemy soldiers than they are to civilians. This is most obvious upon Hawker's last resurrection. The soldier-over-civilian bond is first evident when the resurrection does not include the usual language training: Hawker is confronted by a tall barrel-chested alien but instinctively knows it is a sergeant – 'Titles could change, beings could change, but sergeants went on forever' – showing that military culture was more significant for a soldier than any prior group constructions (national or racial). The second example of this attitude is when he encounters an alien woman – a short humanoid covered with a yellow-green downy fur – and, while he cannot recall her species' name, remembers that they had been

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[52] Harry Harrison, 'The Beginning of the Affair', in *Hell's Cartographers*, ed. by Brian W. Aldiss and Harry Harrison (Birkenhead: SF Horizons, 1975), pp. 76-95 (p. 94).
[53] David Drake, 'Cultural Conflict', *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume One* (New York: Baen Books, 2009), pp. 111-128 (p. 128).
[54] Ashley, p. 380.

enemies 'at one time in the distant past, but had long since become allies.' With combat careers lasting thousands of years, it was not unusual for sleepers to find themselves fighting alongside previous enemies in later wars.[55] Clearly then, more significant than alienation from the enemy was the soldier's alienation from the home front and civilian life.

Alienation from Society

The second type of alienation examined in the reading of these military SF narratives is the soldier's alienation from civilian society upon their return home. Post-Vietnam soldiers naturally experienced profound alienation as they exchanged the role of soldier for that of pariah, what they now imagined themselves to be; many veterans felt branded as losers or killers, and as if the entire nation held them responsible for the war's failures.[56] The alienation was also the result of the changes in society and culture of 'the World' (to borrow a soldier's term from the Vietnam War) which the soldier missed while at war. Once again Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War* is the most extensive rumination on this theme, with both Stephen Goldin's *The Eternity Brigade* and Orson Scott Card's 'Ender's Game' also contributing to the conversation.

Joe Haldeman was a veteran of the Vietnam War; he was drafted after graduation from college (with a physics degree) in 1967 and – after several failed efforts to avoid service – served as a combat engineer with the Fourth Division in the Central Highlands of Vietnam.[57] He arrived in-country on 29 February 1968, a couple of weeks after the Tet Offensive, and survived with only superficial injuries until September 1968. At this point he was badly wounded in the explosion of a (booby-trapped) North Vietnamese ammunition dump. He spent months in hospital before being honourably discharged and sent back to the United States, and thus missed the vast majority of, according to historian James Patterson, the 'turbulent' and

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[55] Goldin, pp. 10, 12.

[56] Christian G. Appy, *American Reckoning: The Vietnam War and Our National Identity* (New York, NY: Viking, 2015), p. 237. Ellen Frey-Wouter and Robert S. Laufer, *Legacy of a War: The American Soldier in Vietnam* (Arwonk, NY, and London: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1986), pp. 41-47.

[57] Joe Haldeman, 'Vietnam and Other Alien Worlds', in *Fights of Fancy: Armed Conflict in Science Fiction and Fantasy*, ed. by George Slusser and Eric S. Rabkin (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1992), pp. 92-102 (p. 93).

'pivotal' year of 1968, during which social, cultural, and political antagonisms rent the country.[58] Haldeman has written about the 'succession of alien worlds' he encountered after being drafted – including basic training, his first combat experience, Vietnam itself, and the 'mundane one of drug dependence' – during which he was aware of 'moving through physical, emotional, moral, and existential terra incognita', but that the most shocking alien world he found was home itself.[59] He has subsequently written a number of novels, both mundane and science fiction, dealing with his experiences in Vietnam and the alienation he experienced after his service. Haldeman extrapolates from his own shock at the changes in American society during his year of service and puts into metaphor the idea that soldiers are expected to fight to save a culture which has changed and forgotten them while they were absent from it, and expected to reintegrate into a society that largely ignored veterans as a group. The novel does this by depicting, as a consequence of the time dilation of interstellar travel, the radically different Earth that Mandella and Marygay Potter encounter after their first campaign and the alienation they suffer as a result.[60]

When Mandella and Potter return to Earth, only two years after departure from their perspective, decades have passed and it is now 2024, and 'the World' and its people are much changed. They are bothered by the 'violence, high cost of living, too many people everywhere' and, for the mildly homophobic Mandella at least, the popularity of 'homolife.' Worst of all is that 'everything seemed to have gotten just a little worse, or at best remained the same', without any improvements to everyday life.[61] *The Forever War*'s portrayal of a nation with higher rates of violent crime – where people routinely require bodyguards, 'riders' haunt elevators looking for victims, gun possession is common for self-defence, and the countryside is roamed

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[58] Patterson, pp. 682, 709.

[59] Haldeman, 'Vietnam and Other Alien Worlds', pp. 92-102 (p. 101.). This was a result of both changes at home and changes within himself; Haldeman suffered from what now would be called PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder, a psychiatric condition that can develop after exposure to traumatic events, symptoms of which include severe personality changes that include agonising grief, increased anxiety, extreme guilt, suicidal longings, violent outbursts, severe depression, hypervigilance, and a sense of meaninglessness, disturbing recurrent flashbacks to the event, and avoidance or numbing of memories of the event.

[60] Ashley, p. 19. This middle section, a novella called 'You Can Never Go Back' was rejected for publication by Ben Bova of *Analog* and was not included in the original publication of the book. Instead it was published by Ted White in *Amazing* magazine, as a coda to *The Forever War*, and then included in the 1991 edition of the novel. This thesis focuses on the final published version of the novel, containing 'You Can Never Go Back.'

[61] Haldeman, *The Forever War*, p.143.

by nomad gangs – reflects the conditions Haldeman found on his return. These conditions included the increased violence evident in the protest movement against the war and other instances of civil disorder in American cities, such as those around civil rights and racial unrest. The economic problems encountered by the soldiers represent the huge budgetary deficits, inflation, and economic instability created by spending for the war in Vietnam, in the U.S. in the early 1970s.[62] Likewise, the novel's depiction of homosexuality becoming increasingly common – encouraged by most governments, apparently, because of its benefit as a method of birth control – is emblematic of the changing sexual mores of the 1960s and early 1970s, with the gay liberation movement, beginning with the Stonewall Riots of 1969, widely considered to be the most important event leading to the modern fight for gay and lesbian rights. Haldeman also 'imagines the reaction of the general public to a war that has gone on so long that its purposes and presence have long faded from consciousness' and from which few veterans ever return, meaning their experiences have little impact on Earth politics.[63] In addition, the returning soldiers confront a public with little understanding of the war or the enemy: Mandella reflects that, in the past

> people whose country was at war were constantly in contact with the war. The newspapers would be full of reports, veterans would return from the front… always the sense of either working toward victory or at least delaying defeat. The enemy was a tangible thing, a propagandist's monster whom you could understand, whom you could hate… But [in] this war… the enemy was a curious organism only vaguely understood… The main effect of the war on the home front was economic, unemotional – more taxes but more jobs as well. The most important fact about the war to most people was that if it ended suddenly, Earth's economy would collapse.[64]

This feeling of alienation, while common for the soldier who leaves home to fight abroad, was more pronounced for Haldeman because he missed 'a pivotal year in American culture', 1968, either because he was 'sequestered in Basic Training or

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[62] Patterson, p. 597.

[63] Philip K. Jason, *Acts and Shadows: The Vietnam War in American Literary Culture* (New York and Oxford: Roman & Littlefield, 2000), p. 58.

[64] Haldeman, *The Forever War*, p. 144.

trying to cope with combat and subsequent hospitalization in Vietnam', rarely getting news from home or disregarding what he did receive as 'far away and trivial compared to the business of daily avoiding and dealing death.'[65]

Despite the problems they face, however, the Forever Warriors return to a world that lacks much of the harshness experienced by Vietnam veterans at the end of their consensus reality service. The Vietnam War 'above all left an abiding sourness in the United States', a sourness veterans tended to feel with special intensity: 'Unlike the servicemen who had returned to parades and celebrations in 1945, those who came back after 1968 encountered an increasingly weary and cantankerous nation' and abandoned to civilian life after their experiences in the jungle, they faced staggering problems, including unemployment, guilt, depression, rage, and intense rejection, as well as what would later be called PTSD.[66] Mandella and Potter, on the other hand, receive a warm welcome, including banquets, receptions, and interviews, and do not suffer rejection by the civilians they encounter. They do, however, suffer guilt after their massacre of the Taurans and face unemployment in civilian life. While *The Forever War* does not directly confront the high rate of depression and suicide among veterans – the rate of both was much higher among Vietnam veterans than in the population at large – the psychological casualties of the army's hate conditioning could be seen as allegorical: over a dozen soldiers 'lost their minds' coming out of it because they 'couldn't handle the memory' of being 'a butcher.'[67]

Mandella and Potter eventually leave Earth once again and re-enlist in the army for two reasons: first, the lack of employment opportunities and second, the lack of personal connections in civilian life as symbolised by the death of their parents. Even before they get home, the soldiers are told that there are not many jobs available – out of the Earth's population of nearly nine billion, there are already five or six billion unemployed – and the only job they are uniquely trained for is soldiering, and that the likelihood of updating their skills is small.[68] The war effort's drain on the economy demands that Mandella and Potter return to soldiering, even

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[65] Joe Haldeman, 'Introduction: A Tangled Web', *War Stories* (San Francisco and Portland: Night Shade Books, 2005), pp. 171-172 (pp. 171-172).
[66] Patterson, pp. 769-770.
[67] Joe Haldeman, 'We Are Very Happy Here', *Analog*, November 1973, pp. 104-147 (p. 133).
[68] Haldeman, *The Forever War*, p. 137. Jason, p. 58.

though the return is not administratively enforced. Their re-enlistment is also a result of their exacerbated alienation when their closest links to home – Potter's parents and Mandella's mother – die: Potter's parents are killed by looters when their South Dakota commune is raided, while Mandella's mother perishes because under the 'Universal Medical Security System' she is not eligible for medical treatment when she becomes ill.[69] This can be seen as an exaggerated metaphor for what some veterans experienced when trying to reintegrate back into society: difficulty maintaining personal relationships, resulting from bitterness in men who had been through a difficult ordeal and now felt rejected and unappreciated by other Americans. With these events, almost out of desperation, both Mandella and Potter re-enlist. While Mandella is annoyed when they are assigned to combat platoons departing for Stargate and the battlefields beyond, his main thought is that they are going home.[70] While this issue – being forced to return to the army by alienation and lack of employment – has no clear parallel with conditions met by returning Vietnam War veterans, there is the possibility that it does have a parallel 'in the feeling expressed by many that Vietnam, as a psychic landscape, had become the only home in which they could flourish.'[71]

The final – and complete – alienation of the soldiers who have fought the Forever War occurs at the end of the novel. Mandella returns from his final battle in the Greater Magellanic Cloud to find that the war has come to an abrupt end and that humanity has evolved into a post-individual group consciousness – 'over ten billion individuals but only one consciousness', all cloned from a single individual – called Man.[72] The home front has become completely alien to the returned veterans. In addition, Man reveals that the war has been a terrible and shameful mistake, alluding to the experience of Vietnam veterans who returned to find themselves in the position of being 'an embarrassment to the civilians', reminders 'of unpleasantness for those who are waiting out the war in blissful ignorance, and later, when the war is over… reminders of awful mistakes.'[73] When veterans returned to the United States they discovered many civilians wanted to ignore and forget about their controversial, and unsuccessful, war; veterans were often treated with

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[69] Haldeman, *The Forever War*, pp. 158, 163.
[70] Haldeman, *The Forever War*, p. 166.
[71] Jason, p. 58.
[72] Haldeman, *The Forever War*, p. 272.
[73] Gordon, p. 32.

indifference or scorn by people who either opposed the war or were ambivalent about it, and, worse, some civilians blamed veterans for what was a shared national failure.[74] As Phillip E. Wegner has written, in deploying the image of the group mind, Haldeman shows 'in a way that also effectively captured the war veteran's sense of alienation from the community to which he finally returns, how these changes have rendered obsolete, centered, and monadic subjects such as Mandella.'[75] Mandella and Potter, along with other veterans of the Forever War who refuse to become assimilated into Man, are resettled to an isolated planet sardonically named Middle Finger.[76] According to Brian Aldiss and David Wingrove, however, this is not a 'happy ending', the 'static, passive society of clones, for all its benevolence, seems somehow a worse fate than war.'[77] This view is confirmed by Haldeman who writes, in his introduction to 'A Separate War' in the collection *Far Horizons*, that the novel 'does not have a happy ending': Potter and Mandella 'do get back together... but they're together on a prison planet, preserved as genetic curiosities in a universe where the human race has abandoned its humanity in a monstrous liaison with its former enemy.'[78]

This theme was not new to Haldeman. The protagonist of his 'Time Piece' (*If*, July/August 1970) likewise finds that the army is his only home. Written immediately upon Haldeman's return from Vietnam, 'Time Piece' is a 'trial run' for 'Hero': like 'Hero' this narrative features soldiers, at one stage imprinted with psychoconditioning, in combat across the galaxy with incomprehensible aliens, time dilation that alienates the soldiers from the Earth, and a planetary hospital, which soldiers can only visit when they are severely wounded, as the only

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[74] Anderson, pp. 81, 169. This civilian scorn most likely did not extend to the "spat upon vet" image. Jerry Lembcke's *The Spitting Image* (1998) – by a Vietnam veteran and sociologist – argues that there is no persuasive evidence to substantiate the belief that veterans were commonly spat upon by protestors. Instead, he believes that "spat upon vet" is a postwar myth that reflects the rightward shift of American political culture after Vietnam, and meant to discredit future anti-war activism.

[75] Phillip E. Wegner, *Life between Two Deaths, 1989-2001: U.S. Culture in the Long Nineties* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009), p. 177.

[76] Haldeman, *The Forever War*, p. 276.

[77] Brian Aldiss and David Wingrove, *Trillion Year Spree: The History of Science Fiction* (New York: House of Stratus, 2001), p. 432.

[78] Joe Haldeman, 'Introduction to A Separate War', in *Far Horizons: All New Tales from the Greatest Worlds of Science Fiction*, ed. by Robert Silverberg (New York: Avon Eos, 1999), pp. 53-54. Likewise Damien Broderick writes of Middle Finger: 'Here unreconstructed relics of the war huddle from a universe repellent in its inhuman benevolence' and it 'proves to be the sort of welcome-home Vietnam veterans enjoyed – cold and hard.' Damien Broderick, *x, y, z, t: Dimensions of Science Fiction* (Holicong, PA: Borgo Press/Wildside Press, 2004), p. 62.

constant.[79] In deciding whether to retire or sign up for a fourth tour of duty, the protagonist – Francisco Jesus Mario Juan-José Hugo de Naranja – finds he has 'no choice, really', he cannot return to Earth where veterans are like 'animated museum pieces', unable to speak the universal Language of Earth and unable to relate to the 'strange' people with their 'mindplugs and homosex and voluntary suicide.'[80]

Alienation from civilian society is also an important theme in Stephen Goldin's *The Eternity Brigade*. Hawker's decision to sign up for the sleeper program is motivated not by money but by the self-knowledge that the army is all he knows. He enlisted immediately after high school, and went straight into combat after basic training. He is aware that 'if he left the army, he'd be completely on his own', and he likes the idea that he can 'make the army his life, surrender himself to it and let it make all the decisions for him', something that may not be possible in a peacetime army.[81] Hawker is already alienated from civilian life at the beginning of the novel – the army is his life and he has no friends, family, or prospects outside of it – and it only gets worse when he goes into suspended animation. After their first post-sleep conflict – a Chinese civil war – Hawker, Green, and Symington return to a United States 'twelve years older' and much changed: for Hawker the situation is worse because he was in the same position as at the start of the experiment, 'facing a hostile world without sufficient resources or knowledge', the mere thought of facing civilian life 'almost as terrifying' as taking part in war. The United States has become more authoritarian during the missed decade, with every U.S. citizen requiring an identification card – which made a point of a person's 'race' – and government-certified travel passes necessary for anyone entering the bigger cities. The former policy is a result of illegal immigration; the latter enacted after the 'Energy Riots', to make sure 'terrorists and troublemakers' were kept out of the major metropolitan areas. In addition to national ID cards and travel restrictions, the soldiers also encounter monetary devaluation, an energy shortage, massive job layoffs and unemployment, poor prospects for higher education, and news censorship.[82] The attitude of the soldiers is summed up by Green – 'I don't like this

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[79] Ashley, p. 45.
[80] Joe Haldeman, 'Time Piece', *War Stories* (San Francisco and Portland: Night Shade Books, 2005), pp. 77-84 (pp. 82-83).
[81] Goldin, pp. 37-38.
[82] Goldin, pp. 96, 102, 105, 107-110.

world very much' – and all three re-enlist in the sleeper program, Hawker and Green immediately, and Symington, 'bitter and broke', a year later.[83]

Things are worse after their next defrosting and war – fought in Antarctica, between the U.S., Russia and China, and a conglomerate of countries from South America and Africa – when they discover that the U.S. is 'like an armed camp.' Nobody 'goes *anywhere* without travel papers', and travel is expensive in any case, the standard of living has dropped significantly, and the significant number of unemployed spend their lives on the welfare rolls, provided with free 'dope' by a government 'as close to a dictatorship as we've ever come'.[84] Once again all three soldiers continued with the program – now involving the digital recording of their bodies and personalities – and for Hawker there is no agonizing decision over the decision to re-enlist after the next war. For Green and Symington, who both die during the war on the Moon between the North American Complex and the Russian-Arab Bloc, the decision is made for them when they are resurrected, with no memory of dying, for the next conflict. Furthermore, as in *The Forever War*, the estrangement between the soldiers and home only gets worse: after being awoken for a war between domed cities under the Pacific Ocean, Hawker finds that civilian life is 'incomprehensible', and that the people behave 'unpredictably' and have motivations he cannot begin to understand. This experience 'emphasized how alienated he was from everything he thought he'd known' and he is glad when the war is over 'because he knew he'd probably end up on some other planet where he *expected* things to be strange.'[85] Hawker finds re-integration impossible and never sets foot on Earth again.

Once again showing the influence of *The Forever War* on his ideas, Goldin includes an encounter between *The Eternity Brigade*'s soldiers and the vastly altered descendants of humanity. Hawker and his comrades protect the world of Cellina from alien aggressors and then, when one of their numbers suffers a corrupted resurrection, desert the army. It is only then that they find out what kind of world and people they were fighting for: Cellina is a planet that has 'conquered both poverty and death' leaving it 'decadent beyond [their] ability to imagine', and the

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[83] Goldin, pp. 111, 116.
[84] Goldin, p. 125.
[85] Goldin, pp. 148-149.

genetically-engineered inhabitants, who could be 'as bizarre as any alien', are inhuman and cruel.[86] As well as having the ability to shape and duplicate their bodies at will, everybody on Cellina has their 'life pattern' continuously backed-up at Resurrection Central, meaning they can never die. Floating around in their bubble-like 'home-spheres', and with technology capable of producing literally anything, they have developed a decadent society based solely on the search for amusement in which 'self-denial is an alien concept.' They have also developed a society with no morals, as proven when the AWOL soldiers are taken in by one angel-winged native, and then variously drugged, tortured, raped, and killed, and subsequently resurrected, for the amusement of the posthumans.[87]

Two years after Haldeman explored the dangers of militarism in *The Forever War*, Orson Scott Card published what could be read as another instalment in the ongoing argument about Vietnam, his short story 'Ender's Game' (*Analog*, August 1977; later expanded as *Ender's Game*, 1985).[88] The alienation of the children who attend Battle School is even more systematic than that of the soldiers in *The Forever War* and *The Eternity Brigade*. The child-soldiers are born, raised and trained in Battle School, isolated from the outside world, their entire existence revolving around the 'games' they must play in preparation for the continuing conflict with the alien "enemy" – their alienation is total and they have no chance to encounter civilian society or civilians of any kind. Ender Wiggins (not Wiggin, as in the novel) is 'a stranger to the world he was being trained to save', a world he knew only from 'vague references to "outside"': when he is promoted to Command School, it is the first time in his memory he has left Battle School. The journey from one School to the other gives Ender his first look at trees and men who were not in uniform.[89] In addition, this short journey emphasises another aspect of estrangement between the military and civilian society: while travelling the officers escorting Ender stress their hurry by repeating '[t]here's a war on' to civilian officials; however, when they get to Command School and 'enclosed him again within the shell of the military' nobody had to say 'There's a war on' because no one in the military

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[86] Goldin, p. 157.

[87] Goldin, pp. 193, 196, 219.

[88] Levy, pp. 59-72 (pp. 68-69). The novella was nominated for the Hugo Award and reprinted in Jerry Pournelle's first *There Will Be War* anthology (1983) before Card published the novel-length *Ender's Game* (1985).

[89] Orson Scott Card, 'Ender's Game' (*Analog*, August 1977), pp. 100-134 (p. 159).

'forgot it for a single instant of a single day', in contrast to the unconcerned, or ignorant, civilians.[90] Another aspect of the estrangement encountered by soldiers when returning to the civilian world was the difficulty of finding work when one's primary training is in the art of war. This is suggested by Ender's realisation, during his increasingly stressful simulated battles at Command School, that he 'had been trained in nothing but the game all his life.'[91] Interestingly, the short story differs from the novel in its depiction of Ender's fate after his victory over, and genocide of, the enemy. While in the short story Ender is assured that he'll be 'taken care of' and that the government will never forget him because he 'served us very well', the novel presents the ultimate metaphor for the betrayal of the soldiers and for soldier alienation: it ends with the exile of Ender from the Earth, and, demonised by the civilian population, his labelling as 'Ender the Xenocide', the only person to ever commit total genocide against a sentient species.[92] It is for this crime that Ender spends the rest of the series seeking atonement.

David Drake's *Hammer's Slammers* and Jerry Pournelle's *Falkenberg's Legion* mercenary-themed military SF stories more forthrightly depict the estrangement of soldiers from civilians through the differing views about military actions, between the military taking the action and the civilians those actions are taken for.[93] The most significant example of this from Drake is in 'The Butcher's Bill' (*Galaxy,* November 1974): the Hammer's Slammer armoured regiment, fighting in a war between two factions seeking to control ancient alien artefacts, ends up destroying those artefacts to save face against the rival mercenary force, despite the Slammer's clients attempting to cancel the contract.[94] The divergence between soldiers and civilians is also presented as the result of civilians not understanding the actions of the soldier in 'Caught in the Crossfire' (1978). In this story Margritte – her village occupied by a mercenary force that wishes to use it as an ambush point against a Slammer convoy – ends up shooting the three soldiers holding her village hostage, to save her fellow villagers from the crossfire of combat. For this Margritte – 'gaunt,

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[90] Card, 'Ender's Game', pp. 100-134 (p. 159).
[91] Card, 'Ender's Game', pp. 100-134 (p. 167).
[92] Card, 'Ender's Game', pp. 100-134 (p. 175). Orson Scott Card, *Ender's Game* (New York: Tor, 1991), p. 316. The deterioration of Ender's reputation is shown in the sequel, *Speaker for the Dead.*
[93] For further discussion of Pournelle and Drake, and their Falkenberg and Hammer's Slammers series, see Chapter Six.
[94] David Drake, 'The Butcher's Bill', *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume One* (New York: Baen Books, 2009), pp. 35-56 (p. 55-56).

misted with blood as though sunburned', a woman 'who had blasted life away instead of suckling it' – is rejected by the other villagers, confronted by one frightened mother who 'snarled at the killer who had been her friend', and chooses to join Hammer's regiment rather than stay.[95] Drake's works also depict post-service alienation. For example, in 'Counting the Cost' (1987), Captain Tyl Koopman ponders that after 'five years in the regiment and six months back with his family, he had to agree with the veterans who'd warned him before he went on furlough that he wasn't going home… He had left home, because the Slammers were the only home he'd got.'[96] For Pournelle, the alienation between soldiers and civilians is not something that develops over time, it occurs from the very beginning of a soldier's enlistment: they are making the decision to leave civilian life behind. Pournelle's soldiers choose to serve and offer their lives for a higher calling, and are dismissive of most civilians, such as those stuck in the Welfare Islands of Earth or those who join the Freedom Party of Hadley. Pournelle's most significant example of the differing views of the soldier and the civilian comes from 'Mercenary' (*Analog*, July 1972), detailing the Legion's first campaign on the newly independent colony world Hadley: in order to end the political rebellion that threatens Hadley, Falkenberg lures the rebels into the capital's stadium and orders his men to 'slaughter' them. Falkenberg watches the event – and the resulting 'rivers of blood, blood cascading down the steps, blood pouring down stairwells to soak the grassy field below' – impassively, because he *knows* it was required, but which the members of the Hadley Cabinet – and by extension civilians as a whole – do not understand.[97]

Alienation from Their Humanity

The third type of alienation examined through military SF in this chapter is the soldier's alienation from their humanity; the dehumanisation of the soldier. The

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[95] David Drake, 'Caught in the Crossfire', *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume One* (New York: Baen Books, 2009), pp. 91-105 (p. 104).

[96] David Drake, 'Counting the Cost', *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume Two* (New York: Baen Books, 2009), pp. 151-316 (p. 153).

[97] Pournelle, pp. 331-332. 'The Mercenary' was first published in *Analog* in 1972, was later included in *The Mercenary* (1977), along with 'Peace With Honor' (1971) and 'Sword and Sceptre' (1973), which, in turn, was absorbed into *Falkenberg's Legion* (1990). As Mike Ashley points out John W. Campbell had discussed a similar tactic in his 'provocative' May 1969 editorial in *Analog*. Ashley, p. 11.

Vietnam War changed American ideas that war was necessarily righteous and America's fighting forces were inherently more virtuous than their enemies. During the conflict atrocities perpetrated by U.S. soldiers against Vietnamese combatants and civilians shocked the world; and since then the dehumanising culture of the military, which includes both the dehumanisation of the enemy and the dehumanisation of the soldier, have been of concern to the United States government and public. Both can be seen as a form of alienation: a soldier's deliberate alienation from the enemy (discussed earlier) and a soldier's intentional or unintentional alienation from the mainstream of humanity. This theme is present, but not significant, in military SF of the 1950s and early-1960s, including in the works of Robert Heinlein and Harry Harrison, but gained more attention during and after the Vietnam War.[98]

The dehumanisation of the soldier is a key idea in *The Forever War*, a novel about, in the words of its protagonist, a 'peace-loving, vacuum-welding specialist *cum* physics teacher snatched up by the Elite Conscription Act and reprogrammed to be a killing machine.'[99] Alastair Sparks writes of Joe Haldeman's soldiers being 'elite draftees, caught in an endless, futile war which strips them of humanity, alienates them from civilian society, and denies them status except in survival.'[100] Haldeman's view of army life and the position of the soldier is something he developed during his time in the army. Among the things he learned was that the individual is a pawn in the government's game and their fate is out of their control, and that to the government, and eventually, to the individual, a person *is* his profession, no more.[101] The idea of the dehumanisation of the soldier, the army's efforts to depersonalize soldiers and turn them into automated killing machines, is approached in two ways in *The Forever War*: first, through the post-hypnotic suggestion and hate conditioning the Forever Warriors are imprinted with during

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[98] As with many things, Heinlein and Harrison, in *Starship Troopers* and *Bill, the Galactic Hero* respectively, offer differing representations of soldier dehumanisation. Both Johnny Rico and Bill are changed by the regimentation and brainwashing they experience in the military, but while Heinlein is sympathetic to a young man's transformation into a professional, elite killer, Harrison is not, and thinks the 'better you are as a soldier, the worse you are as a human being.' Charles E. Gannon, *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines: Technomilitary Agenda-Setting in American and British Speculative Fiction* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), p. 251. Harry Harrison, 'Introduction', *Bill the Galactic Hero* (New York: ibooks, 2001), p. vii.
[99] Haldeman, *The Forever War*, p. 96.
[100] Spark, 'Vietnam: the War in Science Fiction', pp. 113-131 (p. 126).
[101] Gordon, p. 17.

the early years of their service, and, second, Mandella's subsequent nightmare sense of himself as a fighting machine.[102]

The dehumanisation of the soldiers is obvious even during their training on the planet Charon. This aspect of their training is violent and results in several deaths; despite the time and money invested in the recruits, the military expects 'acceptable losses' in its pursuit of a few dozen well-armed killing machines.[103] But even this is not enough for the army. The first encounter between Taurans and humans is a massacre, with the Taurans exterminated to the last. This is the direct result of the post-hypnotic suggestion, also known as 'hate conditioning', that Mandella and his comrades are imprinted with and which is activated just before the battle. Mandella knew the post-hypnotic suggestion was coming, knew it was artificial, but was still overwhelmed by the images and ideas implanted into his mind and triggered by Sergeant Cortez: Mandella was 'secure in the conviction that the noblest thing a man could do would be to die killing one of those horrible monsters.' At the end of the battle, the hypnotic compulsion falls away under the sergeant's command and the troops are faced with the consequences of their actions, the butchery they have unleashed: everyone was ordered to take 'sed-tabs' and some people 'almost went crazy with the memories of bloody murder multiplied a hundred times.' Mandella also recognises that his murderous actions were not all that inhuman, that 'ancestors only a few generations back would have done the same thing, even to their fellow men, without any hypnotic conditioning.'[104] This notion – that 'civilisation' is a thin veneer obscuring a savage, bestial reality, and that war can reveal this – has often been characteristic of Vietnam-era cultural products, for example Michael

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[102] In addition, humanity's evolution into something unrecognisable – first, the twenty-fifth century world of people 'quickened' in artificial wombs, raised in creches, and drafted into the UNEF, later the collective-consciousness of Man – can be read as the result of a communal process of dehumanisation linked to the Tauran War and unchecked militarism, participation in which is literally dehumanizing for humanity as a whole. The novel is, as Brenda Boyle writes, 'parable-like as it cautions against those attitudes that, when the novel was being serialized in the early 1970s, reflected the obstinacy of the American government towards Vietnam, even as evidence for failure mounted', and can be seen as a 'cautionary tale against nationalist attitudes.' Moreover, the idea of soldiers being alienated from humanity is problematized by the possible interpretation that they end the novel *more* human than Man; that humanity is alienated from itself and only the soldiers retain their humanity. Boyle, p. 79.

[103] Haldeman, *The Forever War*, p. 112.

[104] Haldeman, *The Forever War*, pp. 72-73, 79-80. The hate conditioning could also be interpreted as a science-fictional representation of the combat drug use of some troops in Vietnam. Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP) teams in Vietnam were 'chemically altered by constant use of Benzedrine and other alertness drugs. LRRPs and others argued that chemically-induced paranoia made their survival more likely.' Blackmore, pp. 125-126.

Herr's *Dispatches* – the most iconic non-fiction account of the Vietnam War – and Francis Ford Coppola's Vietnam War film *Apocalypse Now* (the screenplay of which drew on *Dispatches*, as well as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*).[105]

Mandella only experiences the activation of his hate conditioning once, and the programming is erased after the action at Aurigae, but, as a result of this conditioning, he 'develops a nightmare sense of himself dehumanized into a fighting machine.'[106] Even on his first mission, he dreams that he is a 'machine, mimicking the functions of life, creaking and clanking… through the world' and that the 'little man who sat inside my head pulling the levers and clutches and watching the dials… was hopelessly mad and storing up hurts for the day.' Later, after he has survived his assault ship being shot down, Mandella imagines that he and the other soldiers in the infirmary are 'odd soft machines' being fixed by the doctors – the 'mechanics' – whose tunics were covered in blood that could just as easily be grease.[107] This view became concrete when his missing leg is replaced with a metal skeletal prosthetic over which nerves and flesh are grown. This reflects contemporary ideas about the effects of the Vietnam War on soldiers who saw service, that the men who fought in the jungle have been turned into something not entirely human.[108]

This image of soldiers turned into robotic fighting machines was not uncommon, and Charles E. Gannon argues that the 'concern with the dehumanizing effects of increasingly automated conflicts' is 'perhaps the most prevalent thematic thread' running through America's post-World War Two far-future war fiction.[109] The motif is used in two other short stories during this period, and a novel. The first story using this motif is Haldeman's 'The Private War of Private Jacob' (*Galaxy Science Fiction*, June 1974), a one-idea story organised around the image of soldiers being led into inhuman war by happy, human-looking robots. The central image, of 'crazy laughing grinning old Sergeant Melford' – later revealed to be robotically

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[105] Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* (1899 serial; 1902 book) has, perhaps, inspired more SF stories that any other work of fiction, perhaps unsurprising with its interest in imperialism, colonialism and racism, all ideas that have, as John Rieder argues, shaped SF. See, John Rider, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 2008).

[106] David Seed, *Science Fiction: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 51.

[107] Haldeman, *The Forever War*, pp. 61, 173.

[108] Discussed in Blackmore, 'Warbody: Joe Haldeman's Killer SF'.

[109] Gannon, p. 251.

controlled by a computer – while shells burst and men die around him, speaks to Haldeman's view that to love war one must be inhuman, while Private Jacob's inheritance of 'catalyst status' further speaks to the notion that someone like him will always be there to lead men into battle.[110] The second story linking the idea of soldier and machine is by Korean War army veteran Gene Wolfe. 'The HORARS of War' (*Nova* 1, 1970) details 'a future jungle war fought not by human soldiers but by HORARS (Homolog ORganisms Army Replacement Simulations), flesh and blood robots, manufactured, not drafted, who fight with programmed enthusiasm, and have no relatives to protest their death' and has a main character, 2910, who may or may not be a human journalist impersonating a HORAR, the answer left ambiguous by the author.[111] The third story is Kate Wilhelm's *The Killing Thing*, the plot of which revolves around the duel between Captain Tracy of the Fleet and a deadly, self-programming killer robot on an uncharted planet. The robot is built by a scientist on the 'liberated' world of Ramses, and then trained in war by the rebels of Tensor to take revenge against their conquerors – the Earthmen – before it eventually programs itself with a new worldview: 'All men were the enemy' who had to be killed 'in order to maintain its own being.'[112] However, Trace ends the novel sympathetic to the robot – 'It had always done exactly what it had been designed to do, no more, certainly no less than that' – and aware of how the military programmed him in a very similar way, with its teachings about the inevitability of war, the need for World Group expansion, and the dehumanisation of non-human aliens. Trace destroys the robot and himself – another killer robot – rather than let it get into the hands of the World Group, which would duplicate it, defeat the Outsiders, and 'take the entire galaxy.'[113]

Dehumanisation of the soldier is treated differently in Stephen Goldin's *The Eternity Brigade*. Hawker's inescapable role as a slave soldier for his superiors forces him to become 'a master of the fine art of mass killing' whose training in 'slaughter' began on members of his own species but had broadened to the point

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[110] Joe Haldeman, 'The Private War of Private Jacob', *War Stories* (San Francisco and Portland: Night Shade Books, 2005), pp. 85-89 (pp. 85, 88.)

[111] Spark, 'Vietnam: the War in Science Fiction', pp. 113-131 (pp. 121-122). Gene Wolfe, 'The HORARS of War', in *Nova 1*, ed. by Harry Harrison (New York: Delacorte Press, 1970), pp. 82-101.

[112] Wilhelm, pp. 28, 112.

[113] Wilhelm, p. 140.

where 'he could kill any intelligent creature his superiors told him was an enemy.'[114] Because they can be cheaply and easily resurrected to fight, the soldiers cannot *stop* fighting in wars across the galaxy: Hawker develops an inhuman, nihilistic attitude toward his situation. The fighting 'hardly mattered anymore', winning and losing are 'merely the opposite sides of the same coin', with even death itself 'scant respite' from the suffering. He views himself as no different from the plastic soldiers he played with as a child, 'no more real in the minds of the generals than Hawker's toys had been to him. If one gets killed in one place, make a new one and stick is someplace else. They were all interchangeable, just pieces in a vast game that had been going on since the beginning of time.'[115]

While Orson Scott Card's short story 'Ender's Game' is not as explicit in the portrayal of the dehumanisation of the soldier, there are suggestions of it in the military's treatment of students at Battle School. The children of Battle School are raised there, and the only world they know is the school and the students and teachers they share it with. Ender realises after his destruction of the nameless 'enemy' that the military 'needed a weapon, and you got it, and it was me', and, expressing his grief over committing unintentional genocide, is told that weapons 'don't need to understand what they're pointed at… We did the pointing, and so we're responsible. You just did your job.'[116] The students are, according to Graff, raised to merely be weapons wielded by their superiors, meaning their dehumanisation is explicit in their training from the very beginning. However, Ender's realisation of his manipulation by the military and anguish at his actions is a reassertion of his humanity, despite all his conditioning; although this realisation comes too late for the military's victims.

The dehumanisation of the soldier is rejected in the stories of David Drake. In his foreword to *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume One* Drake writes of his return to 'the World' after service in Vietnam: sitting in the lounge of Duke University Law School and overhearing two men talking about avoiding service in Vietnam, Drake, recognising that they were 'perfectly rational plans… I knew better than they did how much Nam was to be avoided', still wanted to 'kill them

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[114] Goldin, p. 7.
[115] Goldin, pp. 10, 140.
[116] Card, 'Ender's Game', pp. 100-134 (p. 175).

both.' He continues: 'That gave me an inkling of the notion that maybe I wasn't quite as normal as I'd told myself.'[117] However, the way war changes a person in Drake's fiction and experience does not make them less than human, just different. This view is developed further by Gene Wolfe's introduction to the same collection. Discussing that war stories 'written by people who know nothing of wars and even less of the men and women who fight them often tell us at great length that those men and women are dehumanized, and try their damnedest to show them like that', Wolfe dismisses the idea, writing that

> Men and women do not stop being women and men because they are
> out where the metal flies, and that is the wonderful, the truly miraculous,
> thing about them. Now and then the experience even knocks a bit of the
> pretence and pettiness out of them, and that is the glorious thing about
> a real shooting war, otherwise such a mess of pain and waste.[118]

However, Drake's work does show suggestions of the normalisation of a soldier's loss of humanity, presented in a matter-of-fact way through two character examples in 'Hangman' (1979): Sergeant Rob Jenne and Major Joachim Steuben. Jenne, who enlists in Hammer's Slammers in 'Under the Hammer' (1974), talks with Captain Pritchard after an encounter with a sniper. Jenne had complained about not getting a chance to pick up the sniper's rifle as a trophy, and a shaken Pritchard accuses him of being 'so damned proud of killing one of the poor bastards who hired us to protect them.' In response Jenne explains that he has learned to play by the 'rules of the game' – one rule of which is to 'get to be as good as you can at killing the people Colonel Hammer wants killed' – and that he was proud of taking out the sniper. The sergeant finishes by saying, 'I was afraid if I stayed in the Slammers I'd turn into an animal… And I was right. But it's the way I am now, so I don't seem to mind.'[119] Steuben, Hammer's chief aide and 'hatchetman', is another example of what other authors would present as dehumanisation of the soldier. While searching for contraband weapons being hidden by villagers, Steuben shoots an eight-year-old girl in the knee in front of her parents – and prepares to shoot Pritchard when

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[117] David Drake, 'Foreword: A Professional Writer by Way of Southeast Asia', *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume One* (New York: Baen Books, 2009), pp. 7-10 (p. 8).
[118] Gene Wolfe, 'Introduction', in David Drake, *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume One* (New York: Baen Books, 2009), pp. 1-5 (p. 3-5).
[119] David Drake, 'Hangman', *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume One* (New York: Baen Books, 2009), pp. 133-190 (pp. 151-152).

he draws his weapon on Steuben – but stands down, eyes 'empty', under orders from Hammer.[120] Steuben's psychopathic tendencies are not presented as a result of his service with Hammer's Slammers, but as a part of his personality, which just happens to make him a perfect fit for his role in the organisation.

Also offering representations of the dehumanisation of the soldier is Norman Spinrad's *The Men in the Jungle* (1965), although Spinrad's approach is much more pessimistic and condemnatory. This novel – the author of which was one of the signers of the anti-war advertisement in *Galaxy* and whose work has often been categorised as part of the New Wave, which sought to 'exorcise' the militaristic fantasies of much of military SF through 'alternative visions' – was intended to 'illuminate the brutality of war.'[121] A reflection of the horrors of the Vietnam War, concerned as it is with a brutal guerrilla conflict that takes place – mostly – in the titular jungle, this novel can almost be seen as an anti-soldier, as well as antimilitaristic, work. The plot follows Bart Fraden as he leads a revolution against the rulers of the planet Sangre, the sadistic and narcissistic Brotherhood of Pain. The main examples of soldiers are the demented Field Marshal Willem Vanderling, and his 'herogyn-heads', the bloodthirsty Killers, and the cannibalistic native guerrillas. Vanderling, formerly Commander in Chief of the Belt Free State Armed Forces and now Commander of the People's Army of Sangre, possesses a 'military mind... kill the enemy, and damn the torpedos!' He develops a close relationship with his 'herogyn-heads', soldiers addicted to drugs, with which Vanderling and Fraden begin the revolution.[122] Vanderling becomes increasingly unstable and, as one character explains to Fraden, this is a natural occurrence:

> There he is leading a gang of kill-crazy herogyn-heads against even
> more bloodthirsty Killers. How can he *not* become more and more like
> the men he's leading and the men he's fighting – especially since that's
> always been his bag in the first place... Bullethead's a soldier, and his

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[120] Drake, 'Hangman', pp. 133-190 (p. 169).

[121] Norman Spinrad, *Science Fiction in the Real World* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990), p. 145.

[122] In the novel, herogyn was 'illegal on every ball of mud that called itself a civilized planet, and for good reason': developed by the Jovian Hegemony during brush fire wars with the Far Satellites, it is instantly addictive and turns a person into 'a fearless, homicidal soldier-fanatic utterly obedient to whoever supplied the stuff', but withdrawal turns the addict into a 'mindless, savage killing machine – so savage, so bloodthirsty, that you were useless as a soldier.' Norman Spinrad, *The Men in the Jungle* (London: Sphere Books Limited, 1972), pp. 62-63.

only vice is *killing*. What's a war, anyway, but a long series of individual murders? And Bullethead enjoys every one of 'em. War is a means to you, but it's an end to him, Now he's got himself a whole gang of playmates who feel the same way. He doesn't have to kid himself any more. Now he can be a bloody murderer and be proud of it.

His dehumanisation does not start in war, but is a result of pre-existing tendencies. The other soldiers in the novel, the Brotherhood of Pain's Killers and Bart Fraden's People's Army, are equally bloodthirsty and barbaric from start to finish, engaging in atrocities (the least of which is the Sangran's penchant for cannibalism).[123]

The main character, Fraden, fugitive from the Confederated States of Terra and self-appointed President of the Free Republic of Sangre, is the primary example of dehumanisation as a process. Desperate for power, Fraden is also desperate to hold onto his humanity, something that becomes difficult as he witnesses – and often orders – brutal and barbaric actions. In particular, this is witnessed through Fraden's changing views of a terrible act he committed at the beginning of his revolutionary efforts on Sangre.[124] Before beginning his guerrilla revolution he becomes a member of the Brotherhood; the initiation ceremony involves the killing of a baby and the eating of its flesh, an act that leaves him disgusted and vowing that 'he could not live with himself until the Brotherhood of Pain was a nameless memory in an unmarked grave.'[125] However, by the end of the novel – during which he struggles with giving in to the barbarism and brutality of the planet and its inhabitants – he realises his loss of humanity, that the 'one moment of horror that had triggered the sequence meant… *nothing*.' The 'planet had changed him' and was turning him 'into the only kind of man it would let rule it' – someone like the current Prophet of Pain.[126] His experiences in the jungle have changed him in the same way Vietnam changed those who fought there.

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[123] It is the guerrillas who massacre the semi-intelligent native inhabitants of Sangre, the docile, eight-legged anthropod Bugs.
[124] Franklin, p. 159.
[125] Spinrad, *The Men in the Jungle*, p. 47.
[126] Spinrad, *The Men in the Jungle*, p. 245.

Conclusion

The Vietnam War had a significant impact on military SF. The self-conscious, mature phase of the military SF subgenre began in the early- to mid-1970s, at the peak of the Vietnam War's significance to SF and American culture. Covering the period between 1966 and 1980, this chapter focused on two antimilitaristic novels, Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War* (1974) and Stephen Goldin's *The Eternity Brigade* (1980), while other – militaristic and antimilitaristic – works were also discussed. These included texts by Orson Scott Card, David Drake, Jerry Pournelle, Norman Spinrad, Harry Harrison, Gene Wolfe, and Kate Wilhelm. This chapter argued that one of the major themes of Vietnam-era military SF is the alienation suffered by the soldier during and after their service in the military, an alienation which took several forms: alienation from the enemy, alienation from the civilian world, and alienation from humanity itself.

The first form of alienation examined was the alienation of soldiers from the enemy. The Othering important in all warfare was heightened in the Vietnam War because of cultural remoteness from the Vietnamese and the American concept of technowar. This alienation was represented in military SF through the symbolic depiction – transfiguration – of a consensus reality enemy as an alien, most notably in Haldeman's Taurans. Dehumanising the alien Other did not go unexamined during this period, and the possibility of tragedy was recognised, as seen also in Wilhelm's *The Killing Thing* (1967), Harrison's 'Commando Raid' (1970), and Drake's 'Cultural Conflict' (1979).

The second form of alienation discussed was soldier alienation from civilian society. Vietnam veterans experienced profound alienation when they returned to 'the World' after their service, and this was engaged with in military SF. In Haldeman's *The Forever War* and Goldin's *The Eternity Brigade* the idea of the soldier returning to a home that has become alien is approached through science-fictional metaphor – time dilation during interstellar travel, and cryogenic storage and resurrection – with the alienation represented by the social-cultural-technological changes soldiers are confronted with.

The final form of alienation discussed in this chapter was soldier alienation from their own humanity; in other words, soldier dehumanisation. The most common

trope for expressing this idea is that of the soldier as a 'robotic fighting machine', as seen in Haldeman's *The Forever War*, Wolfe's 'The HORARS of War' (1970), Wilhelm's *The Killing Thing*, and Goldin's *The Eternity Brigade*.

The end of the 1970s witnessed the end of the détente phase of the Cold War, the re-escalation of Cold War rhetoric, and faltering efforts to restrain militarisation. In 1981 Ronald Reagan became President of the United States: the 'Reaganite' attitudes, views, and aspirations of 1980s America inaugurated a new period of military SF in both its narratives and in the form of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).

CHAPTER FIVE

Consolidation Phase: Reagan, Military SF and SDI, 1980s

The self-conscious, mature phase for military SF began in the mid-1970s, and the subgenre was consolidated during the 1980s. Military SF flourished during this decade, within the right-wing, militaristic, and xenophobic zeitgeist of the Reagan years, which was an outgrowth of the Vietnam Syndrome and efforts to 'redeem' the American experience in Vietnam. The subgenre in the 1980s, this chapter argues, reflected and promulgated interpretations of war, military life, soldiers, militarism, and militarization that President Ronald Reagan himself was enthusiastically promoting, and is a valuable archive of Reaganite conservative attitudes and aspirations.[1] Among these was the desire to restore American self-confidence, to rebuild the American arsenal and to reconstitute the sinews of American military might, and to reaffirm the militaristic and patriarchal base of the 1980s, creating, as it were, a new post-Vietnam era.[2] The ultimate symbol of this Reaganite vision was the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).

This is the period Darko Suvin identifies as when 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' which resolutely praised space exploration and technology, rearmament, US military imperialism, and 'warfare as measure for Man.' Roughly equating with the military SF this thesis is exploring, these 'writings propagating war and military-centered social organisation' became one of SF's 'default images' after the 1970s.[3] Kathryn Cramer, likewise, thinks that in the 1980s hard SF 'evolved into right wing power fantasies about military hardware, men killing things with big machines', part of the right-wing politicisation of American

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[1] As president, Reagan can be said to have acted as the focus and central representative for the various conservative rhetorics which made up the political and cultural climate of the Reagan Era.
[2] Although these preferences seemed sufficient unto themselves, and were accompanied by 'no coherent policy for using the increased power'; military strength was to be amassed to 'bear witness to, rather than to act on, American superiority and moral resolves.' Michael S. Sherry, *In the Shadow of War: The United States Since the 1930s* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 394-395.
[3] Darko Suvin, 'Of Starship Troopers and Refuseniks: War and Militarism in U.S. Science Fiction, Part 2', *Extrapolation*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (2006), pp. 9-34 (pp. 13-16).

science fiction.[4] Roger Luckhurst argues that developments in militarist fiction comprises the most representative SF of the 1980s.[5] According to Suvin, the 'crucial offensive' of militaristic themes and tropes within SF started in 1979 when 'three major warmongering series' were initiated by central SF publishers: as well as David Drake's *Hammer's Slammers*, examined in Chapter Seven, there were Jerry Pournelle's *There Will Be War* anthologies and Reginald Bretnor's *The Future at War* anthologies.[6] This chapter focuses on Pournelle's anthologies, and touches on other military SF works which accept or contest the representations and attitudes of those anthologies. While the last chapter looked at the antimilitarism which was common in military SF during the Vietnam Era, through the theme of soldier alienation, this chapter will examine the substantially different attitudes and themes of Reagan Era military SF and the embodiment of these themes in Reagan's SDI. Moreover, this chapter contends that military SF interacted directly with policy – through organisations such as the Citizens Advisory Council on National Space Policy – and that the major themes, including Redeeming Vietnam, American Exceptionalism and the New American Militarism, Anti-communism, and the Technological War and the Superweapon, were represented both in military SF and state military policy.

Strategic Defense Initiative, the Citizens' Advisory Council, and *There Will Be War*

In a March 1983 speech Reagan inaugurated the Strategic Defence Initiative, popularly known as 'Star Wars', a complicated network of ground-based antimissile missiles and space-based lasers. The project was intended to protect the

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[4] Kathryn Cramer, 'On Science and Science Fiction', in *The Ascent of Wonder: The Evolution of Hard SF*, ed. by David G. Hartwell and Kathryn Cramer (New York: Tor, 1994), pp. 24-29 (p. 26).
[5] Roger Luckhurst, *Science Fiction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), p. 199. Standing in opposition – often explicitly – to the predominant sentiments of military SF during the 1980s was the science fiction subgenre of cyberpunk. The cyberpunks, animated by the 'pessimistic sensibility of the post-Vietnam era', look more radical – politically and culturally – in that they 'accepted what would have been anathema to previous generations' of SF writers, 'but seemed only natural to young American writers in the mid-1980s': that the United States was not going to retain its world dominance forever, that the conquest of space was not the solution to humanity's problems, and that global crises had no simple ready-made answers, military solutions, or technological fixes. Sharona Ben-Tov, *The Artificial Paradise: Science Fiction and American Reality* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), p. 176. Edward James, *Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 198-199.
[6] Suvin, pp. 9-34 (pp. 13-16).

United States from attack by strategic nuclear ballistic missiles, to achieve national security by rendering 'nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete.'[7] SDI was a 'science-fictional idea' having a long heritage in SF literature, and in financial terms it cost more than any other SF idea, with the United States government spending more than $30 billion on the program between its launch in March 1983 and its demise under President Bill Clinton in 1993.[8]

Reagan was supported by partisans of ballistic missile defence – including 'hawkish' strategists, right-wingers, arms control opponents, military space enthusiasts, and advocates of a 'technological end-run' with the U.S.S.R. – and his efforts were aided by the wider political climate, with the rise of the New Right and the resurgence of anti-communism.[9] By activating 'the twin currents of patriotism and anti-Communism, SDI could cut across party lines and bind diverse groups.'[10] However, there was also much criticism of SDI. While its proponents believed that the completed system would stop most, if not all, incoming Soviet missiles during a nuclear attack, its opponents saw the SDI as an unnecessary or wasteful project that would create a false sense of invulnerability or, worse, scare the U.S.S.R. into launching a first-strike attack.[11] A third, largely ignored, camp in the debate over SDI insisted that it was neither an impregnable shield nor a waste of time, but rather, a limited technology with a limited military value. After Reagan's speech the project received a great deal of press attention and judgments of it were generally harsh, the proposal apparently dismissed. However, two years later, the administration launched the Strategic Defense Initiative. After a concerted campaign in early-1985, 'polls showed that the American public had taken a great interest in SDI and that a high percentage favoured the development of a Star Wars defense': over 80 percent of all Americans had heard of SDI, and 'about half of that

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[7] 'President's Speech on Military Spending and a New Defense', New York Times (24 March 1983) A20., quoted in David Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War: Literature and Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 181.

[8] James, p. 200. As previously mentioned, in his study *War Stars* (1988) H. Bruce Franklin investigates 'the American cult of the superweapon', the American fascination with the ultimate weapon which could make a decisive difference to the balance of power. H. Bruce Franklin, *War Stars: The Superweapon and the American Imagination* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 11.

[9] Edward Reiss, *The Strategic Defense Initiative* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 46, 197.

[10] Reiss, p. 157.

[11] James William Gibson, *Warrior Dreams: Paramilitary Culture in Post-Vietnam America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994), p. 267.

group – the figures ranged from 41 to 69 percent, depending on the pollster and the wording of the poll – favoured the development of a defensive system.' The polls also indicated that approval of SDI was directly related to the belief that it would enable the complete defence of the nation.[12]

As Edward Reiss argues, although U.S. popular culture contained some themes oppositional to SDI – such as the 'Strangelove' myth of the mad scientist, and the 'Frankenstein's Monster' fear of technology – these were in a minority. The 'Star Wars' view of SDI was reinforced by other motifs from popular culture: these included U.S. nationalism and Exceptionalism, the ideology of anti-communism, and faith in the technical fix and the 'superweapon.'[13] Many of these motifs were touched on by Reagan in his 'Address to the Nation on Defense and National Security' on 23 March 1983. In this speech he declared that the U.S. 'does not start fights' but maintained its strength 'in order to deter and defend against aggression – to preserve freedom and peace.' He detailed the 'enormous military might' of the Soviet Union and its efforts to spread its military influence, and shared 'a vision of the future which offers hope' by embarking on a program 'to counter the awesome Soviet missile threat with measures that are defensive.' Based on the U.S.'s 'strengths in technology' and the efforts of the 'scientific community', this 'long-term research and development program' was intended to 'achieve our ultimate goal of eliminating the threat posed by strategic nuclear missiles.'[14] Likewise, these motifs are manifest in Reagan Era military SF.

Arguably, it was science fiction writers who brought the technologies and options of SDI to the military's attention and into the national political spotlight.[15] With Reagan's announcement of SDI, the subsequent debate over Star Wars divided the

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[12] FitzGerald attributes this change in public opinion to a change in Reagan's rhetoric: from the "evil empire" and offensive-weapons system rhetoric of 1983, to one of improving relations with the Soviet Union and peace intentions for the technology in 1985. Frances FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War* (New York and London: Simon Schuster, 2000), pp. 258-259.

[13] Reiss, pp. 164, 197.

[14] Ronald Reagan, 'Address to the Nation on Defense and National Security', 23 March 1983, <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1983/32383d.htm> [accessed 12 February 2015]

[15] It may even have brought to the attention of Reagan himself: not only was he a 'science fiction fan', as mentioned by Eric S. Raymond and Lou Gannon, Reagan also starred in *Murder in the Air* (1940), a film that contains an inertial projector as a directional energy weapon, which not only makes the U.S. invincible in war, but promises to become the greatest force for world peace ever discovered. Eric S. Raymond, 'A Political History of SF', 9 February 2007 (prepared for Penguicon I, November 2002), <www.catb.org/esr/writings/sf-history.html> [accessed 12 June 2015]; Lou Gannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime* (New York: Public Affairs, 1991), p. 60.

science fiction community into opposing camps and authors 'locked horns with each other in some of the most well-publicised and layman-accessible arguments about SDI.'[16] The debate was 'informed throughout by science fiction tropes and, among other issues, the problematic relation of science fiction writers to government or military agencies.'[17] Supporters of the project took active participation in the formulation of government policy.[18]

Citizens' Advisory Council on National Space Policy

After the Vietnam War one of the major developments in the relationship of SF and war was a deepening of the long standing cooperation between some SF writers and the military. From the very beginning 'militaristic science fiction and military policy coexist[ed] in the same discourse system to a surprising degree' and during the Vietnam War there was debate about the link between SF and military policy.[19] This 'strange nexus of science fiction and military futures planning' reached a climax in the 1980s.[20] By the 1980s, the relationship between the science fiction and military communities 'had become one not merely of overt common interest, cooperation, and occasional consultancy, but had evolved into joint, institutionalized future war "think tanks."'[21] One of the most notable instances of this cooperation was a conference called 'Futurist II', held at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in 1985. A successor to a top-secret conference called 'Futurist I', this meeting brought together at least forty specialists in future war and weaponry, including military personnel, futurists, and SF writers.[22] More significant in the political lobbying for the militarization of space and the Reagan Administration's

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[16] Charles E. Gannon, *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines: Technomilitary Agenda-Setting in American and British Speculative Fiction* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), p. 194.

[17] David Seed, 'The Strategic Defence Initiative: A Utopian Fantasy', in *Future Wars: The Anticipations and the Fears*, ed. by David Seed (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), pp. 180-200 (p. 180).

[18] Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War*, p. 181.

[19] Chris Hables Gray, '"There Will Be War!": Future War Fantasies and Militaristic Science Fiction in the 1980s', *Science Fiction Studies*, 21, 3 (November 1994), pp. 315-336 (pp. 316, 320). For an account of the period see, H. Bruce Franklin, 'The Vietnam War as American Science Fiction and Fantasy', *Science Fiction Studies*, 17, 3 (November 1990), pp. 341-359.

[20] Gray, pp. 315-336 (p. 327).

[21] Charles E. Gannon, 'Imag(in)ing Tomorrow's Wars and Weapons', *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice*, 21: 2 (2009), pp. 198-208 (p. 199).

[22] Gray, pp. 315-336 (p. 320). Gannon, 'Imag(in)ing Tomorrow's Wars and Weapons', pp. 198-208 (p. 200).

Strategic Defense Initiative, was the Citizens' Advisory Council on National Space Policy.

Formed in 1981 and chaired by Jerry Pournelle, the Council 'was created by joint action of the American Astronautical Society and the L-5 Society for the purpose of developing a detailed and technically feasible space policy to further the national interest.'[23] They intended to imagine a technologically viable alternative to the Cold War policy of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) and supported the militarisation of space. It met four times during the Reagan Administration, and twice after. As well as Pournelle, other members of the Council included SF writers Larry Niven, Gregory Benford, Poul Anderson, Robert Heinlein, and Greg Bear – none of whom had signed the 1968 anti-Vietnam War advertisement – as well as astronauts (including Buzz Aldrin), major physicists, aerospace industry executives, space scientists and engineers, political and business leaders, computer scientists, military strategists, and retired military officers.[24] Members of the Council claim that they were instrumental in starting the process of lobbying and advocating which led Reagan to launch the SDI in the early 1980s.[25] After the announcement of the program, some science fiction writers – including many on the Council – were central figures in promoting SDI, 'indefatigably churning out fiction and nonfiction glorifying Star Wars.'[26] Furthermore, the Council published its report *Mutual Assured Survival* (1984), proposing an interlocked system of defences, both space- and ground-based, including ballistic, particle and laser weaponry.[27] As Chad Andrews writes, military SF authors not only 'directly impacted the course of American policy and politics', their fictions 'helped construct the imaginative foundation that enabled such policies and politics in the first place.'[28]

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[23] Citizens' Advisory Council on National Space Policy, 'Report of the Spring, 1981 Council Meeting', L5 News, April 1981.

[24] Gannon, 'Imag(in)ing Tomorrow's Wars and Weapons', pp. 198-208 (p. 207). Also a member of the Council was SF publisher and editor James "Jim" Baen, who established Baen Books (focusing on adventure SF, military SF, and fantasy) in 1983. Baen was an important editor for the growing military SF subgenre during the 1970s.

[25] James, p. 200. Mark Bould, 'Rough Guide to a Lonely Planet, from Nemo to Nero', in *Red Planets: Marxism and Science Fiction*, ed. by Mark Bould and China Miéville (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2009), pp. 1-26 (p. 2).

[26] Franklin, *War Stars*, p. 200.

[27] Jerry Pournelle and Dean Ing, *Mutual Assured Survival* (New York: Baen Books, 1984).

[28] Chad Andrews, 'Technomilitary Fantasy in the 1980s: Military SF, David Drake, and the Discourse of Instrumentality', *Extrapolation*, 56, 2 (2015), pp. 139-168 (p. 164).

Pournelle and *There Will Be War*

The leading, and most outspoken, figure in science fiction's involvement with SDI was unquestionably Jerry Pournelle, Chairman of the Citizens' Advisory Council. He was one of the last discoveries of long-time *Analog* editor John W. Campbell and his work 'came to epitomize the Campbellian viewpoint'; that is, he viewed both military superiority and technological progress as necessary for the advancement of civilization.[29] Pournelle co-wrote two works important to the SDI debate, *The Strategy of Technology* (1970) and *Mutual Assured Survival* (1984), supported the High Frontier Project, and edited the *There Will Be War* anthologies, which propagandised for the SDI project, and other right-wing initiatives, and for a hawkish approach to the Cold War.

Before his first science fiction was published in 1971, Pournelle co-authored *The Strategy of Technology* (1970) with 'right-wing ideologue' Stefan Possony and retired USAF officer Francis X. Kane (both members of the future Council), a book which became 'one of the seminal documents of the SDI debate' and which, according to H. Bruce Franklin, 'may best be comprehended as science fiction.'[30] Based on the premise that 'the United States is at war', *The Strategy of Technology* attacked the lack of defence planning and advocated a 'conflict for technological dominance', calling on the U.S. military to develop high-technology weapons, including a strategic defence system.[31] The Technological War was seen as the decisive struggle of the Cold War: it was the 'direct and purposeful application of the national technological base… and of specific advances generated by the base' to attain strategic and tactical objectives and a position of strategic dominance.[32] Viewing the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction as obscene, Pournelle and Possony proposed an alternative strategic doctrine, called Assured Survival, which

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[29] Ashley also wrote that the Falkenberg series was 'simply part of a long line of Campbellian militarist sf.' Mike Ashley, *Gateways to Forever: The Story of the Science-Fiction Magazines from 1970 to 1980* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), pp. 10, 12.

[30] Franklin, *War Stars*, pp. 158, 200. Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War*, p. 184. In addition to being constantly referenced editorially by Pournelle, extracts from *The Strategy of Technology* are published throughout the *There Will Be War* series: 'The Technological War' in Vol. II, 'The Prevention of War' in Vol. V, 'Surprise' in Vol. VI, and 'Wizard Weapons' in Vol. VII.

[31] Jerry E. Pournelle and Stefan T. Possony, *The Strategy of Technology* (Cambridge, MA: University Press of Cambridge, 1970), pp. 1, 56. Kane's contributions were added to the 1972 edition, after he had retired from the military.

[32] Stefan T. Possony and J. E. Pournelle, 'The Technological War', in *There Will Be War, Volume II: Men of War*, ed. by Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1984), pp. 59-81 (pp. 62-63).

focused on guaranteeing the survival of the U.S. and as many of its citizens as possible through the development of defensive weapons and an appropriately structured military force. This doctrine of Assured Survival was adopted by the Council, and SDI was seen as a suitable method to attain this goal.

In addition, Pournelle served as director for 'organizational support' for the High Frontier, a privately-funded non-government pro-SDI pressure group, which eventually moved under the institutional umbrella of the Heritage Foundation, an ultra-conservative think-tank with close ties to the Reagan administration.[33] High Frontier was founded by Lt. General Daniel O. Graham, advisor to Reagan, former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, and later a member of the Citizens' Advisory Council. High Frontier published a report, with a foreword by Robert Heinlein, entitled *High Frontier: A New National Strategy* (1982), which was 'an influential, Reagan-endorsed tract on the pro-SDI side of the debate.'[34] As explained by Graham, High Frontier's objective – with its 'layered strategic defense', including point defense of U.S. missile silos and spaceborne interception of enemy missiles – was to formulate a national strategy that would 'nullify, or substantially reduce, the growing threat… posed by the unprecedented Soviet military buildup', replace the doctrine of MAD with a strategy of Assured Survival, and 'provide both security and incentive for realizing the enormous industrial and commercial potential of space.[35] Heinlein – who enthusiastically endorsed the writings of Pournelle and supported SDI – praised High Frontier as a substitute for the insane and stupid philosophy of MAD. Using the metaphor of MAD as 'two men at point-blank range each with a .45 aimed at the other man's bare chest', he declared that High Frontier 'places a bullet-proof vest on our bare chest'.[36] This

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[33] Gray, pp. 315-336 (p. 324). Melvin A. Goodman, *National Insecurity: The Cost of American Militarism* (San Francisco: City Light Books, 2013), p. 278.

[34] Lt-Gen. Daniel O. Graham (Ret.), *High Frontier: A New National Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: High Frontier, 1982). Gannon, *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines*, p. 195.

[35] Lt. Gen. Daniel O. Graham (Ret.), 'Project High Frontier', in *There Will Be War*, ed. by Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1983), pp. 143-145 (p. 144).

[36] He emphasises that High Frontier is 'as non-aggressive as a bullet-proof vest', that there is 'no way to kill anyone with High Frontier – all that High Frontier can do is to keep others from killing us.' Robert A. Heinlein, 'The Good News of High Frontier', in *There Will Be War*, ed. by Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1983), pp. 141-142 (p. 141). Originally published in *Survive* (September-October 1982), and, in a shortened form, used as a Foreword to *High Frontiers: A New National Strategy* by Daniel O. Graham.

metaphor of two men with cocked pistols was also used on multiple occasions by Reagan to describe the nuclear dilemma.[37]

The report *Mutual Assured Survival* (1984), written by Pournelle and fellow SF writer Dean Ing but presenting the recommendations of the Council, may be the best-known and most controversial thesis of the entire SDI debate.[38] The book was influential in the militarization of space under Reagan and was instrumental in securing funding for the SDI project. It expounds the benefits of a layered defence system, and insists that space has become *de facto* militarised – that the militarization of space took place as soon as intercontinental ballistic missiles were deployed – but then asserts a 'synergism between science and the military, during frontier explorations.'[39] Reagan signed a cover blurb for the book, which praises them for 'addressing with verse and vision the challenges to peace and to our national security' and for producing a work that 'can assist us in achieving a safer and more stable future for this country, for our allies, and, indeed, for all mankind.'[40] The book claims that, despite ineffective treaties, the Soviets 'currently have the world's only operational space weapons, and are expanding broad efforts to achieve military dominance of near-Earth space.'[41]

Pournelle's most significant contribution to the engagement with the rhetorics of the period, however, was the *There Will Be War* military SF anthologies (a nine-volume series co-edited with John F. Carr), published between 1983 and 1990, weaving together original and reprint SF short stories on military themes with selections from Rudyard Kipling and A. E. Housman sentimentalizing war and soldiering, combined with reports and statements from members of the Citizens' Advisory Council, as well as meditations on military virtue and excerpts from strategic planning documents.[42] Pournelle was 'an astute organizer tying together the disparate components of the anthologies into an ideologically cohesive unity.[43]

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[37] FitzGerald, p. 209.

[38] Gannon, *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines*, p. 195.

[39] Pournelle and Ing, p. 185.

[40] Gray, pp. 315-336 (p. 325)

[41] Pournelle and Ing, p. 99.

[42] Luckhurst, p. 200. A similar series of military SF anthologies was edited by Reginald Bretnor – historian, military theorist, author, and former horse cavalryman in the U.S. Army – collectively titled *The Future at War*, comprising *Thor's Hammer* (1979), *The Spear of Mars* (1980), and *Orion's Sword* (1980). Clearly opposed to the *There Will Be War* anthologies and their mind-set is *There Won't Be War* (1991), edited by Harry Harrison and Bruce McAllister.

[43] Andrews, pp. 139-168 (p. 140).

The anthologies reflect a strong commitment to militarism and to right-wing conservatism, and feature propaganda for the Strategic Defence Initiative – which the editors call 'probably the most important issue to face the United States in this decade' – and similar political/military programs, as well as non-fiction articles written to laud the Reagan Administration or to attack the political left.[44] They show a disdain for democracy and idealize military force. This thesis' interest in the series follows on from work by Chris Hables Gray and Chad Andrews, recognising the anthologies usefulness due to their representations of rhetoric, their relationship with the Council and 'New Right', and their immense popularity.[45] The anthologies' military SF content offers representations of key motifs for SDI such as U.S. nationalism and Exceptionalism, anti-communism, and the technical fix and the superweapon.

Vietnam Syndrome and Redeeming Vietnam

During this period no single political or cultural event polarised the military SF field in the way the Vietnam War had in the 1970s. However, the subgenre was still heavily influenced, some would say haunted, by the Vietnam War and its legacy. This influence included a continuing effort to deal with the events and attitudes of the 1970s, as well as the reproduction and interrogation of the backlash against those events and attitudes prominent in the United States under the Reagan Administration. The first major theme of 1980s military SF is the Vietnam Syndrome and efforts aimed at Redeeming Vietnam.

Two polarised opinions emerged after the United States' humbling, even humiliating, defeat in Vietnam. Many Americans – mostly liberals – believed that

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[44] Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr, 'Editor's Introduction to: Reagan vs. The Scientists' in *There Will Be War, Volume IV: Day of the Tyrant*, ed. by Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1985), p. 220 (p. 220). In addition to the *There Will Be War* series, Pournelle has 'involved himself in various other anthologies and shared-world projects celebrating the contribution that politically motivated violence might make to the advancement of the space age.' Significant among these was Pournelle's *Imperial Stars*, a sister series to *There Will Be War*, which spun off from the latter's success, and which was even more bellicose. Brian Stableford, *Historical Dictionary of Science Fiction Literature* (Lanham, MD, and Oxford, UK: The Scarecrow Press, 2004), p. 272.

[45] In particular the articles, Chris Hables Gray, '"There Will Be War": Future War Fantasies and Militaristic Science Fiction in the 1980s', *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (November 1994), pp. 315-336., and Chad Andrews, 'Technomilitary Fantasy in the 1980s: Military SF, David Drake, and the Discourse of Instrumentality', *Extrapolation*, 56, 2 (2015), pp. 139-168.

the U.S. had been 'not only foolish but also morally wrong to engage in that prolonged and bloody conflict' and that the exercise of American military power was invariably deplorable in intent and impact. Their critics insisted that the U.S. 'could have prevailed if it had summoned the will to do so', that it was the absence of American power that invited catastrophe, and that the U.S. 'must never again back down in fights for freedom.'[46] In terms of the popular culture products of these two views, the first acknowledged and dramatized the terrible consequences of war and militarism, while the second sought 'an escape hatch from the historical cataclysm by revising the script', reframing the traumas 'as a basis of national redemption.'[47]

The term 'Vietnam Syndrome' came into use in the 1980s to signify the deep reluctance in American public opinion to support U.S. military intervention abroad. This was supposedly the result of the 'traumatization' suffered during the Vietnam War; by the early 1980s the war was seen primarily as an *American* tragedy. The reimagining, or misremembering, of Vietnam transformed the war into a 'story of American victimhood', centred on specifically American sacrifice and suffering, and into the cause of a profound national identity crisis.[48] The Syndrome was 'diagnosed' by Reagan in a speech given to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Convention on 18 August 1980, in which he equated it not only with the public reluctance to support military interventions, but to feelings of guilt and doubt over the morality of America's intentions and actions during the Vietnam War. Arguing that the U.S. had fought for a 'noble cause', he also outlined the lesson he had gleaned from Vietnam: if 'we are forced to fight, we must have the means and the determination to prevail or we will not have what it takes to secure the peace' and 'we will never again ask young men to fight and possibly die in a war our government is afraid to let them win.'[49] In revisionist scholarship and popular

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[46] James T. Patterson, *Restless Giant: The United States from Watergate to Bush v. Gore* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 4.

[47] Carl Boggs and Tom Pollard, *The Hollywood War Machine: U.S. Militarism and Popular Culture* (Boulder, NV: Paradigm Publishers, 2006), p. 102.

[48] Christian Appy argues that the Vietnam War 'shattered the central tenet of American national identity – the broad faith that the United States is a unique force for good in the world, superior not only in its military and economic power, but in the quality of its government and institutions, the character and morality of its people, and its way of life.' Christian G. Appy, *American Reckoning: The Vietnam War and Our National Identity* (New York: Penguin Group, 2015), pp. xii-xiv.

[49] Ronald Reagan, 'Speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Convention', 18 August 1980, <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/reference/8.18.80.html> [accessed 2 February 2015]. Even in the late-1970s ex-President Nixon wrote, 'We had won the war militarily and politically in

culture, the war was recast as such a 'noble cause' during which the U.S. more or less fought itself, and lost. The U.S. loss was viewed as the result of what the Joint Chiefs of Staff called 'self-imposed restraints'; victory would have been possible if not for the 'influences of liberals in Congress, the anti-war movement, and the news media, who together stopped the military from unleashing its full powers of destruction.' By the late 1970s and early 1980s, 'this was not an esoteric doctrine, but a widely accepted explanation.'[50] The noble cause rhetoric sought to revive nationalist and militarist pride about the United States' intervention in Vietnam.[51]

Pathologised in this way, the Vietnam Syndrome was seen to require a cure. While for many Americans 'No More Vietnams' embodied a dovish, neo-isolationist lesson – that the U.S. should 'no longer interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries' and 'should not send its young men to fight and die abroad' – some saw a cure to the Vietnam Syndrome lying in the opposite conclusion. Hawks thought the U.S should continue its internationalist foreign policy; however, should military force be necessary, the military ought not to be restrained, have clear political backing, and 'have the full resources to wage war for clear, unambiguous victory.'[52] If the Syndrome ever contributed to military inaction, it was certainly short-lived, and it never produced a drastic military downsizing or demobilization.[53] After Vietnam, 'the arms race, huge military procurements, and proxy wars or armed interventions did not at all abate' and Americans continued to support far-reaching military commitments, notably to NATO, and continued to pursue the containment of communism.[54] Within five years of the end of the Vietnam War, American troops were sent into action in Grenada, which was followed by other 'treatments' of the

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Vietnam. But defeat was snatched from the jaws of victory because we lost the war politically in the United States.' Richard Nixon, *The Real War* (New York: Warner, 1980), p. 114., quoted in Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation*, revised edition (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), p. 259. Something reemphasised in Richard Nixon, *No More Vietnams* (New York: Avon Books, 1985), p. 97.

[50] Gibson, *Warrior Dreams*, pp. 27-28.

[51] Patrick Hagopian has discussed the 'therapeutic discourse of wounds and healing' used to remember the war, the rhetoric which portrayed the war as a scar on American society that could only be healed through national reconciliation. Patrick Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials, and the Politics of Healing* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachesetts Press, 2009), pp. 17, 19.

[52] Lisa M. Mundey, *American Militarism and Anti-Militarism in Popular Media, 1945-1970* (Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland & Company, 2012), p. 204. David L. Anderson, *The Columbia Guide to the Vietnam War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 171.

[53] Appy, p. 286.

[54] Suvin, pp. 9-34 (p. 10). Patterson, p. 99.

Syndrome, including the bombing of Libya, and President George W. H. Bush's invasion of Panama and the Gulf War.[55] This misinterpretation and reinvention of the Vietnam War also led pundits and politicians to advocate and pursue a militarist policy in Central American with little concern of mass protest or substantial public objection.[56]

Gibson and Redeeming Vietnam

According to James William Gibson, American defeat in Vietnam shattered the United States' 'long record of martial victories and the pride those victories created.'[57] Vietnam disrupted the American war story – which traditionally featured an unprovoked attack followed by glorious victory, with 'temporary victimhood… quickly forgotten in the glow of righteous retribution' – because it ended in failure. This was not just failure to 'achieve the war's stated objectives, but failure to preserve the broad conviction that America was an exceptional force for good in the world.'[58] Politically, the defeat in Vietnam meant that the post-World War Two era of overwhelming American political and military power in global affairs – what *Time* and *Life* magazine publisher Henry Luce had prophesied would be the 'American Century' – was over after only thirty years.[59] Several other defeats in the 1970s also hurt the United States, including the overthrow of the Shah in Iran and the Iranian hostage crisis, the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, guerrilla war in El Salvador, and the OPEC oil embargo, all of which 'pointed to a world no longer under American control.' Culturally, the defeat created a crisis in American national identity. In a nation which had 'always celebrated war and the warrior' and

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[55] Marilyn B. Young, *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1991), p. 315. However, one widely agreed upon lesson produced by the Syndrome – that the U.S. should not engage in long, inconclusive wars with high American casualties – remained in place for a quarter-century, before being forgotten after 11 September, 2001. From 1975 to 2000 the United States directly and indirectly engaged in dozens of military operations and wars around the world, yet the 'total number of U.S. troops killed in warfare during that entire twenty-five-year period was under eight hundred.' Appy, pp. 286-287.
[56] Jim Neilson, *Warring Fictions: American Literary Culture and the Vietnam War Narrative* (Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi, 1998), p. 3.
[57] James William Gibson, 'Redeeming Vietnam: Techno-Thriller Novels of the 1980s', *Cultural Critique*, 19 (Autumn 1991), pp. 179-202 (p. 181)
[58] Appy, p. 228.
[59] Henry R. Luce, 'The American Century', *LIFE Magazine*, 17 February 1941, pp. 61-66. Republished as Henry R. Luce, 'The American Century', *Diplomatic History*, 23, 2 (Spring 1999), pp. 159-171.

in which martial victories had been 'crucially important both to the national identity and to the personal identity of many Americans', particularly men, Vietnam disrupted the American self-image. This disruption of cultural identity was intensified by other social transformations, like the civil rights and ethnic nationalist movements and their challenge to white racial dominance, the feminist movement and its challenge to traditional male and female roles, and massive waves of immigration from Mexico, Central America, Vietnam, Cambodia, Korea and Taiwan.[60]

The 1970s were a time of deep crisis for traditional war mythology, and the cultural reproduction of war and the warrior. However, paradoxically, 'the old mythology of American martial prowess and moral virtue instead assumed an even greater hold on the popular imagination' during the 1980s, with the creation of images and narratives of new wars fought and won by American heroes. This period 'saw the emergence of a highly energized culture of war and the warrior.'[61] Gibson believes that there were 'two modes of victorious warfare' created in novels, comic books, film and television, which assumed the validity of the conservative critique of U.S. policy during the Vietnam War. The first mode was the story of the 'paramilitary' warrior (examined in Chapter Seven). Paramilitary culture did not, however, redeem the military as an institution. Instead it frequently portrayed the military as 'fundamentally corrupted by politics, careerism in the officer corps, and institutional rigidity' and endorsing individual warriors or small elite groups rather than 'the military's code of high-technology, capital-intensive warfare.' The second mode was the technothriller.[62] Gibson's arguments for the 'regeneration through violence' of the technothriller – in a way that legitimized the military as an institution – can also be applied to the majority of military SF during the 1980s.[63] Although, as Gray writes, technothrillers are 'more focused on current politics and near future war than the work of militaristic pure-sf writers… the themes are

[60] Gibson, *Warrior Dreams*, pp. 10-11. Gibson, 'Redeeming Vietnam: Techno-Thriller Novels of the 1980s', pp. 179-202 (pp. 181-182).
[61] Gibson, *Warrior Dreams*, pp. 24, 9. Gibson, 'Redeeming Vietnam: Techno-Thriller Novels of the 1980s', pp. 179-202 (p. 183).
[62] Gibson, 'Redeeming Vietnam: Techno-Thriller Novels of the 1980s', pp. 179-202 (pp. 183-184).
[63] Gibson, 'Redeeming Vietnam: Techno-Thriller Novels of the 1980s', pp. 179-202 (p. 184).
Term adopted from Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973).

remarkably similar.' [64] Among these similarities mentioned by Gibson are: performing a 'recuperative' or healing function, attempting to restore the military to its former, pre-Vietnam War, position of prestige and power; 'suturing' the wounds of Vietnam-derived views of war, providing 'good' war stories of future battles to replace the 'bad' ones from Vietnam; and reassertion of the primacy of 'heroic male warriors, magic weapons, and horrific enemies as fundamental cultural categories for Americans to conceptualize and experience the world.'[65] The appeal of these SF 'romances for men' is the same as that of the more traditional action-adventure pulp novels – the glorification of war.[66]

Redeeming Vietnam and Military SF

While Jerry Pournelle's *There Will Be War* anthologies were unabashedly fostering conservative ideas about the 'noble cause' and the liberal 'betrayal' in Vietnam, and reframing the American experience as a 'victory', Timothy Zahn was publishing novels that recuperated and redeemed post-Vietnam views of war and the soldier. At the same time Lucius Shepard and Karl Hansen produced works that bitterly did the opposite. In all these cases, however, the narratives overwhelmingly emphasised the experience of 'American' soldiers – depicted as victims or underdogs, or villains or murderers – rather than the Vietnamese (or their allegorical counterparts).

As in his Falkenberg series, in the *There Will Be War* anthologies Pournelle conducted a campaign against what he saw as the liberal betrayal of the United States in Vietnam and elsewhere. In the first volume, he writes that the U.S. Army in Vietnam never lost a battle, 'except with the American news media'; evidenced by the Tet Offensive, 'one of the most decisive victories in history', which was portrayed in the news media as a tragedy and defeat. In addition, he mentions that South Vietnam fell to an invasion from the North and was 'defeated by the Congress of the United States, which deliberately refused to allow the President to enforce the Geneva accords.'[67] In the next volume Pournelle re-emphasises that the U.S.

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[64] Gray, pp. 315-336 (p. 322).
[65] Gibson, 'Redeeming Vietnam: Techno-Thriller Novels of the 1980s', pp. 179-202 (pp. 198-200).
[66] Gibson, *Warrior Dreams*, p. 43.
[67] Jerry Pournelle, 'Mercenaries and Military Virtue', in *There Will Be War*, ed. by Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1983), pp. 254-259 (p. 258).

was 'never defeated in the field, instead, it was 'defeated at home, by an enemy we could not fight.' The war was not lost because it was unwinnable, but because the nation 'lost its will': the United States withdrew, 'the dominoes fell, and the blood baths began. It is no good telling ourselves anything different.'[68] The third volume also stresses this view of victory in the guerrilla war being 'thrown away', of victory being portrayed as defeat by the news media, and of South Vietnam being 'lost to the failure of U.S. will.'[69] By the fifth volume, Pournelle was galvanised enough to argue that the U.S. Army had actually won the Vietnam War in 1972, only to be betrayed by 'the contempt of the media and the intellectuals', and a disinterested Congress, which led to the ignominious withdrawal from Vietnam in 1975.[70]

Zahn's Blackcollars and Cobras

Timothy Zahn, with a Master of Science from the University of Illinois (1975), had his first story appear in *Analog* in September 1979. Zahn published two relevant military SF series' during the 1980s, the couplet comprising *The Blackcollar* (1983) and *Blackcollar: The Backlash Mission* (1986), and the trilogy comprising *Cobra* (1985), *Cobra Strike* (1986), and *Cobra Bargain* (1988).[71] Zahn took the view that while the Vietnam War may have been wrong, America's soldiers remained an honourable, patriotic, and capable force, and his works undertake the rehabilitation of the U.S.'s Vietnam forces.[72] Both series serve to 'redeem' Vietnam-era views of the soldier, providing heroic male warriors and good war stories, through narratives of 'post-war' soldiers refighting their respective conflicts.

In the first series, the blackcollars are elite, martial-arts-trained, *nunchaku-* and *shuriken*-armed, drug-enhanced guerrilla warriors whose 'wartime exploits were

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[68] Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr, 'Editor's Introduction to: `Caster', in *There Will Be War, Volume II: Men of War*, ed. by Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1984), pp. 101-106 (p. 101).
[69] Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr, 'Editor's Introduction to: The Miracle-Workers', in *There Will Be War, Volume III: Blood and Iron*, ed. by Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1984), pp. 176-180 (pp. 177, 179).
[70] Jerry Pournelle, 'Introduction: Warriors and Statesmen', in *There Will Be War, Volume V: Warrior*, ed. by Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1986), pp. 9-13 (p. 12).
[71] *Blackcollar* (2006) collects the *The Blackcollar* and *Blackcollar: The Backlash Mission*. *The Cobra Trilogy* (2009) collects *Cobra*, *Cobra Strike*, and *Cobra Bargain*.
[72] Stephen Prince, 'Introduction: Movies and the 1980s', in *American Cinema of the 1980s: Themes and Variations*, ed. by Stephen Prince (New Brunswick and New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2007), pp. 1-21 (p. 15).

legendary' during the unsuccessful war of the Terran Democratic Empire against the Ryqril.[73] The blackcollars received heavy combat training, 'psychor' mental conditioning, and a special drug routine, including a drug code-named 'Backlash' for enhanced speed and reflexes.[74] Forty years after the Ryqril invasion of Earth, the blackcollars of Plinry begin to take action aimed at redeeming their failure and restoring the independence of humanity. After the war they had suffered 'ridicule and disrespect', from a populace who understood neither their abilities nor their limitations, all while they had been 'dying in degrees from the inside out as their hope of doing something meaningful faded with the years.' Now they welcome the 'chance to live as blackcollars again, the chance for one last shot at the collies and their Ryqril overlords.'[75] Likewise, the blackcollars of Denver, encountered in *The Backlash Mission*, suffer the contempt of the civilian population after the war: unlike those of Plinry, however, they accept that the 'war is *over*... and we *lost*', and decided to survive, by any means available. They make a living as hired-hands for organised crime organisations – a fact some of them, such as Kanai, were ashamed of – but also get the opportunity to redeem themselves.[76]

In the second series, the Cobras are cybernetically-enhanced soldiers recruited, modified and deployed to the Troft-occupied world of Adirondack during the successful war – a rewriting of Vietnam – of the Dominion of Man against the Troft Empire. The Cobras are enhanced with 'ceramic laminae' covering their bones, ligament strengthening, servomotor joints, small finger-tip lasers, an arcthrower in their body cavity, an antiarmor laser in their left calf, sonic weapons, and optical and auditory enhancers, all connected by a nanocomputer preprogrammed with combat reflexes. The result is 'the most deadly guerrilla warriors mankind has ever produced.'[77] The post-war alienation and trauma of the soldier is reflected in two physiological concerns for Cobras retiring from the army and returning home. First, their nanocomputers cannot be reprogrammed or removed without excessive trauma to brain tissue, meaning they retain their 'combat reflexes' even in civilian life.[78] This exacerbates civilian assumptions that the Cobras have been changed by

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[73] Timothy Zahn, *Blackcollar* (Riverdale, NY: Baen Books, 2006), p. 7.
[74] Zahn, *Blackcollar*, p. 14.
[75] Zahn, *Blackcollar*, pp. 54, 135.
[76] Zahn, *Blackcollar*, pp. 405, 338-339.
[77] Timothy Zahn, *The Cobra Trilogy* (Riverdale, NY: Baen Books, 2009), pp. 17-18.
[78] Zahn, *The Cobra Trilogy*, p. 18.

the war, become dangerous, something to fear.[79] Second, in the long-term they suffer from Cobra Syndrome, when their bodies react to the ceramic laminae, the implanted weaponry, the servomotors, and joint strengtheners, 'precipitating the arthritis and anemia' that bring their lives to a premature end.[80] The civilian government develops a solution to the 'Cobra problem' – employing them in the initial exploration and colonisation of a new world – giving them the opportunity to use their skills and abilities, and prove their loyalty and usefulness to civilian society.[81]

Hansen, Shepard and Other Vietnams

Two antimilitaristic books – Karl Hansen's *War Games* (1981) and Lucius Shepard's *Life During Wartime* (1986) – in a way serve as a counterpoint to redemptive narratives like those of Timothy Zahn. They do not perform a recuperative function, suture the wounds of Vietnam-derived views of war, or reassert the primacy of heroic male warriors.

Lucius Shepard was a poet and musician who first began to write unconventional science fiction and fantasy stories in 1983. Based in part on his Nebula Award-winning novella, 'R&R' (*Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, April 1986), and several other short stories, *Life During Wartime* is the tale of U.S. Army artillery specialist David Mingolla, a psychic drafted into the 'Psicorps' to fight in a psychotropically-embellished, near-future, Vietnam-style conflict in the jungles of Central America. [82] In the first part of the novel, Mingolla is on R&R in Guatemala, attempting to unwind from the horrors of the conflict, 'a conflict having no patterns, no orderly confrontations, but which, like a plague, could pop up anywhere at any time and kill you… a battle without resolution.'[83] It describes 'in vivid vernacular detail the drug-saturated atmosphere and confused decay in and around the army, and Mingolla's eventual ethical revulsion from such dehumanization.' The second part of the novel, after Mingolla has undergone the drug treatment to turn him into

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[79] Zahn, *The Cobra Trilogy*, pp. 110, 115.
[80] Zahn, *The Cobra Trilogy*, p. 599.
[81] Zahn, *The Cobra Trilogy*, p. 149.
[82] Lucius Shepard, *Life During Wartime* (New York and London: Bantam New Fiction, 1987), p. 20.
[83] Shepard, *Life During Wartime*, pp. 56, 373.

a psychic and half-crazed killing machine, involves 'an overlong confusion of ESP, love and treachery' as Mingolla discovers that global power struggles and war are the result of an international conspiracy between two groups of psychics.[84] The novel has been called a 'searing portrayal of the soul-destroying immorality of contemporary warfare.'[85] Mingolla develops a view himself, with reason, as the 'bad guy' – 'fucking', as he put it, 'the history of rebellion, of the Army of the Poor, of brutalized peasants and Indians.'[86] Shepard's 'special blend of science fiction and magic realism mixes the Vietnam War of the past, the Latin American "low-intensity conflict" of the 1980s, and a future combining the most grotesque elements of both' into an apocalyptic vision of war and its aftermath, in opposition to the 'militarist fantasies' prevalent in U.S. culture during the 1980s. According to H. Bruce Franklin, Shepard's extrapolation of the evolving Vietnam in Latin America 'into a future nightmare where devastating technology is under the control of unrestrained depravity' is also presented succinctly in 'Salvador' (*The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, April 1984).[87] Much like *Life During Wartime*, 'Salvador' follows a U.S Special Forces soldier and his platoon, searching for Sandinista patrols in El Salvador prior to an invasion of Nicaragua. As with Mingolla, these soldiers rely on drug ampules to stay calm and focus their rage, and discover that their increasing drug use makes it difficult to distinguish between reality and hallucination.[88]

Karl Hansen's *War Games* is the war story, and life story, of Lance Corporal Marc Detrs, combat cybrid – physiologically and cybernetically augmented soldier – of the First Ghost Cavalry, self-proclaimed 'mercenary killer of elves.'[89] Dietrs, heir to an aristocratic family on a decadent Earth enlists in the Combrid Corps as part of his plan to find and control the 'timestone', which would allow him to see and manipulate the future for his own benefit. Like Shepard, Hansen refuses to redeem or recuperate the Vietnam experience. In this novel Earth is at war with the 'elves'

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[84] Suvin, pp. 9-34 (p. 18).

[85] Michael Levy, 'Life During Warfare by Lucius Shepard, 1987', *Anatomy of Wonder*, ed. by Neil Barron, 5th edition, (Westport, CT, and London: Libraries Unlimited, 2004), p. 375 (p. 375).

[86] Shepard, *Life During Wartime*, p. 154.

[87] H. Bruce Franklin, *Vietnam and Other American Fantasies* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), pp. 167-168.

[88] Lucius Shepard, 'Salvador', *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, April 1984, pp. 8-23.

[89] Karl Hansen, *War Games* (New York: Playboy Paperbacks, 1981), p. 65.

of Titan, the colonists who tend the crystalline forests.[90] Earth controls the space lanes, but 'on the ground, it was another matter altogether': there the rebels fight as guerrillas and have the advantage because it is their native land, they 'knew the terrain and had the support of the local populace.' The elves can 'live off the land' and fight – using tactics of concealment, sniping, and the use of booby-traps – with just the equipment they could carry on their backs.'[91]

The novel acknowledges the popular romanticisation and glorification of war but goes on to subvert these views. Dietrs relates his early thoughts on the Hybrid Wars, which 'had been going on for as long as I could remember, but… had never seemed entirely real.' Each night the 'holos' brought

> a fragment of heroic fantasy into the living rooms of old Earth. There was lots of exotic scenery: Martian deserts, volcanoes on Io, vapour canyons on Europa, Titanian crystal forests, the hydrocarbon glaciers of Iapetus. And it was the stuff of heroes: outnumbered Terran troops bravely defending the Empire from rebel brigands. Sailors scurried among the rigging of gravships patrolling the space lanes, cyrines streaked across the vacuum on boarding wires to fight hand to hand among the struts of pirate ships, sleek trigee fighters rose from their carriers to engage rebel craft…

However, of most appeal to the young Dietrs is the Combrid Corps' Ghost Cavalry, the combat hybrids who conduct pre-emptive strikes on rebels. He is swept up by the recruiting propaganda of the holos: hoverbuses disgorging wraith-like and not-quite-human combrids from their bellies, who 'floated gently to the ground, supported by pseudograv thrusters in their battle packs, firing bursts of pulsar beams downward.'[92] Despite the awareness of the holos propaganda, Dietrs admits that he enjoys soldiering and calls the Cavalry 'more fun than anything I'd ever done before – like a hunting trip with your buddies, half of whom were women.'[93] However, he is also aware of the 'disturbing dichotomy' he perceives in being a soldier: nothing

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[90] The elves are of 'human stock' but have been adapted to the native conditions of Titan: they are tall with hollow, pneumaticized bones, gliding skin flaps between arms and legs, large pointed ears, lemur eyes, dense grey fur and brown adipose, and they breathed hydrocarbon air and obtained oxygen from digesting oxides. Hansen, pp. 80-81.
[91] Hansen, pp. 17-18, 82.
[92] Hansen, pp. 17-18.
[93] Hansen, p. 65.

is more exciting than war but at the same time soldiers endure the constant threat of death. This dichotomy, according to Dietrs, often results in combrids going 'bonkers' and being shipped Luna-side for 'rehypnotraining.'[94] This enjoyment of war is re-emphasised when Dietrs and Grychn, an old friend and rebel, are on the run and spend time hiding in an elf village. While Grychn and the elf leader recollect past raids and encounters with combrids and spooks, Dietrs begins to 'feel the old thrill again… The old excitement of combat came back to me – wicked and brutal.' He had always enjoyed 'playing Cowboys and Indians.' Dietrs even ponders the idea of joining the elves – reasoning that he would 'make a good guerrilla… it would be fun' – but decides that when he finds the timestone a 'nickel-and-dime rebellion' would be a waste of his time, instead 'there would be whole planets to conquer.'[95]

The dreams of 'redeeming Vietnam', recovering from the other 'disappointments and traumas' of the late-1960s and 1970s, and restoring people's confidence in their country, were not Reagan's alone, but 'a widespread, collective response among the American people.' Reagan's candidacy and Presidency provided a 'formal channel' to translate these dreams into practice.[96] Too often in the 1980s, however, healing the wounds of the 1970s meant patching up America's 'conventional myths and values, rather than subjecting them to necessary criticism and revision.'[97] Reagan Era military SF, and the Strategic Defense Initiative itself, were energised by a belief in American Exceptionalism and a New American Militarism derived from this patriotic nationalism.

American Exceptionalism and the New American Militarism

SDI rested on a fundamentally nationalistic and militaristic premise. In Reagan's view, Star Wars would revalidate American Exceptionalism, by negating the strategy of Mutual Assured Destruction and placing the United States and its people beyond the reach of any would-be adversary, thus providing an invulnerability that

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[94] Hansen, p. 82.
[95] Hansen, pp. 233, 234.
[96] Gibson, *Warrior Dreams*, p. 269.
[97] Rick Berg and John Carlos Rowe, 'The Vietnam War and American Memory', in *The Vietnam War and American Culture*, ed. by John Carlos Rowe and Rick Berg (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 1-17 (p. 10)

'would reaffirm America's uniqueness among all the world's nations and among all nations in history.' Reagan made the fusion of military strength with Exceptionalism the core of his efforts to revive national self-confidence, and played a significant role in conjuring up the myths that nurtured and sustained American militarism. [98] The second major theme of 1980s military SF was American Exceptionalism, which, under Reagan, was combined with a New American Militarism.

The belief in U.S. Exceptionalism presumes that the United States 'was the closest any people had ever come to a virtuous and equitable society' and had a 'responsibility to share this remarkable achievement with others.'[99] As historian Howard Zinn writes, the core of this Exceptionalism is the idea 'that the United States alone has the right, whether by divine sanction or moral obligation, to bring civilization, or democracy, or liberty to the rest of the world, by violence if necessary.'[100] This elitist and imperialistic impulse – indeed, mission – has a long history: the writings of several scholars – David Gelernter, Godfrey Hodgson, Seymour Lipset, Deborah Madsen, and Byron Shafer, among others – are especially insightful in explaining the origins and character of this idea. [101] American exceptionalism was a fantasy that permitted U.S. citizens 'to achieve their national identity through the disavowal of U.S. imperialism.'[102]

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[98] Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans are Seduced by War* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 138, 99.

[99] Anderson, p. 16.

[100] Howard Zinn, 'The Power and the Glory: Myths of American Exceptionalism,' *Boston Review*, 30, 3 (Summer 2005), pp. 20-22 (p. 20), quoted in Geoff Martin and Erin Steuter, *Pop Culture Goes to War: Enlisting and Resisting Militarism in the War on Terror* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), p. 35.

[101] James W. Ceaser, 'The Origins and Character of American Exceptionalism', *American Political Thought*, 1 (Spring 2012), pp. 1-25; David Gelernter, *Americanism: The Fourth Great Western Religion* (New York: Doubleday, 2007); Godfrey Hodgson, *The Myth of American Exceptionalism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009); Michael Kammen, 'The Problem of American Exceptionalism: A Reconsideration,' *American Quarterly*, 45 (March 1993), pp. 1-43.; Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (New York: Norton, 1996); Justin Blake Litke, 'American Exceptionalism: From Exemplar to Empire' (unpublished PhD thesis: Georgetown University, 2010); Deborah L. Madsen, *American Exceptionalism* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1998); Byron Shafer, *Is America Different?: A New Look at American Exceptionalism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991); Sylvia Soderlind and James Taylor Carson (eds.), *American Exceptionalisms: From Winthrop to Winfrey* (Albany, NY: State University of New York press, 2012); Stephen M. Walt, 'The Myth of American Exceptionalism', op-ed, *Foreign Policy* November 2011).

[102] Donald E. Pease, *The New American Exceptionalism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), p. 20.

Along with the post-Vietnam crisis of national identity, of national 'trauma' and 'victimhood', came a desire to re-create a pre-Vietnam sense of American uniqueness and moral certainty and to repair the cultural damage to the U.S. sense of patriotism and pride. This resulted in renewed expressions of American Exceptionalism, but 'it was a far more embittered and fragile faith than it had been in the decades before the Vietnam War.'[103] Related to this renewal of American Exceptionalism as a response to the crisis of American national identity was many Americans' embrace of conservatism in social, economic and political life during the 1980s. Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner suggest that after the period of self-doubt and isolationism following Vietnam, the conservative means of counteracting this national trauma emerged through 'a triumph of the will, a purgation of doubt through action, and an interventionist military stance that brooked no restraint.'[104] On the path to political ascendancy, conservatives found new allies in culturally conservative political liberals, forming the foundations of neoconservatism.[105] Neoconservatism's aim was to reverse the judgements of the 1960s, to repair the political and cultural damage done by that decade, and to restore American power and assertiveness on the world stage.[106]

Although the Vietnam War gave rise, by that conflict's end, to a public mood seemingly more supportive of cultural products that questioned militarism, it also 'induced a powerful reaction from Americans who refused to accept the war's apparent verdict and who viewed with alarm the changes the war gave birth to or encouraged.'[107] The antimilitarism of the 1960s and 1970s created a conservative backlash and the resurgence of open and vehement militarism in the United States.[108] As Michael Sherry writes, America's post-Vietnam militarisation 'was more self-reflective than ever', its purpose to bolster how Americans felt about themselves rather than to shape the world: it might be said that militarisation in

[103] Appy, p. xviii.
[104] Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner, *Camera Politica: The Politics and Ideology of Contemporary American Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 197-198., quoted in Jan Johnson-Smith, *American Science Fiction TV: Star Trek, Stargate and Beyond* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005), p. 126.
[105] 'Conservatism', in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of American Cultural and Intellectual History, Volume 1*, ed. by Joan Shelley Rubin and Scott E. Casper (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 234-240 (p. 238).
[106] Bacevich, p.70.
[107] Bacevich, p. 34.
[108] Mundey, p. 204.

America was 'degenerating into – or coming full circle back to – simple militarism', as defined by Alfred Vagts, author of *A History of Militarism* (1937).[109] This resulted, in the 1980s, with demands 'to rebuild the American arsenal and to restore American self-confidence', the celebration of soldierly values, and 'the search for ways to make force more usable.' There 'emerged ideas, attitudes, and myths conducive to militarism.'[110] As Andrew J. Bacevich argues this 'new American militarism' was the 'handiwork of several disparate groups that shared little in common apart from being intent on undoing the purportedly nefarious effects of the 1960s', but that 'none of these acted out of motives that were inherently dishonourable', they just saw military power as the apparent solution to any number of problems.[111]

American Exceptionalism and Military SF

Both exceptionalism and concomitant militarism are core to Jerry Pournelle's *There Will Be War* anthologies: the Preface to *Volume II: Men of War* makes this clear with its claim that in 1787 'a remarkably talented group of men met in Philadelphia to institutionalize the first – and in some ways the last – real revolution in history', producing an exceptional nation, and that the military is required because now 'not only the blessings of liberty, but our posterity themselves, are threatened.'[112] Likewise, the anthologies are explicitly based on the assumption that war is inevitable and peace is just a temporary condition. While the first volume acknowledges that 'everyone desires peace', it goes on to declare that, historically, 'peace has only been bought by men of war.'[113] In his introduction to the seventh volume, *Call to Battle*, Pournelle argues again that war is inevitable: 'If [today] there are no formal wars, there is no shortage of combat and death; nor is the

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[109] Sherry, pp. 339-340. Alfred Vagt, *A History of Militarism: Romance and Realities of a Profession* (New York: Norton, 1937).

[110] Bacevich, pp. 207, 176.

[111] Bacevich, pp. 6, 207. These groups includes including soldiers seeking to rehabilitate their profession, intellectuals fearing the loss of confidence at home, conservative Christians dismayed by the collapse of traditional morality, strategists wrestling with the implications of defeat in Vietnam and of nuclear weapons, politicians seeking to expand their influence, and suppliers of popular culture looking to make money.

[112] Jerry Pournelle, 'Preface: To Provide for the Common Defense', in *There Will Be War, Volume II: Men of War*, ed. by Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1984), pp. 11-14 (pp. 11-12).

[113] Jerry Pournelle, 'Preface', in *There Will Be War*, ed. by Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1983), pp. 11-14 (p. 11).

situation likely to change'; he also writes that 'if you would have peace, you must be prepared for war… If these books need justification, that will serve well enough.'[114] This section examines two authors in particular who engage with the theme of American Exceptionalism and militarism: David Brin in *Startide Rising* (1983) and *The Uplift War* (1987), approving of such ideas and attitudes, and Barry Longyear in *Manifest Destiny* (1980), criticising such ideas and attitudes.

Brin and American Exceptionalism

Hugo, Locus, Campbell, and Nebula Award-winning author David Brin is an astrophysicist and space scientist and frequent futurist consultant for a variety of government agencies and major corporations. Both of Brin's contributions to the military SF subgenre – *Startide Rising* and *The Uplift War* – are part of his Uplift Series. Set in an intergalactic civilization perpetuated by the act of 'uplift', in which 'patron' species genetically modify pre-sapient 'client' species into sapiency, in these books humanity is an anomaly. Humanity is a sapient species with no apparent patron race and which had, pre-contact with the wider galaxies, already uplifted two species, dolphins (fins) and chimpanzees (chimps or chims). In *Startide Rising* the Earthclan exploration vessel *Streaker*, crewed by uplifted dolphins and their human patrons, discovers a colossal derelict armada and, pursued by alien fleets from throughout the Five Galaxies, fights for survival on and around the world of Kithrup. Occurring around the same time as *Startide Rising* but in another part of the galaxy, *The Uplift War* details the invasion, sparked by the events of the former book, of the Earthclan colony world Garth, heavily populated by uplifted chimpanzees, who, with their human allies, must battle their ruthless birdlike Gubru occupiers.

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[114] Jerry Pournelle, 'Introduction: Call to Battle', in *There Will Be War, Volume VII: Call to Battle!*, ed. by Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1988), pp. 1-6 (p. 1, 2). This idea was also raised in Reginald Bretnor's *The Future at War* anthologies, for example in T. R. Fehrenbach's 'The Ultimate Weapon', in which Fehrenbach – Lieutenant Colonel T. R. Fehrenbach, U.S. Army (Ret.), author of *Lone Star*, a definitive history of his native state of Texas, and *This Kind of War*, a strategic and tactical history of the Korean War – writes that there is 'little doubt that there will be future war', but this is good because 'war is too useful to human beings to be eschewed' and war 'might be described as the rational act of a perhaps ultra-rational species.' T.R. Fehrenbach, 'The Ultimate Weapon', *The Future at War, Volume II: The Spear of Mars*, ed. by Reginald Bretnor (New York: Baen Books, 1980), pp. 210-229 (p. 211).

Darren Harris-Fain argues that it is difficult to imagine 'a work of fiction in which the American mythos becomes metaphor more forcefully' than in Brin's Uplift Series:

> The common assumption of humanity's superiority found in much American SF of the Golden Age, which Brin revives for a new era in these space operas, could thus be seen as an extension of the American mythos, which in turn echoes biblical beliefs in the idea of a chosen people. But in Brin's Uplift series, humanity (and by extension the species it uplifts) is special not because it is the select object of God's favour or because of its possession of a unique national identity, but because of its unusual combination of toughness and tenderness, of hard-nosed practicality and starry-eyed optimism.[115]

Harris-Fain explains that Earth's sentient species, 'unlike the more staid and cautious older races of the universe, are ambitious, energetic, and lacking in reverence for established ways of doing things.'[116] The Terrans are unique, as mentioned, because they lack a patron: the three races of Sol are proud of their difference from all other races, of their status as the 'orphans' of Earth.[117] The humans respect their clients, finding the 'idea of treating fins as clients were usually treated in the galaxy… repulsive': humanity refused to demand 'a hundred thousand years of servitude from its clients' as Galactic law allowed, and rules are followed just so 'humans and chimps and fins will act in just the right way when Galactics are around', but under normal circumstances the species live as equals.[118] Few Galactic Clans 'believed or understood how much freedom had been given dolphins and chims by the humans of Earth.'[119] Their innovativeness also distinguishes them from the rest of Galactic civilisation: not only do the 'wolflings' preach revolutionary uplift practices, but they refuse to grow reliant on the Galactic Library – like the Galactics who had become decadent, uncreative, unadaptable, and unimaginative – and consider the Library 'a honey pot – tempting, and possibly nourishing, but also a terrible trap.' This could be seen as arrogant, when 'humans

[115] Darren Harris-Fain, *Understanding Contemporary American Science Fiction: The Age of Maturity, 1970-2000* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), pp. 84-85.
[116] Harris-Fain, p. 84.
[117] David Brin, *Startide Rising* (Toronto and New York: Bantam Books, 1983), p. 79.
[118] Brin, *Startide Rising*, pp. 7-8, 67.
[119] David Brin, *The Uplift War* (Toronto and New York: Bantam Books, 1987), p. 32.

sometimes boasted too loudly that they were the only species now living who had bootstrapped themselves into space without anybody's help.'[120]

Longyear and Manifest Destiny

The attitudes of American exceptionalism are also extrapolated and exaggerated in the military SF works of Barry B. Longyear, although Longyear is much more pessimistic and cynical than Brin. This is most evident is his collection *Manifest Destiny* (1980), set in a loose future history in which the author characterises humanity, governed by the United States of Earth (U.S.E.), as a belligerent race expanding into the galaxy at the expense of other species.[121] As David Seed writes, Longyear – who served in the U.S. Army (1962-1965) as a HAWK missile and launcher technician – 'historicises' the U.S.'s conversion of military superiority into a right of conquest, justified by exceptionalism.[122]

In this future, high school students are taught a 'simplistic, highly romanticized, overblown account of the human expansion into space… highlighting the invincible, inevitable nature of human force', and are indoctrinated with the belief that 'humanity, because of its nature and tradition, was meant to rule.'[123] In addition, the guiding principle of the Government of the United States of Earth is that 'in all related matters that shall come before it', it 'will decide all such matters in accordance with the Manifest Destiny of Man, that He shall reign supreme in this and in any and all other galaxies of the Universe.'[124] While in consensus reality the U.S.A.'s concept of manifest destiny – which has provided both an organising worldview and an ultimate goal for American society since the 1840s – has been redefined as being more about spreading 'civilisation' and 'uplift', the U.S.E.'s determination for galactic expansion and dominance follows the more traditional

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[120] Brin, *Startide Rising*, pp. 102, 114. Brin, *The Uplift War*, p. 30.
[121] His thematic focus is explicit in the work's title.
[122] Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War*, p. 92.
[123] Barry B. Longyear, 'Savage Planet', in *Manifest Destiny* (London and Sydney: Futura Publications, 1982), pp. 167-199 (p. 169). 'Savage Planet' first appeared in the February 1980 issue of *Analog*.
[124] Barry B. Longyear, 'The Resolve', in *Manifest Destiny* (London and Sydney: Futura Publications, 1982), pp. 9-10 (p. 9).

conquest model; in both cases, however, the result is 'a trail of blood' and near constant warfare.[125]

The belligerence of humanity, and species of similar attitude, encourages the formation of a 'union of quadrants' through which such races may be controlled or destroyed. Earth long refuses to be a signatory to the Ninth Quadrant Council of Planets and the United Quadrants of the Milky Way Galaxy. Transfiguring anti-Soviet rhetoric and Cold War fears of the gulag, the President-General expounds to the Legislative Assembly the dangers of submission to the United Quadrants:

> Shall we rule this Galaxy, or be ruled? Shall we follow our own destinies as free and independent men and women, or shall we submit to the despotism of a host of reptilian and insect-like creatures who would dictate to the human race where it may and may not exist? I speak, of course, in reference to this sham of a democratic league of planets…[126]

Longyear's United States of Earth eventually becomes a signatory to the Charter of the Ninth Quadrant Federation and, in turn, of the Charter of the United Quadrants. This results in the amendment of its core resolution to focus on the 'Manifest Destiny of Intelligent Life, that it shall be self-determined and free from either the coercion of its own kind, or from any other kind of life, in this and in all other galaxies of the Universe.'[127] Set before Earth's acceptance of the United Quadrants, the short story 'Enemy Mine' comments on the patriotic nationalism and anti-communism resulting from American Exceptionalism and militarism, suggesting alternatives to these attitudes.[128] Set in the midst of a war – occasioned by human expansionism – between the United States of Earth and the Dracon Chamber, two pilots, the human Lieutenant Willis E. Davidge and the reptilian toad-like Jeriba Shigan, crash land on a desolate world and are forced to work together, and eventually become friends, in order to survive. The Cold War allegory of the

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[125] Barry B. Longyear, 'Legislative Record, November 5, 2052', in *Manifest Destiny* (London and Sydney: Futura Publications, 1982), pp. 13-14 (p. 13).

[126] Barry B. Longyear, 'Legislative Record, June 6, 2071', in *Manifest Destiny* (London and Sydney: Futura Publications, 1982), pp. 79-81 (p. 79).

[127] Barry B. Longyear, 'The Resolve, Amended', in *Manifest Destiny* (London and Sydney: Futura Publications, 1982), p. 185 (p. 185).

[128] The Hugo and Nebula Award-winning 'Enemy Mine' first appeared in the September 1979 issue of *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, and was subsequently adapted into a film, *Enemy Mine* (1985), and a novelisation, also titled *Enemy Mine* (1985), with David Gerrold.

interspecies conflict allows Longyear to depict two enemies transformed by their circumstances, learning to appreciate the common terms of reference between their civilisations and to accept their philosophical and political differences.[129]

Bujold, Cherryh, and Antimilitarism

The Reagan Era also saw the emergence of what Darko Suvin calls 'feminized military SF series', as epitomised by Lois McMaster Bujold's early Miles Vorkosigan novels and C. J. Cherryh's Alliance-Union series, which would be followed by lower forms from Elizabeth Moon, David Feintuch, and David Weber.[130] Gwyneth Jones also identifies a 'feminine takeover of popular military sf series' during this period, which she attributes to the 'secret appetite for romance and sentiment that characterizes the "militarist" audience.'[131] The novels of Bujold – such as *Shards of Honor* and *The Warrior's Apprentice* (both 1986) – and Cherryh (born Carolyn Janice Cherry) – such as *Downbelow Station* (1981) and *Rimrunners* (1989) – interrogate the ideas of the majority of mainstream 1980s militaristic military SF, including Exceptionalism (of the United States, Barrayar, or the Earth Company) and the purpose, and limits, of militarism.[132]

Lois McMaster Bujold, who has dual PhDs in physics and electrical engineering and worked as a biologist before turning to writing full time, has won four Hugo Awards for best novel, including for *The Vor Game* (1990). Her Miles Vorkosigan series, which has a softer edge than is usual in military SF, is focused on the highly unconventional 'feminized' hero Miles Vorkosigan, a charismatic and hyperactive physically handicapped military genius 'who lives a double life as an officer in the tightly rule-bound Barrayaran Space Navy and the founder of a blithely deregulated mercenary space fleet.'[133] In the late-1980s and early-1990s, Bujold was best-

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[129] Barry B. Longyear, 'Enemy Mine', in *Manifest Destiny* (London and Sydney: Futura Publications, 1982), pp. 83-159.

[130] Suvin, pp. 9-34 (p. 16). Other feminized military SF of the Reagan Era included: Shariann Lewitt and Susan Shwartz (writing as Gordon Kendall), *White Wing* (1985), which Lewitt followed with several solo ventures in military SF – *Angel at Apogee* (1987), *Cyberstealth* (1989), *Dancing Vac* (1990), and *Blind Justice* (1991) – and Rebecca M. Meluch (R. M. Meluch), *War Birds* (1989).

[131] Gwyneth Jones, 'Wild Hearts in Uniform: The Romance of Militarism in Popular SF', *Imagination/Space: Essays and Talks on Fiction, Feminism, Technology, and Politics* (Seattle: Aqueduct Press, 2009), pp. 80-98 (p. 86).

[132] Michael M. Levy, 'The New Wave and After, 1964-1983', in *Anatomy of Wonder*, ed. by Neil Barron 5th edition (Westport, CT, and London: Libraries Unlimited, 2004), pp. 59-72 (p. 69).

[133] Stableford, pp. 46-47.

selling SF's 'feminine voice', as Jones writes: 'graceful, easy-reading romance, good-willed elitism, a touch of brutality, not too much tech, and uniforms with plenty of gold braid.' [134] Suvin writes of Bujold's 'improbable but successful marriage of the sentimental and military narratives', which can read 'either as militarism with a human face' or 'as a subtle subversion weaning readers away from war and militarism.' He concludes that Bujold 'modulates from one position to the other within each work' but the series overall leans 'more strongly toward the non-militarist horizon.' [135] Indeed, from the second novel onwards the dominant military SF motifs give way to sentimental-cum-political intrigue, and in *Memory* (1996), the central hero resigns from the military.

C. J. Cherryh earned a Master of Arts in Classics and taught at a high school before becoming a full-time writer. Both of her military SF novels – *Downbelow Station* and *Rimrunners* – are set in her Alliance-Union universe. In this future history the Alliance is a centrally-dominated, emerging interstellar empire while the Union is a loose amalgamation of parties which declared independence from the Alliance, thus precipitating war.[136] The Hugo Award-winning *Downbelow Station* is the first book of the series. The Company War, between the Earth Company and the newly-independent Union, has been in full swing for several years, and the Union is winning.[137] The Company Fleet, under the command of Conrad Mazian, has been reduced to a ragtag guerrilla force, all but disowned by an out-of-touch Earth. The story begins when the Company's Captain Signy Mallory, of the *Norway*, forcibly docks at Pell, shattering Pell's fragile neutrality. Mallory – who has a reputation as a selfish, proud, cold-blooded sociopath – has lived her whole life in a state of war, and accedes to Mazian's plan to seize control of Pell Station out of loyalty.[138] In the end, however, Mallory finds a way to survive by joining with the merchant ships and the station to form the Merchanter's Alliance. Cherryh, like Bujold, modulates between militarism and antimilitarism in her works, and also tends to leans toward

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[134] Jones, pp. 80-98 (p. 88).
[135] However, Suvin also argues that Bujold's books accept interstellar warfare as inevitable, as symbolized by the marriage of 'Miles' liberal mother to his heretic warrior father.' Suvin, pp. 9-34 (pp. 19, 20).
[136] Don D'Ammassa, *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction: The Essential Guide to the Lives and Works of Science Fiction Writers* (New York: Facts on File, 2005), p. 136.
[137] Cherryh's *Heavy Time* (1991) and *Hellburner* (1992), released as the omnibus *Devil to the Belt* (2000), are military SF set in the Sol System at the beginning of the Company Wars.
[138] C. J. Cherryh, *Downbelow Station* (New York: DAW Books, 2001), p. 10.

the non-militarist horizon. Her works also combine a 'feminine' focus on people with a touch of brutality; however, they are less romantic and have a harder edge.

As seen in both Brin's Uplift and Longyear's Manifest Destiny works Exceptionalism is intimately linked to patriotist nationalism, which, in turn, results in the perception of absolute difference with other nations/species (for example, the older, more staid Galactic races, or the less belligerent members of the United Quadrants). Patriotic nationalism in 1980s America was intimately tied to the newly resurgent anti-communism of the time.

Anti-Communism

Again and again Reagan emphasized his belief in American Exceptionalism, and his view of the United States as a force for good in the world. An element of this fusion of militarism and exceptionalism was the perpetuation of patriotic nationalism, in the form of Cold War ideology, and a strong militarist rhetoric against the Soviet Union. The third major theme of 1980s military SF is this Anti-Communism.

While the process began with President Jimmy Carter, Reagan went well beyond his predecessor, openly rejecting détente and reasserting the moral absolutes of the Cold War. Invoking the spectre and fear of Soviet expansion, Reagan thought the U.S. had a 'special mission' to overcome Communism, which he saw as a tyrannical, ultimately doomed system, but a system which nonetheless presented apocalyptic peril to America and the West.[139] Moribund by the late 1970s, hard-line anti-communism experienced a remarkable revival during the Reagan Administration.[140] Most notably, Reagan – in a speech made two weeks before his 'Star Wars' speech – insidiously defined the Soviet Union in *Star Wars*-like terms as an 'Evil Empire', the 'enemy *par excellence*, the ultimate, definitive Other.'[141] The rough allusion – which was not meant to put the U.S. in the position of the forces of insurgency facing the superior Empire – places the emphasis on 'evil'; he

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[139] Patterson, p. 146.
[140] 'Anti-Communism', in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of American Cultural and Intellectual History, Volume 1*, ed. by Joan Shelley Rubin and Scott E. Casper (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 51-52 (p. 52).
[141] Gilbert Adair, *Hollywood's Vietnam: From The Green Berets to Full Metal Jacket* (London: Heinemann, 1989), p. 141.

identified the United States with 'the anti-imperial forces, the agents of democracy' at the same time as he 'intensified rivalry for global domination by flaunting American global superiority.'[142] In addition, and with implications for the 'Evil Empire' speech, the Reagan Administration provided financial and military aid to anticommunist governments and insurgencies around the world, a policy, applied in nations including Angola, Afghanistan, Grenada, El Salvador and Nicaragua, known as the Reagan Doctrine. The Reagan Administration managed to portray the forces it supported as outnumbered 'freedom fighters' struggling to roll back 'an overwhelming tide of imperial evil.'[143] It is noteworthy, however, that in his second term Reagan toned down his rhetoric, reduced spending on defence, and was much more conciliatory toward the U.S.S.R.[144]

Anti-Communism and Military SF

The Cold War, anti-communism, and images of a hostile Soviet Union are fundamental aspects of Jerry Pournelle's anthology series, as well as a lot of other 1980s military SF. As David Seed maintains, 'the Cold War is at the forefront' of every volume of the *There Will Be War* anthologies – with rigid images of the Soviet Union as an evil and powerful adversary integral – and Pournelle's promotion of SDI throughout was based on a 'persistent hope that the nuclear stalemate might be resolved by military technology.'[145] The books are based on the assumption – expressed by Pournelle in several articles – that 'the U.S.S.R. is the single most important and strongest opponent of the United States' and 'the most serious threat to our national existence since the Civil War.'[146] This attitude is

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[142] Alan Nadel, '1983: Movies and Reaganism', in *American Cinema of the 1980s: Themes and Variations*, ed. by Stephen Prince (New Brunswick and New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2007), pp. 82- 106 (p. 97).
[143] Engelhardt, p. 270.
[144] Perhaps because he believed Gorbachev to be a different kind of Soviet leader, perhaps because of the war scares and his personal desire to end the nuclear threat, perhaps because he believed the U.S. had 'regained its position of strength in the world and could now afford to negotiate with the Soviet Union without appearing weak', or a combination thereof. Trevor B. McCrisken, *American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam: US Foreign Policy since 1974* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 129.
[145] Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War*, pp. 186-187. See also, Gray, pp. 315-336 (p. 324) – for discussion of images of Soviet Union in *There Will Be War* and those images' relationship to the justification of the war establishment and the militarisation of space.
[146] Possony and Pournelle, 'The Technological War', pp. 59-81 (p. 60). Jerry Pournelle, 'Peacekeeper', in *There Will Be War, Volume II: Men of War*, ed. by Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1984), pp. 356-368 (p. 356).

maintained until the final volume of the series (published in 1990), where Pournelle warns that while 'we appear to be entering a new phase of *rapprochement* with the Soviet Union' – based on the statements of Mikhail Gorbachev renouncing the doctrine of fundamental conflict between socialism and capitalism – this 'is not the first time a Soviet premier has promised more than he intended to deliver… remember détente…'[147] Poul Anderson displays a similar attitude in his introduction to the anthology *Space Wars* (1988), in which he approves of the militarisation of space and Daniel Graham's *High Frontier*, and declares that he 'would support a war on any scale necessary if that should prove the only alternative to letting in the Gulag.' He clearly shares the assumption that war is a necessity, writing that 'evil though it be, war is not the ultimate evil.'[148] An important work displaying such images of a hostile communism which must be defeated is Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle's *Footfall* (1985); presenting an alternative to this kind of unexamined anti-communism and militarism is Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game* (1985); and mediating between the attitudes of these two is John Steakley's *Armor* (1984).

Niven and Pournelle, and Anti-Communism

Larry Niven, another important advisor to Reagan on the creation of the SDI anti-missile policy and member of the Citizens' Advisory Council, collaborated with Pournelle on *Footfall*. In Damien Broderick's words, this alien invasion novel is 'an enormously successful sf blockbuster aimed at those huge audiences outside the narrow sf genre, a hymn to grit, xenophobia, manifest destiny and the Joy of Nuclear War' and it 'captured the Reagan 1980s even more vividly than the movie *Rambo II*.'[149] In a piece of anticommunist allegory that harkens back to the 1950s – but is understandable with the revival of anti-communism during the Reagan Era – the fithp, who resemble 'baby elephant[s] with two trunks', are a herdlike species

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[147] Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr, 'Editor's Introduction to: Bringing Home the Bacon', in *There Will Be War, Volume IX: After Armageddon*, ed. by Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1990), pp. 313-315 (p. 313).

[148] Charles G. Waugh and Martin H. Greenberg (created by Poul Anderson), *Space Wars* (New York: Tor, 1988), pp. ix-x., quoted in Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War*, p. 190. Gray, pp. 315-336 (p. 325).

[149] Damien Broderick, *X, Y, Z, T: Dimensions of Science Fiction* (Holicong, PA: Borgo Press/Wildside Press, 2004), pp. 82-83.

who act in groups and are virtually incapable of taking individual action (also being less intelligent and less adaptable than humans). [150] These alien invaders, 'communal beings', serve as 'ciphers for the Communist threat that right-wing ideologues still bruited as the greatest danger facing the Free World at that time.'[151] At the same time, the Soviet Union in the novel is still a grave threat to the United States, with more nuclear missiles than the U.S.'s strategic forces and a space program that 'virtually owned the sky from Near Earth Orbit to beyond the Moon.'[152] The U.S. government also seriously considers the possibility that the aliens might make an alliance with the Soviets against the U.S; and, in fact, Soviet Chairman Trusov does suggest that the 'herd beasts… will respect communism' before being overruled by his colleagues.[153]

The fithp invade the Earth, their space superiority and space-based laser and kinetic energy weapons decisive. But the aliens are defeated when the U.S., utilising the advice of a number of SF writers conscripted as consultants, launches a huge, heavily-armed, nuclear-powered spacecraft to defeat the aliens in space, forcing their total surrender.[154] In addition to offering proof for the Reagan Era's belief in American Exceptionalism, with the United States' victory over the alien invaders and hegemony over the post-invasion Earth, the novel can be seen as a highly representative work of its time in that it seems designed, at least partly, as an expression of support for the development of superweapon programs, including Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative. Among the SF writers employed as consultants by the U.S. government in the novel are Nat Reynolds, Wade Curtis and Robert Anson, surrogates for Niven, Pournelle and Robert Heinlein: 'In short, authors Pournelle and Niven have placed themselves, their politically allied peers, and some of the recommendations from *Mutual Assured Survival* in the text.' The sub-narrative, following the consultants who become known as the 'Dreamer Fithp', is, essentially, 'an impatient and grimly illustrated critique of the American government's (and possibly, American public's) unwillingness to invest in more

[150] Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle, *Footfall* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1985). p. 163.
[151] Adam Roberts, *The History of Science Fiction* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 302. M. Keith Booker and Anne Marie Thomas, *The Science Fiction Handbook* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 34.
[152] Niven and Pournelle, pp. 54-55.
[153] Niven and Pournelle, pp. 107, 378.
[154] Niven and Pournelle, pp. 156, 273, 571.

advanced weapons' in the face of the communist threat.[155] As discussed in the next section, the idea of the superweapon as a solution to American insecurity and a source of American victory was a major theme in 1980s military SF and in wider popular culture.

Card and Rehabilitation of the Enemy

Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game* represents an alternative to the hard-line anti-Communism and unexamined militarism of the majority of military SF during the 1980s. The narrative moves from rejection of co-existence with rivals, instead favouring their annihilation, to the rehabilitation of the enemy. In this novel – based on a Hugo Award-nominated short story, and one of the single most commercially successful military SF novels of all time – the International Fleet (I.F.) maintains the Battle School to train children to defend Earth against the expected Third Invasion of the alien Buggers. Ender Wiggin is the school's most promising student; 'equisitioned' from his family and then subjected to unethical and horrific manipulation and dehumanization by the military in order to make him a perfect commander, he eventually ends the war through an unwitting act of genocide (xenocide) against the insectile aliens.[156] It is not quite the 'guiltless military masturbatory fantasy' it is labelled by Norman Spinrad.[157] In Card's follow up volume, *Speaker for the Dead* (1986), the 'thrilling military climax of the war against the Buggers' becomes 'ashes in [Ender's] and our mouths', and depicts Ender travelling the galaxy trying to make amends for his war crime.[158]

Following Robert Heinlein, 'given common Cold War rhetoric and the nature of insect social organization', insectile aliens are an 'easy stand-in for any socialist or communist political organization, such as that of the Soviets.' Arrayed against this aggressive, ultra-collectivist society are a collection of individuals. Also as with Heinlein, Card equates the concept of individualism with humanity: 'essentially, to

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[155] Gannon, *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines*, pp. 202-203.
[156] Ender's treatment by the military reflects the way the people of the United States were reconsidering how its soldiers were being used internationally after the failure in Vietnam.
[157] Norman Spinrad, *Science Fiction in the Real World* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990), pp. 27, 144.
[158] Roberts, p. 314. In *Speaker for the Dead* and *Xenocide* (1991), he eventually finds a planet for the Queen cocoon – the sole surviving remnant of the Bugger species – and averts another potentially genocidal interspecies misunderstanding.

be human is to be an individual, and to be an individual is to be an American.'[159] However, as Darren Harris-Fain writes, rather than

> depicting the Buggers as the terrifying bug-eyed monsters of the pulp era, it is revealed that they had planned to end the war once they learned that humans were an intelligent species… and rather than depicting humans heroically defending themselves against an alien menace, it is humanity that is guilty of genocide, using a boy as their instrument of destruction.[160]

Card complicates Heinlein's easy binary of 'us against them' by basing the conflict on an inability to communicate with or understand each other.[161] The Buggers 'talk to each other directly… mind to mind' and do not have anything like human language.[162] The Bugger Wars begin because the aliens, when their colonisation ship arrived at Earth, did not understand that creatures without the ability to communicate telepathically could be sapient beings. They came to colonize a world devoid of their definition of intelligent life. Once the Buggers knew the truth of humanity's intelligence, they did not attack again. Ender learns to think for himself and question the military establishment and its party-line propaganda concerning the Buggers. As Leon Perniciaro states 'unlike the ruling military power structure of *Starship Troopers*, which fights against an actual menace and threat of annihilation, the military of *Ender's Game* uses the threat of alien invasion (like the threat of a Red invasion or the threat of terrorism) to maintain control.'[163] The militarism of Ender's world is explained, and justified, as a consequence of the Formic Invasion and the 'bugger menace': 'as long as people are afraid of the buggers, the I.F. can stay in power, and as long as the I.F. is in power, certain countries can keep their hegemony.'[164] The threat (or lack thereof) from the buggers is confirmed by the queen cocoon at the end of the novel.

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[159] Leon Perniciaro, 'Shifting Understandings of Imperialism: A Collision of Cultures in Starship Troopers and Ender's Game' (unpublished MA thesis: University of New Orleans, 2011), pp. 10, 12.

[160] Harris-Fain, pp. 124-125.

[161] An idea previously used to great effect in Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War* (1974), in which the millennium-long war was 'begun on false pretenses and only continued because the two races were unable to communicate.' Joe Haldeman, *The Forever War* (New York: Eos/HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), p. 273.

[162] Orson Scott Card, *Ender's Game* (New York: Tor, 1991), p. 253.

[163] Perniciaro, p. 25.

[164] Card, p. 110.

In a way the Buggers are 'humanised' in the course of *Ender's Game*, through Ender's discovery of the misunderstanding that started the war and his insight into the imperialistic, militaristic world government's motives for manipulating public sentiment with the 'bugger menace'. By humanising Earth's 'presumably eternal enemy' and by 'contemplating the ramifications of destroying alien cultures to colonize their worlds', the text 'allegorically critiques and revises U.S. 'red scare' conceptions, as well as the neo-colonial process at the heart of the Cold War.'[165] In addition, Ender's promise to the Bugger Queen – that he would take her last egg and rebirth her species, and tell her story to humanity – is a potential rehabilitation of the Buggers and by extension the Soviet Union, going beyond Heinlein's reduction of the U.S.'s enemies to mere insects. The Bugger Queen, the last remnant of a species for all intents and purposes wiped out by humanity, apologises for the conflict and asks for forgiveness: 'We are like you… We did not mean to murder, and when we understood, we never came again… We could live with you in peace. Believe us, believe us, believe us.'[166] At first, Card maintains Heinlein's depiction of faceless pulp monster, absolutely unknowable and completely foreign, but through Ender's mutual understanding with the Buggers he returns to them the potential for a kind of humanity. By allegorically allowing Ender to partially redeem the Buggers, Card implies that the struggle between the U.S. and the Soviet Union might not be inevitable nor inescapable, that 'mutual understanding might, in fact, be possible.'[167]

Steakley and Ants

John Steakley was born and lived most of his life in Texas, receiving a BA in English from Southern Methodist University, and writing *Armor* (1984). The main character is Felix, a soldier fighting in the Antwar. In order to cope with the terror and anger he feels for the war, Felix can enter a mind-state that he thinks of as 'The Engine': born of his 'all-consuming rage' at his superiors, the military, and 'the thick-headed idiot humans who had undertaken something as asinine as interplanetary war in the first place', the Engine is something 'cold and distant', a

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[165] Perniciaro, p. 32.
[166] Card, p. 321.
[167] Perniciaro, p. 32.

fatalistic 'wartime creature.' [168] The novel embraces anti-communism – like *Footfall* – with its depiction of inherently hostile aliens, but also interrogates the idea – like *Ender's Game* – through comparisons between the Ants and humanity. Both of these are accomplished through the metaphor of ants. The enemy are 'scurrying, swarming ants', eight-feet tall and fearless of death, who undertake wave attacks and 'don't care about anything but killing people.'[169] On the other hand, during the construction of a fort on Banshee, the thousands of engineers are described as 'like parts of a single elaborate machine' or like 'ants… building a hive.'[170] Militarised humanity and communistic Ants are imitational, suggesting war – whether a Cold War or a hot Antwar – and militarism can threaten national self-identity and individual identity in its pursuit of opposition to the Other.

The sheer quantity and destructive power of nuclear weapons can be difficult to comprehend, and in order to make sense of nuclear terror, many people come to believe that there must be an Absolute Enemy as terrible and lethal as the Absolute Bomb itself. Derived from the idea of the Absolute Enemy was the significant rhetoric around communism, the Soviet Union and the Cold War. This rhetoric is especially conspicuous in military SF during the 1980s. The desire for security, likewise, imagines that the Absolute Bomb and Absolute Enemy must be matched by the Absolute Defence.[171] It was this fear of the Soviet Union and desire for security that Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative catered to.

The Technical Fix and the Superweapon

Popular belief imagined that the Absolute Enemy – Communism and the Soviet Union – could be countered by the Absolute Defense, developed out of the United States' technological superiority. This technological superiority further emboldens American militarism and Exceptionalism, and, moreover, U.S. 'technological superiority has come to signify, and justify, a moral and political supremacy that is often invoked to rationalize any U.S. imperial aggression.'[172] Reagan affirmed that 'the technological genius that had made the nation great could be used to keep it

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[168] John Steakley, *Armor* (New York: DAW Books, 1984), pp. 17-18.
[169] Steakley, pp. 46, 276.
[170] Steakley, pp. 288-289.
[171] Reiss, pp. 15-16, 156.
[172] Boggs and Pollard, p. 233.

safe', and repeatedly stressed that the U.S. 'would not exploit its invulnerability to the detriment of others – it could never be the aggressor.'[173] The fourth major theme of 1980s military SF, and most important to the debate over SDI, is the idea of the Technological Fix and the Superweapon as the key to U.S. security and victory.

In his *War Stars*, published against the background of SDI, H. Bruce Franklin examines the 'cult of the superweapon' in American culture, part of the wider myth of the 'technological fix.'[174] In this seminal study Franklin traces out the American fascination with the superweapon, that 'ultimate weapon which could make a final decisive difference to the balance of power' and achieve – after greater military power is rationalised as defensive in nature – the ongoing dream of 'ultimate security.'[175] Related to this 'technical fix' and the 'cult of the superweapon', and Jerry Pournelle and Stefan Possony's 'Technological War', is a model of warfare called 'technowar' by James William Gibson, in which 'war was conceptualized as a kind of high-technology production process' whose 'final product was death.'[176] This sanctioning of high-tech warfare was a natural convergence point for the imperatives of the U.S.'s military-industrial complex and the country's – technophilic – science fiction writers. While defense companies and their interests pushed for bigger and better technological weaponry, many of the campaigns emerging from the SF right-wing pushed for bigger and nastier weapons systems as the way out of the Cold War.[177] Chris Hables Gray argues that, since the Vietnam War, this theme of the superweapon offering universal peace has been superseded in the majority of pro-war SF stories by 'a more basic claim that war is a necessary aspect of human nature and/or manhood, that it is natural and inevitable, and that humans will need to fight nasty aliens someday besides.'[178] While the short stories

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[173] George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 870.

[174] Franklin, *War Stars*, p. 11.

[175] Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War*, p. 181. David Seed, 'Introduction', in *Future Wars: The Anticipations and the Fears*, ed. by David Seed (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), pp. 1-8 (p. 6)

[176] Gibson, *Warrior Dreams*, pp. 27-28.

[177] In an article about SDI and the Citizen's Advisory Council, Norman Spinrad wrote that 'during the height of the SDI feeding frenzy, the aerospace industry feasted lavishly at the public trough thanks to the Pentagon's clout with Congress.' He goes on to share an anecdote about an aerospace industry party and the 'dreamy dollar-sign looks' on a couple of scientists faces when he jokingly suggested a 'tachyon beam weapon' that could 'detect incoming missiles, and zap them on the pad before they're launched.' Norman Spinrad, 'Too High the Moon', *Le Monde diplomatique*, July 1999, <http://mondediplo.com/1999/07/14star> [accessed 27 February 2015].

[178] Gray, pp. 315-336 (pp. 315-316).

and articles in the *There Will Be War* series do embrace the idea of war as necessary and inevitable, the anthologies also promote SDI as an alternative.

Strategic Defence and Military SF

Both Jerry Pournelle – in his *There Will Be War* anthologies – and Ben Bova – particularly in his Kinsman Saga – are supporters of military techno-science and the Strategic Defense Initiative, mirroring and promoting the attitudes of the 'cult of the superweapon.' The first report from the Citizens' Advisory Council, 'The Soviet Strategic Threat from Space', published in the first volume of *There Will Be War*, concludes that 'strategic-scale war' in the final decades of the twentieth century is 'likely to conclude with the total and quite bloodless triumph by the nation owning the space laser system(s).' The report also warns that the United States' ability to successfully wage war in space during the 1980s and 1990s 'will necessarily develop from its present comprehensively inferior position relative to the capabilities of the Soviet Union.' If, at least, parity is not gained with Soviet space warfare capabilities, the U.S. may be doomed by the mid-1990s in the face of 'beam weapons systems deployed on Soviet battle stations circling the Earth.'[179] However, this warning – of the U.S.'s technological inferiority – is problematic under the continuing idea of American Exceptionalism, resulting in contradictory views: Daniel O. Graham, promoting the High Frontier study, writes that '[f]ortunately, the United States – at least for the moment – has a technological lead over the Soviet Union, especially in space.'[180] As well as warning about Soviet capabilities, the anthologies are convinced that the Soviet Union 'believes in strategic defense' and will 'install strategic defenses as soon as they are technically available.' The anthologies repeatedly make reference to the Soviet Union's construction of two large radars – 'whose only possible use is for battle management of strategic defense against ICBMs' – and Soviet testing of directed energy weapons. Declaring that the Soviet Union has clearly violated the Ballistic

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[179] The Committee on Space War, Citizens Advisory Council on National Space Policy, 'The Soviet Strategic Threat from Space', in *There Will Be War*, ed. by Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1983), pp. 65-71 (pp. 70-71). Later volumes repeat this warning of growing Soviet capabilities in contrast to stagnated American ones; for example, Pournelle, 'Preface: To Provide for the Common Defense', pp. 11-14 (p. 13).
[180] Graham, 'Project High Frontier', pp. 143-145 (p. 143).

Missile Defense Treaty, the conclusion is that whether or not the United States proceeds with SDI, 'it is pretty clear the Soviets intend to do so.'[181]

Bova and Star Wars

Ben Bova was also a prominent supporter of SDI, advocacy of which appeared in his non-fiction works *The High Road* (1981) and *Assured Survival* (1984, retitled *Star Peace* in 1986), as well as his novels *Privateers* (1985) and *The Kinsman Saga* (1987).[182] Bova, a technical writer for Project Vanguard in the 1950s and later for the Avco Everett Research Laboratory in the 1960s (which performed research in lasers and fluid dynamics), also became the influential editor of *Analog* and then *Omni*, which was, according to H. Bruce Franklin, 'a vital organ for space-weapons propaganda.'[183] The first non-fiction text, *The High Road,* argues that humanity's survival depends on the – manifest destiny-like – colonization and exploitation of space, and that civilians need to get involved, exercising as much power and control over the uses of space as possible, before space is lost to the military.[184] The second, *Assured Survival: Putting the Star Wars Defence in Perspective*, recounts the history of laser technology, explicitly linking the project to the wide-spread SF trope of the 'death ray' and 'ray gun', and then outlines a number of nuclear attack scenarios.[185]

Bova's *Privateers*, which, along with its sequel *Empire Builders* (1993), is part of his roughly-linked Grand Tour series of novels containing almost two dozen works, 'fervently boosts space-war preparedness led by rigged-individualist capitalists.' It describes a post-SDI situation where the Soviet Union's military satellites have forced the U.S. out of NATO, Western Europe has been laid waste by a Soviet hydrogen bomb detonated in orbit and is rebuilding along Soviet guidelines, American cities are polluted, run-down and on the verge of collapse, the U.S has turned isolationist and abandoned its space program, and the Soviets '*own* outer

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[181] Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr, 'Editor's Introduction to: Winter Snow', in *There Will Be War, Volume IV: Day of the Tyrant*, ed. by Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1985), pp. 41-43 (pp. 41-42). Pournelle, 'Introduction: Call to Battle', pp. 1-6 (p. 5).
[182] Gannon, *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines*, p. 195. Luckhurst, p. 200.
[183] Franklin, *War Stars*, p. 200.
[184] Ben Bova, *The High Road* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981).
[185] Ben Bova, *Assured Survival: Putting the Star Wars Defence in Perspective* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984).

space', setting up factories in near space and turning the moon into a Gulag.[186] This came about because the Americans 'made themselves defenceless first'; the Soviet antimissile satellites were a decisive military advantage, leaving the American nuclear forces 'rather useless.'[187] This situation must be rectified by astronaut-engineer-entrepreneur Dan Randolph; using a Venezuelan space station as a base, he begins to intercept Russian ore freighters transporting raw materials from the prison-labour mines on the Moon to the Third World factories in orbit near the Earth, 'fighting as a latter-day buccaneer on behalf of private enterprise.'[188] He encourages the space organizations of several Third World nations to – covertly – follow suit.

Bova had already explored the ramifications of a 'Star Wars' policy of space-defence in his Kinsman Saga, pieces of which appeared in several science fiction magazines and anthologies during the 1960s, were revised and collected into a pair of novels – *Millennium* (1976) and *Kinsman* (1979) – in the late-1970s, and then released as a single narrative, *The Kinsman Saga* (1987). This space future narrative – based around the life of the Aerospace Force astronaut Chester Arthur 'Chet' Kinsman – contains an argument for the efficacy of implementing the Strategic Defense Initiative, although with 'as much cautionary reserve as technophilic zeal', unlike *Privateers*.[189] The first novel, *Kinsman*, introduces a United States 'that still sets the pace for the free world but whose core values are falling victim to its pursuit of the cold war, its overpopulation, and the limits of natural resources', resulting in 'wide-spread poverty, McCarthy style witch-hunts, and global militarism.'[190] One passage makes this clear:

> America was on a wartime footing, almost. The oil shock of ten years ago had inexorably pushed the United States toward military measures… Unemployment at home was countered by a new public-service draft that placed millions of eighteen-year-olds in police forces, hospitals, public works projects, and the armed services. Dissidence was smothered by fear: fear of dangers real and imagined, fear of

[186] Franklin, *War Stars*, p. 200. Ben Bova, *Privateers* (London: Methuen, 1985), pp. 23-24.
[187] Ben Bova, *Privateers* (London: Methuen, 1985), p. 25.
[188] Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War*, pp. 188-189.
[189] Gannon, *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines*, p. 143.
[190] DeWitt Douglas Kilgore, *Astrofuturism: Science, Race, and Visions of Utopia in Space* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), p. 204.

government retaliation, fear of ruinous unemployment and economic collapse, and the ultimate fear of the nuclear war that hovered remorselessly on the horizon waiting for the moment of Armageddon.[191]

These trends are even more advanced in *Millennium*, with the nation enduring fuel shortages, public safety laws, riots, a high prison population, rampant unemployment and poverty, army patrols in every city, curfews, severe travel restrictions, and government surveillance.[192] In addition, *Millennium* 'depicts a world poised on the brink of destruction due to the rapid accumulation of orbital weapons, defences, and countermeasures.'[193] The U.S. and the Soviet Union compete to complete their respective strategic defense satellite networks, knocking out each other's satellites with manned interceptors, each side knowing that 'whoever finishes its ABM network first will have a tremendous edge', breaking the nuclear stalemate and being able to 'dictate terms to the other side with impunity.'[194]

As Charles E. Gannon writes, the narrative 'provides not only an interesting foreshadowing of the technologies that would be studied and developed under the Strategic Defense Initiative, but also of the high potential for destabilization inherent in either unilateral or bilateral deployment of orbital weapons.' This possible instability was an urgent issue in the debate over Reagan's Star Wars scheme.[195] However, the novels also show a – cautionary – support for antiballistic missile satellites. Kinsman explains that defensive systems like SDI 'won't kill anybody… Their purpose is to prevent nuclear war from happening.'[196] Later in life, gaining support for his moonbase by linking it to construction of the Star Wars system, Kinsman is accused of courting global war. He responds that the 'satellites will protect us against missile attack', and that building them from lunar resources 'will make them cheaper and easier to deploy', and 'able to protect more people, more parts of the world, sooner.'[197] This plays out at the end of the Saga, when the

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[191] Ben Bova, *Kinsman* (London: Mandarin, 1987), pp. 170-171.
[192] Ben Bova, *Millennium: A Novel About People and Politics in the Year 1999* (New York: Random House, 1976), pp. 130-131.
[193] Gannon, *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines*, p. 143.
[194] Bova, *Millennium*, p. 10.
[195] Gannon, *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines*, p. 143.
[196] Bova, *Kinsman*, pp. 170-171.
[197] Bova, *Kinsman*, p. 260.

leaders of the American and Russian bases on the Moon jointly secede from their terrestrial masters (as the nation of 'Selene'), and then engineer a takeover of the anti-missile laser satellites of both sides, commandeer the satellite-based weather control system, and unilaterally declare peace.[198] As the in-text UN Secretary General says, 'Our world – this Earth – is faced with a myriad of staggering problems' – including war, vast hunger, struggle for natural resources, overpopulation, energy shortages, and global pollution – which the nations of the world cannot solve because 'the most fundamental problem of all is the problem of nationalism.' He concludes that a world government, a result of Selene's revolution and control of the SDI network, 'is the only chance we have to avoid global catastrophe.'[199] Bova, as discussed in his Author's Foreword to *Kinsman*, has 'no doubt' that the 'ultimate result of space-based defences against nuclear attack will be a unified world government', although the form of that government, and the role the United States and other nations will play, are unanswered questions.[200]

The End of the Cold War, SDI, and the Vietnam Syndrome

The Cold War itself ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 – and George W. H. Bush and Boris Yeltsin's formal declaration that the Cold War was history in February 1992 – and as concern about superpower rivalry weakened, 'so did the connection between the control of space and national security.'[201] Likewise, as SDI faded from the public discourse – and the military budget – so ended 'an unprecedented period of symbiosis' between SF and the U.S. administration.[202] The Vietnam Syndrome, likewise, 'ended' with the First Gulf War.

The collapse of the Soviet system was unexpected, but conservatives advanced the argument that the Reagan Administration had played a major role in its failure and

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[198] The political problem of SDI as an offensive weapon is solved by putting control in the hands of an alliance of American and Russian astronauts who have learned to work together while stationed on the Moon. Similarly in Bova's *Peacekeepers* (1989), the International Peacekeeping Force is assigned control of both the East and West's strategic defense satellites and empowered to 'act immediately against any kid of aggression across any international frontier… to stop wars as soon as they are started.' Ben Bova, *Peacekeepers* (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1989), pp. 20.
[199] Bova, *Millennium*, pp. 222-223, 226.
[200] Bova, *Kinsman*, p. ix.
[201] Howard E. McCurdy, *Space and the American Imagination*, 2nd edition (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2011), p. 87. Patterson, p. 195.
[202] Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War*, p. 192.

that SDI 'was the key to this winning strategy.'[203] This view was promoted by Jerry Pournelle and *There Will Be War*, according to which the Initiative placed 'intolerable pressure' on the Soviet Union.[204] However, as later scholarship has argued, the effects of SDI on the demise of the Soviet Union 'pales in significance besides the chronic dislocations fracturing the body politic', and that beside the U.S.S.R.'s 'massive, structural problems', SDI 'scarcely warrants mention.'[205] With the end of the Cold War, in the early 1990s the Strategic Defense Initiative ended, or at least mutated into something considerably less impressive. First, the Bush administration's Global Protection Against Limited Strikes (GPALS) designed to protect the U.S. from an attack by Third World countries or an accidental, limited missile launch by the U.S.S.R. Later, with Secretary of Defense Les Aspin's declaration that the Strategic Defense Initiative was dead, there was the Clinton Administration's Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (BMDO), which was much less grandiose than both Reagan's SDI and Bush's GPALS.[206]

The end of the Cold War created an unusual strategic opportunity for the United States: for the first time in sixty years, the U.S. was not preoccupied with an existential threat – the likes of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union – and had the possibility of abandoning the 'armed-to-the-teeth posture' it had adopted. As Melvin A. Goodman wrote, then, it was an 'unfortunate irony' that at this point the U.S. 'inaugurated a conservative, Cold War politician.' The Bush Administration and Pentagon turned to regional conflict as the new geopolitical challenge; small and insignificant states became the perceived threat to what Bush called the 'new world order' before a joint session of Congress in January 1991.[207] In the short term, this resulted in the 'end' of the Vietnam Syndrome, through the redemptive First Gulf War (1990-1991). In a *Time* magazine article in January 1991, *New Republic* editor Charles Krauthammer wrote that

> If the war in the gulf ends the way it began – with a dazzling display of
> American technological superiority, individual grit and, most

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[203] FitzGerald, pp. 273-274, 474.

[204] Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr, 'Editor's Introduction to: The Voice of the Cockroach', in *There Will Be War, Volume IX: After Armageddon*, ed. by Jerry Pournelle and John F. Carr (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1990), pp. 111-115 (p. 115).

[205] Reiss, pp. 192-193.

[206] FitzGerald, pp. 484, 491. Goodman, pp. 291-293.

[207] Goodman, pp. 64, 72.

unexpectedly for Saddam, national resolve – we will no longer speak of post-Vietnam America. A new, post-gulf American will emerge, its self-image, sense of history, even its political discourse transformed.

To Krauthammer, victory over Iraq would redeem the United States; America would regain 'the legacy of the last good war', World War Two, 'a legacy lost in the jungles of Vietnam.'[208] After victory in the First Gulf War, President George H. W. Bush explicitly stated, 'By God, we've kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all![209] In declaring the 'new world order', Bush 'had no way of knowing that he was inaugurating a post-Cold war era that would be marked by extensive use of military force that has seduced three successive American presidencies.'[210]

Conclusion

This chapter investigated military SF in the 1980s, when the subgenre flourished within the right-wing, militaristic, and xenophobic climate of the Reagan Era. It argued that much of the military SF during this period reflected 'Reaganite' attitudes and aspirations and that military SF interacted directly with policy. This was seen through a joint discussion of Jerry Pournelle's *There Will Be War* military SF anthology series, the Citizens' Advisory Council on National Space Policy, the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), and military SF works by Timothy Zahn, Lucius Shepard, Karl Hansen, David Brin, Barry B. Longyear, Lois McMaster Bujold, C. J. Cherryh, Orson Scott Card, Ben Bova, and John Steakley. Four major themes were represented both in military SF and military policy: the Vietnam Syndrome and Redeeming Vietnam, American Exceptionalism and the New American Militarism, Anti-communism, and the Technical Fix and the Superweapon. All were embodied in the ultimate symbol of the Reaganite vision, the science-fictional project of SDI.

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[208] Charles Krauthammer, 'How the War Can Change America,' *Time* magazine, Jan. 28, 1991, quoted in Gibson, *Warrior Dreams*, p. 293.

[209] "Kicking the 'Vietnam Syndrome'", *Washington Post*, March 4, 1991, quoted in Franklin, *Vietnam and Other American Fantasies*, p. 27. However, as a Vietnam stand-in, nothing in Iraq's situation was comparable to Vietnam's: 'The United States was to take revenge for a jungle war on a land without cover; for a war of popular mobilization on a war-exhausted country of demoralized conscripts; for fears of becoming embroiled in a conflict with China and the Soviet Union on a country without significant allies; for an inability to throttle the Vietnamese in their 'sanctuaries' on a country without a safe haven.' Engelhardt, p. 287.

[210] Goodman, p. 89.

This chapter argued that one of the responses to the national 'trauma' suffered during the Vietnam War was the emergence of a highly energised culture of war, along with narratives aimed at 'healing' the wounds inflicted by Vietnam on views of the military and war. Many authors, including Zahn in his two series about guerrilla warriors refighting their wars, took part in this cultural project, while others, such as Shepard and Hansen in their own transfigurations of Vietnam-style conflict, refused to perform a recuperative function.

Also part of the efforts to revive national self-confidence were ideas around American Exceptionalism and the New American Militarism – the second major theme of this chapter – which were engaged with by military SF writers. For example, Brin in *Startide Rising* (1985) and *The Uplift War* (1987), espouses the idea of exceptionalism through his unique and innovative 'wolfling' humanity, while Longyear in *Manifest Destiny* (1980) critiques the idea through his depiction of belligerent and expansionist United States of Earth.

The third theme discussed in this chapter was the hard-line anti-communism revived during the Reagan Administration. Two key works that reflect and interrogate this rhetoric were considered. Niven and Pournelle's *Footfall* (1985) depicts the Earth's invasion by communistic aliens who are defeated by a U.S. nuclear-powered spaceship. Card's *Ender's Game* (1984), on the other hand, shows the main character coming to understand the alien Buggers and the government's use of the 'Bugger menace' to maintain control.

Related directly to the perceived threat of communism was the final theme linking U.S. culture, military SF, and SDI: the idea of the Technological Fix and the Superweapon as the key to U.S. security and victory. This discussion was founded on the 'cult of the superweapon' examined by H. Bruce Franklin in *War Stars* (1988). Bova's works are insightful: his views are evident in several non-fiction works, as well as his novels *Privateers* (1985) and *Kinsman Saga* (1987). The former is a warning about the Soviet Union building a strategic defense satellite network before the U.S., while the latter is a more cautious argument for the efficacy of SDI, with an independent lunar nation gaining control of antimissile laser satellites and unilaterally declaring global peace.

While the Strategic Defense Initiative did not continue into the new century, the kind of conservative, militaristic, and imperialistic rhetorics observable during the Reagan Era remained a part of American popular culture and military SF. This continuing engagement with such themes – and the increasingly right-wing position taken by military SF in this engagement – is explored in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER SIX

Reorganisation and Re-Engagement Phase: Modern Military SF, 1989-2011

Military SF was thriving by the early 1990s, and at this point there was a boom, while, at the same time, the narratives became increasingly right-wing and politically conservative. The last chapter examined, among other things, how 1980s military SF engaged with Reaganite attitudes and views about American Exceptionalism and militarism, the enemy, and the military and its role. This chapter engages with similar themes with the continuation of such neoconservative, militaristic, neo-Reaganite attitudes in the 1990s and 2000s, and contends that military SF takes part in the general militarization of American popular culture. During 'the Pause' – between the collapse of the Soviet Union and the September 2001 terrorist attacks – no player on the world stage offered the kind of ideological, political, or military opposition to the United States that the 'Evil Empire' had, and Americans were confident about their role as the world's last remaining superpower. This period was dominated by 'feminized military SF' by Lois McMaster Bujold, David Weber, Elizabeth Moon, and David Feintuch. Things changed after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.[1]

This chapter will look at several themes through a range of military SF texts, and argues that attitudes regarding these themes became more strident after the Pause and 9/11. Three key themes are examined: first, the post-Cold War Enemy, either the figure of the Terrorist or the United Nations; second, the continuing debate over American Exceptionalism and its role in a hostile world; third, the Military-Civilian Divide that has developed in the United States. Through an examination of these three themes, this chapter argues that after the collapse of the Soviet Union military SF (and U.S. popular culture) found its new enemies in the monstrous, irrational Terrorist and the ineffective, interfering United Nations, that military SF reflects the myth that the U.S. faced a hostile, Hobbesian universe requiring U.S. military

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[1] This chapter – and thesis – ends its coverage in 2011, the year the U.S. withdrew from Iraq. The U.S. did not formally end its war in Afghanistan until December 2014.

interventionism, and that military SF shows an awareness of the growing cultural/experiential gap between the civilian population and the nation's military personnel.

Militarism and Popular Culture

As seen in Chapter Five, the reaction to Vietnam produced radical changes in American thinking about soldiers, the armed forces, and war, producing ideas, attitudes, and myths conducive to militarism. The continuity of militarism in the United States during the 1990s and 2000s is 'related to many decades in which U.S. domestic popular culture has tended to reinforce rather than undermine militarism.'[2] The militarisation of American popular culture, in turn, corresponds to the global realities of the period: U.S. neo-imperial power, measured in economic, political, cultural, and military terms, now reached every corner of the globe, 'dwarfing all previous empires.' The nation had firmly established itself as an unchallenged superpower backed by the largest war machine ever.[3]

The end of the Cold War 'ought to have triggered a thoroughgoing reconsideration of the size and appropriate role of America's armed forces.'[4] With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the rationale for the sprawling military-industrial establishment created after World War Two and maintained ever since – defence against a totalitarian regime with the ability to threaten the United States and its vital interests – had vanished. Writing during the mid-1990s, Michael Sherry believed Americans were drifting away – in a 'distinctly fitful, rancorous, uncertain fashion' – from their age of militarisation, and that while the Cold War's end did not halt militarization, it did invalidate the most prominent rationale for militarisation and no sure replacement emerged during the 1990s.[5] However, as Andrew Bacevich argues, Operation Desert Storm and the liberation of Kuwait, and the 'resulting display of U.S. military prowess and advanced technology', beguiled Americans. They

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[2] Geoff Martin and Erin Steuter, *Pop Culture Goes to War: Enlisting and Resisting Militarism in the War on Terror* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), p. 5.
[3] Carl Boggs and Tom Pollard, *The Hollywood War Machine: U.S. Militarism and Popular Culture* (Boulder, NV: Paradigm Publishers, 2006), p. 6.
[4] Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans are Seduced by War* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 53.
[5] Michael S. Sherry, *In the Shadow of War: The United States Since the 1930s* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 431-432, 502.

'showed that with the end of the Cold War, the responsibilities of global leadership were greater than ever', and that those responsibilities meant that the United States could not relinquish the global military presence and global power projection capabilities it had acquired. This ensured the survival of an enormous Cold War-style defense establishment and also 'made the use or threatened use of armed force, as never before, central to the American conception of international politics.'[6] Eventually, with the turn of the twenty-first century, a replacement for the Cold War emerged in the War on Terror, once again providing a rationale for militarism and militarisation.

Explicitly related to such militarisation of policy is the militarisation of popular culture. According to Carl Boggs and Tom Pollard, while few Americans identify outright with U.S. 'pursuit of armed conquest, invasion of foreign countries, and empire', the majority remain 'intensely patriotic, easily seduced by ideological justifications for continued U.S. military adventures abroad.' This culture of militarism is 'far-reaching', 'sophisticated', and yet 'illusory, dependent upon powerful myths.'[7] As examined in their book *The Hollywood War Machine: U.S. Militarism and Popular Culture*, the 1990s brought a new paradigm to both the U.S. global presence and popular culture, precipitated by the end of the Cold War and the rise of America as unchallenged superpower. Expressions of this over the next two decades included a massive growth in military spending, international armed interventions, ascendancy of right-wing neoconservatism, the War on Terror, and the Bush Doctrine – comprising preventive war, military primacy, and the spread of democracy – and the resulting Iraq War. This was accompanied by narratives – in their case study, films – that exalt themes such as the nobility of U.S. military forces in fighting primitive and barbaric enemies; war as exhilarating and noble; 'high-tech violence' prevailing over weaker, but more numerous, enemies; patriotism; ultramasculinism; and Western supremacy and military triumph, often against insurmountable odds.[8]

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[6] Bacevich, pp. 53-54.
[7] Boggs and Pollard, p. 20.
[8] Boggs and Pollard, pp. 169, 13-14.

The Pause, or The Place Between Two Deaths

Adapting the terminology of Gwyneth Jones and Phillip Wegner, the 1990s – in terms of military SF and the wider American culture – could be called the Pause or the Place Between. Jones defines 'The Pause' as the period between the end of the Cold War and 9/11, when 'the sf heartland had no iconic external enemy' and military SF was less focused on military science and technology and more focused on individual experience and emotion.[9] Occupying a similar historical-cultural period is the 'place between two deaths', the specific cultural period which Wegner – drawing on concepts from Alain Badiou, Jacques Lacan and Slavoj Žižek – locates between the 'two deaths' of the beginning of the end of the Cold War, with the 'fall' of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, and the end of the beginning of the new historical situation of the War on Terror, with the destruction of the World Trade Center in September 2001.[10] According to Tom Engelhardt, in these 'nether years', 'bursts of triumphalism yoyo-ed with unease and self-doubt.'[11] Military SF during this period included 'feminized military SF' – Darko Suvin's term for works originating with Lois McMaster Bujold and C. J. Cherryh in the mid-1980s, and which corresponds to Jones' identification of the 'popular militarist SF of the Pause' – and the more masculinist and technophilic texts examined by Charles E. Gannon. The focus of this chapter is on the post-9/11 period of military SF; the themes examined were extant during the 1990s but their treatment was more vociferous – from an increasingly right-wing perspective – in the 2000s.

Jones contends that the *popular* (her emphasis) militarist SF of the Pause has a very different character from that usually associated with the term 'militarist SF.' The focus of these 'mass-market fantasies of war' is the individual's engagement with the military machine of the State, rather than on the science and technology of warfare. Readers and writers 'found themselves concentrating (as peacetime

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[9] Gwyneth Jones, 'Wild Hearts in Uniform: The Romance of Militarism in Popular SF', *Imagination/Space: Essays and Talks on Fiction, Feminism, Technology, and Politics* (Seattle: Aqueduct Press, 2009), pp. 80-98 (pp. 81, 96).

[10] Phillip E. Wegner, *Life between Two Deaths, 1989-2001: U.S. Culture in the Long Nineties* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009), pp. 2, 9. Phillip Wegner, 'Ken MacLeod's Permanent Revolution: Utopian Possible Worlds, History and the *Augenblick* in the *Fall Revolution* Quartet', in *Red Planets: Marxism and Science Fiction*, ed. by Mark Bould and China Miéville (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2009), pp. 137-155 (p. 149).

[11] Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation,* revised edition (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), p. x.

governments are forced to concentrate, although it irks them terribly…) on the quality of life for the individual': not on the victory of the protagonist's polity over its human or alien enemies, but on 'the personal fulfilment, emotional well-being, health and happiness' of the individual military serviceperson.[12] The four main 'feminized' series that characterise military SF during the Pause can be labelled 'Hornblower in Space' texts, that is, transfigurations of C. S. Forester's Horatio Hornblower novels.[13] Each is based around a naval military protagonist: Lois McMaster Bujold's Vorkosigan series, David Weber's Honor Harrington series, Elizabeth Moon's Serrano series, and David Feintuch's Seafort series. Bujold's long-running Vorkosigan series is about the disabled, charismatic, and highly intelligent Miles Vorkosigan serving in the Barrayaran Imperial Military Service while side-lining as 'Admiral Naismith' of the Dendarii Mercenaries. The series began in the 1980s with *Shards of Honor* (1986) and *The Warrior's Apprentice* (1986), and began to move away from military SF in the 1990s. Weber's *On Basilisk Station* (1993) is the first volume in a popular long-running series of novels and short stories following the naval career of Honor Harrington, an officer in the Royal Manticoran Navy. Moon's Serrano series is tongue-in-cheek military SF. It includes the Herris Serrano trilogy, starting with *Hunting Party* (1993), about a disgraced Regular Space Service officer who becomes a private space yacht commander; the Esmay Suiza trilogy, starting with *Once a Hero* (1997), about a new recruit in the Regular Space Service; and finishes with *Against the Odds* (2000), which resolves the series. Feintuch's *Midshipman's Hope* (1994) is the first book of the Seafort Saga, depicting the career of Captain Nicholas Seafort of the U.N.N.S (United Nations Naval Service), the military of the 'conservative and authoritarian' post-Christian Reunification United Nations.[14]

Less popular military SF adhered closer to Gannon's views on modern military SF. According to Gannon, traditionally 'war narratives have woven ruminations on

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[12] Jones, pp. 80-98 (pp. 81, 96).

[13] Horatio Hornblower is a fictional late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century British naval hero, created by C.S Forester over a series of ten completed novels, one unfinished novel, and several short stories between 1927 and 1967. The influence of the *Hornblower* series, and other naval historical novels set in the Age of Sail, on science fiction is widely accepted. Previous transfigurations of the Hornblower stories in SF include A. Bertram Chandler's Rim World series and Poul Anderson's Dominic Flandry series, but it was not until the 1990s that such texts predominated.

[14] David Feintuch, *Midshipman's Hope* (London: Orbit, 1998), pp. 154 - 155.

ethics, morality, politics, ontology, and even religion into their depictions of combat', but more recent fiction 'usually presents a less philosophical perspective on warfare.' Differing from Jones, Gannon writes that these narratives redirect their descriptive energy away from character study 'into an overwhelmingly male-oriented fascination with the grim technologies, swift consequences, and chilling impersonality of modern warfare.'[15] Among these more masculinist military SF works are: Rick Shelley's Second Commonwealth series (1995-1997), 13th Spaceborne series (1994-1995), and Dirigent Mercenary Corp series (1998-2000); William C. Dietz's Legion of the Damned series (1993-2011); David Sherman's Starfist series (1997-2009); and Ian Douglas' Heritage trilogy (1998-2000), the first of three Marines in Space trilogies (1998-2009).

During the 1990s some Americans 'seemed to be almost nostalgic for the Cold War era, when a simpler bipolar world had confronted them.'[16] With the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, they faced the challenge, 'in cultural terms as well as in others, of adjusting to a world that was multipolar in its distribution of power.'[17] At first there was relief, delight, and even smugness, as expressed by Francis Fukuyama's widely-read essay *The End of History*, which argued that with the collapse of Soviet communism, we had reached the 'end of history', in the sense that liberal democracy and market capitalism had prevailed over their ideological rivals and were the only viable systems of modern society.[18] But the need for better paradigms became clear during the 1990s 'fragmentations' and, even more so, after 11 September 2001. The 1990s came to be characterised by insurgency, ethnic strike and ethnic cleansing, genocide, failed states, sectarian violence and civil war, humanitarian crisis, terror, and general lawlessness.[19] The newest, most dangerous, and most radical form of these 1990s fragmentations

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[15] Charles E. Gannon, *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines: Technomilitary Agenda-Setting in American and British Speculative Fiction* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), pp. 239-240.

[16] James T. Patterson, *Restless Giant: The United States from Watergate to Bush v. Gore* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 337.

[17] 'War and Peace', in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of American Cultural and Intellectual History, Volume 2*, ed. by Joan Shelley Rubin and Scott E. Casper (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 539-544 (p. 542).

[18] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

[19] Among the many examples of this were: Yugoslavia breaking up; unrest throughout Southeastern Europe; civil wars in Asia; Somalia dissolving into sectarian and clan warfare; and near-war between India and Pakistan.

appeared in the form of non-state terrorism.[20] Americans were relatively safe within their own borders; they were complacent within their technologically superior fortress, fostered by an industrial-military complex that had convinced them they were invincible. This changed in September 2001.

Post-September 11

On 11 September 2001, fundamentalist Islamist terrorists, under the command of Osama bin Laden, hijacked four U.S. airliners and successfully crashed two of them into the World Trade Center in New York City and one into the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia; the fourth plane was brought down by a passenger rebellion.[21] In all, nearly 3,000 people were killed. These terrorist attacks, the first time since 1814 that the continental U.S. came under foreign attack, brought about the 'end of the uncertain historical interregnum of the 1990s.'[22] As recognised at the time, 9/11 was 'one of those moments in which history splits, and we define the world as before and after.'[23]

9/11 enabled the United States, 'in ways not possible in the immediate, uncertain aftermath of the Cold War, to assume a new global mantle and thus marked the opening of a new period in global history.'[24] In the short term, it weakened those inhibitions on the projection of power that affected the presidencies of George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton. American foreign and military policies became more interventionist – and divisive – than imagined at the turn of the millennium: these new policies launched an unending string of failed wars, conflicts, raids, kidnappings, acts of torture, and drone assassination programs.[25] In response to the attacks and calls for patriotic revenge, the U.S. initiated the War on Terror – an

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[20] Walter LaFeber, Richard Polenberg, and Nancy Woloch, *The American Century: A History of the United States since the 1890s*, 6th edition (Armonk, NY, and London: M. E. Sharpe, 2008), p. 540.
[21] The attack on the iconic Twin Towers and the Pentagon aimed to produce astounding and shocking images. The targets were symbolic of the American national image: the Twin Towers of financial power and economic control, the Pentagon of military power and hegemony. David Ryan, '9/11 and US Foreign Policy', in *American Thought and Culture in the 21st Century*, ed. by Martin Halliwell and Catherine Morley (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), pp. 49-63 (p. 50).
[22] Wegner, *Life between Two Deaths, 1989-2001*, p. 63.
[23] 'The War Against America; An Unfathomable Attack', *New York Times*, September 12, 2001, quoted in Patterson, p. 12.
[24] Wegner, *Life between Two Deaths, 1989-2001*, p. 9.
[25] This neocolonialist and neoimperialist approach to the world is reminiscent of America's attitudes after World War Two. Likewise reminiscent of the post-WW2 era is the social and political climate in the wake of 9/11, which bears a resemblance to the Cold War anxieties of the 1950s.

open-ended, perhaps unending, conflict – and a month later invaded Afghanistan and the strongholds of the Taliban and al-Qaeda. As well as the Afghanistan War, the United States, using the pretense of the War on Terror, has used military force in Pakistan, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen, and has gone to war in Iraq.[26] Deeply angered and fearful because of the 9/11 attacks, Americans were transformed into supporters of war against Iraq, and at the beginning of the Iraq War, in March 2003, 'a clear majority of citizens judged this preposterous enterprise to be justifiable, feasible, and indeed necessary.'[27] In addition, efforts to combat domestic terrorism – such as the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security, the passing of the PATRIOT Act and other anti-terrorism policies, and the increasing militarisation of the police – have evoked widespread fears about threats to civil liberties and individual privacy. The War on Terror has seen 'an unprecedented rollback of constitutional civil liberties and increased surveillance of U.S. citizens.'[28] 9/11 was followed by the increasing militarisation of the United States and the creation of an entrenched national security state.[29]

The effects of 9/11 on American culture have been deemed 'both profound and profoundly superficial', with some commentators 'quite sure that the world has changed and others who suspect that it has not changed at all, even if it should have.' In any case, perhaps no event in modern U.S. history has generated such immediate claims for a decisive shift in the sphere of culture as has 9/11. However, there has been little awareness in American culture of the global response to 9/11, 'which has often (although not always) been critical of the national response and above all of the national culture of military violence.'[30] Likewise, Robert McElvaine – without diminishing the significance or horror of 9/11, or ignoring the subsequent interventionist turn in U.S. foreign policy – argues that 'in terms of political realignment' the attacks appear to be a 'non-turning point', merely strengthening

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[26] Melvin A. Goodman, *National Insecurity: The Cost of American Militarism* (San Francisco: City Light Books, 2013), p. 13.

[27] Bacevich writes that two factors help explain this 'apparent gullibility': first, a 'self-induced historical amnesia' and lack of interest in the historical background to the modern Middle East and the 9/11 attacks; second, the progressive militarization of U.S. policy since Vietnam, which only gained momentum with the events of September 11, and the American public's dulled capacity to 'think critically about the actual limits of military power.' Bacevich, pp. 202-203.

[28] Patterson, p. 12. Martin and Steuter, p. 25.

[29] Goodman, p. 144.

[30] 'September 11th, 2001', in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of American Cultural and Intellectual History, Volume 2*, ed. by Joan Shelley Rubin and Scott E. Casper (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 380-383 (p. 380-382).

existing ideological and rhetorical instincts.[31] Military SF mirrors this: it maintains its two streams – militaristic and antimilitaristic – and works are not fundamentally different to those of previous periods. However, there has been an intensification in the engagement with key themes and rhetorics, and its right-wing militaristic works are increasingly far-right. The post-9/11 preoccupation, both official and popular, with terrorism and patriotism, and the tightening boundaries of nationalistic cultural identity, are observable in the first two main themes of military SF and American militarism between 2002 and 2011: The Enemy and Exceptionalism. The third main theme looked at in this chapter is the Civilian-Military Divide.

The Enemy/The Terrorist

As seen in previous chapters, to legitimate war and its consequences, powerful enemies – real or imagined – are required, and for combat narratives to work effectively a Manichaean framework is often needed, pitting noble heroes against demonic enemies. Such enemies are also an important concept that helps people to define who they are. In the wake of 9/11, especially, readers responded well to narratives with clearly outlined contests between good and evil. However, enemies are not a constant: when the Soviet Union collapsed, U.S. popular culture needed, in both reality and in fiction, a new enemy. In the American imagination terrorism and 'The Terrorist' have taken over the dominant villain role that Communism once filled, as an existential threat to America, its allies, and idea of freedom itself, which must be resisted to avoid a cataclysmic outcome.[32] Military SF takes part in the glorification and justification of violence against (Arab, Muslim) terrorists, or at least their metaphoric counterparts in SF. However, also notable during this period

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[31] Robert S. McElvaine, 'Are we at a turning point in history', *History News Network*, 27 June 2005 <http://hnn.us/articles/12405.html>, quoted in Martin Halliwell and Catherine Morley, 'Introduction: The Next American Century', in *American Thought and Culture in the 21st Century*, ed. by Martin Halliwell and Catherine Morley (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), pp. 1-17 (p. 4). Other commentators agree with this sentiment, that 'in the context of the broad sweep of American political and social history', the 9/11 attacks were 'much less significant than is often alleged': despite the 'immediate devastation and enormous shock, the outpourings of flag-waving rage or tortured introspection', there is no evidence that the attacks 'radically altered the course of American political life.' Dominic Sandbrook, 'American Politics in the 1990s and 2000s', in *American Thought and Culture in the 21st Century*, ed. by Martin Halliwell and Catherine Morley (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), pp. 21-24 (p. 29).
[32] Martin and Steuter, pp. 109-110. Boggs and Pollard, p. 207.

of military SF is the antagonistic role played by the United Nations in some right-wing works.

According to Carl Boggs and Tom Pollard, in American media culture terrorism has inspired the invention of 'an entirely new category of human being, a category that ostensibly captures the essence of contemporary jihadic violence':

> The personality type is one existing beyond history, beyond politics, beyond psychology, a type so irredeemably evil and crazy that no normal mode of interpretation is possible... "terrorists" are people whose sole purpose in living is to cause great pain and suffering. Following this discourse, the modern terrorist amounts to nothing more than a cancerous intrusion into an otherwise healthy body politic, and this is immune from standard legal sanctions or efforts at rehabilitation and must be removed by maximum force.

Presented as such – without historical background or political motivations, as faceless, irrational, innately violent, and stereotyped villains – these agents are granted no rights under international law, and their physical habitats become open terrain for total warfare and the horrors of technowar. These 'monstrous enemies' represent a shift from transfigurations of conventional Huns (Germans), Japs (Japanese), gooks (Koreans and Vietnamese), and redskins (Native Americans) to a new line-up of modern-day threats, including Arabs, Muslims, terrorists, and rogue tyrants. [33] Monsters in popular culture, especially those with access to doomsday weapons, serve 'reactionary ends insofar as they provoke the wrathful vengeance of a power structure under siege', while also furnishing 'easy psychological targets at moments of public fear and paranoia', such as that around (Arab, Muslim) terrorism after 9/11. [34] As proposed in Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's discussion of 'monster culture' and Robert Brennan's subsequent examination of this concept in relation to post-9/11 America and the figure of the terrorist, 'the monstrous body is pure culture' – incorporating anxiety and desire – and Americans'

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[33] Boggs and Pollard, pp. 207, 224. Post-9/11 this line-up was given a name: in his first State of the Union address, President Bush labelled Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as the "Axis of Evil" and declared his commitment to expand the War on Terror to include them.
[34] Boggs and Pollard, p. 224.

fears and fantasies, fuelled by media and presidential rhetoric, transformed the human terrorist into the monstrous and superhuman Terrorist.[35]

The sudden and devastating alien attack is a popular analogy for terrorism – attacks unexpected and attackers possibly unknown, with little or no understanding of the perpetrators' motivations, leaving the masses with two impulses, survival and revenge – as in the Jason Wander series, written by former military intelligence officer Robert Buettner. Following the military career of Jason Wander during the Slug War (also known as the Pseudocephalopod War), the series begins with *Orphanage* (2002).[36] Buettner makes explicit the analogies drawn in the texts to the post-9/11 context in which they were conceived: in a 'Meet the Author' section he writes of 9/11

> Our attackers were so alien to Americans that they could have come from outer space… But I believed that Americans would rise up and make a war somewhere… It would be a long war. It would be fought in alien places, and in ways that would surprise us.[37]

Likewise, the analogy is made concrete with the Ganymede Expeditionary Force, launched after the unexpected Slug attack on Earth and comprised of ten thousand soldiers 'who had lost their entire family'; it is called the 'Orphans' Crusade.'[38] The rhetoric of crusade was a part of both official and popular discussion of terrorism, and (perceived) East-West relations and history, within days of the attacks: President Bush immediately framed the conflict as a war between good and evil with his remarks about 'this crusade, this war on terror.'[39] Buettner also explicitly incorporates his novels into the historical evolution of the military SF subgenre, noting that *Starship Troopers* and *The Forever War* 'marvellously embraced the *zeitgeist* in which each was written, but each suffers for it in a post-9/11 world.'[40]

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[35] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 'Monster Culture (Seven Theses)', *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 3-25. Robert Brennan, 'Monster Culture in Post-9/11 America', *The Morningside Review*, 2006/2007 edition <morningsidereview.org/essay/monster-culture-in-post-911-america/> [accessed 10 October 2015].
[36] Followed by *Orphan's Destiny* (2005), *Orphan's Journey* (2008), *Orphan's Alliance* (2008), and *Orphan's Triumph* (2009)
[37] Robert Buettner, *Orphanage* (New York: Orbit, 2008), p. 309.
[38] Buettner, *Orphanage*, p. 167.
[39] George W. Bush, 'Remarks by the President Upon Arrival, The South Lawn', from the White House archives, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010916-2.html> [accessed 14 March 2016].
[40] Robert Buettner, *Orphan's Destiny* (New York, Orbit, 2008), p. 307.

For the vast majority of the series, the presentation of the Slugs follows that of The Terrorist: they are faceless, irrational, fearless, irredeemably evil villains, whose only interactions with humans were to cause pain and suffering. The war begins when, without warning, the Slugs establish a base on Jupiter's largest moon, Ganymede, and bomb Earth with skyscraper-sized kamikaze-piloted Projectiles, destroying entire cities and killing tens of millions of people. Humanity finds itself at war 'with somebody we didn't know, who wanted us dead for reasons we couldn't understand.'[41] This ignorance about the enemy continues throughout the conflict, even as humanity takes the war out to the stars. In the final book of the series, in which he captures a 'Slug Ganglion', Wander comments that after 'thirty years of war, all I know about the blob is that it is my enemy. I have no reason to think it knows me any differently.'[42] Also like the Terrorist, Slugs are fearless in death, willing to sacrifice themselves for their cause: in the novels, individual Slugs lack neural structures consistent with independent thought, and Slug society is a type of hive intelligence, a single entity made up of physically separate organisms, the death of which individually 'may be as meaningless to the one big Slug as loss of fingernail clippings is to us.'[43] Despite the Slugs being presented in a way that elicits little reader sympathy – in fact, in a way that elicits disgust, and satisfaction with their destruction – Buettner ends the series, in *Orphan's Triumph* (2009), with a similar sort of rehabilitation as that of the Buggers in Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game*. Wander comes to the conclusion that his years 'had taught me how empty this universe was, and how unique life, any life, was within it. Even Slugs.' The Pseudocephalopod, an entire Slug planet-mind going by name Archimedes, travels to an adjacent universe to escape humanity's vengeance: 'Both sides won. We're alive. The Pseudocephalopod is alive.'[44]

Tom Kratman's *A Desert Called Peace* (2007), and the Carrera's Legion series, also engage with The Terrorist as the Enemy. However, it also gives as much rhetorical weight to idea of the United Nations as the Enemy. Kratman's *A Desert Called Peace* and its sequels are set on the interstellar colony world Terra Nova which – through quirks of its history and a distinct lack of social and technical

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[41] Buettner, *Orphanage*, p. 8.
[42] Robert Buettner, *Orphan's Triumph* (New York and London: Orbit, 2009), p. 6.
[43] Buettner, *Orphanage*, pp. 218, 246.
[44] Buettner, *Orphan's Triumph*, pp. 69, 350.

evolution – has a geopolitical situation mirroring that of consensus reality Earth in the early-twenty-first century.[45] Patrick Hennessey (ala. Patricio Hennessey de Carrera) forms Carrera's Legion (*el Legio del Cid*), an expeditionary mercenary force, after his family is killed when Islamic terrorists collide airships into several skyscrapers in First Landing, in the Federated States of Columbia, on 11 June 459 A.C. (2511 A.D.). Following these attacks the Federated States goes to war in Pashtia and then in Sumer, where WMDs (stockpiles of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons) are discovered. Epitomising the ideas of extreme right-wing military science fiction during the modern period, Kratman's main character 'swore, when they were murdered, to avenge myself on all who had contributed, even passively, to my loss', which comes to includes two 'enemies of our entire civilization': Islam (Salafism) and Kosmos ('cosmopolitan progressives', as symbolised by the United Nations).[46] In fact, in Kratman's formulation the enemy behind all of the threats on Terra Nova is High Admiral Robinson of the United Earth Peace Fleet, aboard his flagship *Spirit of Peace*, who wants to destroy the Federated States so that Terra Nova can embrace progressivism, and is willing to use Salafism and terrorism to do it.

The depictions of Muslims and fundamentalist Salafis by Kratman are unrepentantly negative. Muslims are described as having the cultural characteristics of self-deception, bombast, and a terrible sense of timing, and being 'amoral familists', who cannot conceive of legitimate loyalty to someone who is not a blood relation.[47] In descriptions of Salafis – who undertook the 11 June attacks – the focus is on their possession of slaves. They had brought slaves from Earth during the colonisation of Nova Terra; after settlement they became nomads who raided other colonies for food and slaves; and modern Salafis are known as slave-holders who 'only wanted young girl and boys.'[48] Almost every Muslim described in the novel is depicted as vile: for example Samir, a worker in one of the skyscrapers hit by an airship, who taunts his colleagues about the 'judgment of Allah', and the Sumeri

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[45] It is easy to identity the places and events beneath Kratman's veneer of SF: examples include the Federated States of Columbia (U.S.A.), the Tauran Union (the E.U.), Volga (Russia), Balboa (Panama), Sumer (Iraq), and Pashtia (Afghanistan), and the Cochin War (Vietnam War) and Petro War (Gulf War).

[46] Tom Kratman, *A Desert Called Peace* (Riverdale, NY: Baen Books, 2007), pp. 5, 183.

[47] Kratman, *A Desert Called Peace*, pp. 232, 586.

[48] Kratman, *A Desert Called Peace*, p. 20, 473.

lieutenant-colonel who has a thirteen-year old male sex slave, and tortures captured legionnaires. [49] The complete Othering of the Muslim culture contributes to Kratman's effort to show how the War on Terror should have been fought. Carrera prosecutes battle ruthlessly and brutally, without the political restrictions of government forces. He embraces the 'common law' of war – rather than the law of war maintained by the ignorant '*international community of the very, very sensitive*' – and uses it to justify the shooting of enemy soldiers trying to surrender during battle, the execution of soldiers as reprisal for their treatment of Legion prisoners, and the torture of terrorists.[50] In later battles against Salafis, Carrera crucifies the men, relocates the young children to Balboa, and awards the women to his Pashtun Scouts as prizes.[51] In the first book, the best example of this ruthlessness is the battle for pseudo-Fallujah (the insurgent held city of Pumbadeta), where, rather than engaging in street-fighting Carrera besieges the city. He bombs the bridges, destroys food stockpiles, mines the outskirts, starves the city into submission and executes every male identified as an insurgent.[52] Even more dramatically *Carnifex* (2007) culminates with Carrera launching a nuclear strike on the capital city of Yithrab, the terrorists' main supporters, making it look like the Islamists themselves detonated the nuclear bomb; the hero kills over a million civilians to gain vengeance against the mastermind behind the June 11 attacks and, perhaps more importantly, for propaganda purposes.[53]

For Kratman, though, 'cosmopolitan progressives' are the greatest enemy – greater even than Islamist terrorism, which could be dealt with if not for the interference of progressives – and the United Nation's espousal of progressive values makes it a threat. In the Carrera's Legion series progressivism on Earth has created a socialist totalitarian one-world government with a new caste system – with 'the half a million or so Class Ones supervising perhaps three million Class Two, who in turn supervised twenty or so million Class Threes, the entirety lording it over the half billion proles of Classes Four through Six' – in which the privileged live lives of immorality and degeneracy, while the great majority struggle as near-slaves.[54] This

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[49] Kratman, *A Desert Called Peace*, p. 91, 490.
[50] Kratman, *A Desert Called Peace*, pp. 567, 569, 753.
[51] Kratman, *A Desert Called Peace*, p. 3.
[52] Kratman, *A Desert Called Peace*, pp. 910, 911, 953.
[53] Tom Kratman, *Carnifex* (Riverdale, NY: Baen Books, 2007), pp. 875, 878.
[54] Kratman, *A Desert Called Peace*, pp. 17-18.

anti-progressivism and anti-world government attitude is dominant in fundamentalist Christian apocalyptic thinking, as critically engaged with by Haldeman's *Forever Peace*. The Kosmos despise the Federated States because it is holding Terra Nova back from Earth's 'progress' As one Kosmo claims, by 'looting the world, by taking a totally unfair share of its resources, by exploiting the poor, the Federated States are able to make a more proper system, one like Earth has, seem inefficient.'[55] Progressive forces and organisations on Terra Nova include supranationals like the World League and the Tauran Union, the entertainment industry, the news industry, the legal industry – especially that part of it devoted to international law – and the humanitarian industry – including organisations such as Amnesty Interplanetary. The Legion eventually confronts its greatest obstacle, the Tauran Union, in *Lotus Eaters* (2010), as Carrera's actions take Balboa – strengthened by military virtue – into open conflict with the much-larger, but weakened by progressive ideas, Union.[56]

Ian Douglas' Marine in Space series begins with the U.S. at war with a 'tyrannical United Nations rationing resources and stifling American initiative, power, and scientific know-how.'[57] It later disparages the World Unionists and their desire for a single world government.[58] The United Nations is also depicted as the enemy in the military SF of Michael Z. Williamson. Williamson was born in England and immigrated to the United States as a child; he joined the United States Air Force at age 18, and was deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Desert Fox. In his novel *Freehold* (2004) Sergeant Second Class Kendra Pacelli, United Nations Peace Force, flees Earth after being falsely accused of corruption, and migrates to the Freehold of Graine, a 'libertarian utopia.' She serves with the Freehold Military Forces, and takes part in an insurgency after the United Nations Readjustment Task Force invades and occupies the planet. The Freehold has a system based on maximum individual freedom; as one character puts it, it is the 'first truly free human society in history.'[59] Any legal adult 'can do anything he wishes with the only restriction being that no one else gets hurt', there are no restrictions on

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[55] Kratman, *A Desert Called Peace*, p. 25.
[56] Tom Kratman, *The Lotus Eaters* (Riverdale, NY: Baen Books, 2010).
[57] Robert Markley, *Dying Planet: Mars in Science and the Imagination* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 293.
[58] Ian Douglas, *Star Marines* (New York: Eos, 2007), p. 139.
[59] Michael Z. Williamson, *Freehold* (Riverdale, NY: Baen Books, 2004), p. 188.

'hallucinogens, sex or weapons-grade nuclear material', no traffic laws, and no weapons restrictions; in fact, Freehold has a proud armed citizenry.[60] Of course, the Earth press portrays the Freehold government as 'a fascist, plutocratic junta', ignoring the superior standard of living, literacy rate, and unparalleled individual freedom and focusing 'on the "lack" of franchise and the "denial of basic rights" of state-sponsored medical care, public education and free access to entertainment.'[61] In contrast, Williamson depicts the U.N. as an authoritarian system, its armed forces trained to oppress unarmed insurgents and civilians. The U.N. system is 'based not on trust, but on force'; rather than 'a cooperative peace mission, it is an attempt to impose order from outside… Peace at the muzzle of a rifle is not peace, but imperialism and slavery.'[62]

The negative representations of the United Nations in the works of Kratman, Douglas, and Williamson reflect a significant – if still minority – view amongst the U.S, population. Since the early-1970s a majority of Americans consistently affirmed the U.S. should retain U.N. membership and cooperate fully with the organisation, but the 9/11 attacks set the stage for dramatic and long-lasting changes in the U.S. public's assessment of the U.N. A 2003 Gallup/CNN/*USA Today* poll found that the U.N Security Council's decision to not support the invasion of Iraq made 55% of Americans have a less favourable view of the U.N., and the proportion of Americans rating the job the U.N. was doing as poor jumped to 58% and has continued at historically high levels since. Most Americans still see the U.N. as the key actor in world affairs: according to a 2013 Gallup poll 66% said the U.N. played a necessary role in the world, while 29% said that it did not. However, 1 2016 poll showed 38% of respondents though the U.N. was doing a good job, while 54% thought it was doing a poor job in trying to solve the problems it has had to face.[63] A 2016 Pew poll also showed the substantial minority holding negative views of the U.N., and the partisan differences in opinion. According to this poll, 64% of Americans had a favourable view of the U.N. and 29% had an unfavourable view;

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[60] Williamson, pp. 48, 83, 137, 336.
[61] Williamson, p. 363.
[62] Williamson, pp. 248, 335.
[63] 'United Nations', *Gallup* ≤www.gallup.com/poll/116347/united.nations.aspx> [accessed on 15 April 2016].

moreover, 80% of Democrats held a positive view of the U.N., while only 43% of Republicans were favourable.[64]

The representations of both these enemies – the Terrorist and the United Nations, and the conflict between democracy and tyranny – legitimize American foreign policy driven by unilateralism, militarism, and interventionism. [65] The representations of, and American responses to, these enemies also engage with the nation's 'post-Cold War period of extreme confidence in the universal currency of American, democratic, capitalist values.'[66] The theme of the Enemy is thus closely tied to the theme of American Exceptionalism.

Exceptionalism

According to Geoff Martin and Erin Steuter, one of the reasons that the U.S. persists in its militarist foreign policy – 'despite the facts that the costs of war are high, the domestic and global reaction is unfavourable, and the results of blowback may well be making U.S. citizens less safe' – is found in the notion of American Exceptionalism, which leads many Americans 'to overblown self-confidence and sense of the special virtue of the United States.'[67] This was partly the result of the remarkable rebirth of neoconservatism during the 1990s with its desire for the U.S. to seize the strategic initiative and use its fully refurbished power – especially military power – to achieve the final triumph of American ideals. Efforts to promote a 'neo-Reaganite foreign policy of military supremacy and moral confidence' found expression in the conviction that benign American global dominion, aggressive unilateralism and military superiority would prevent global disorder and promote prosperity and peace.[68]

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[64] 'NATO, U.S. allies, the EU and UN', *Pew Research Center*, 5 May 2016 <www.people-press.org/2016/05/05/6-nato-u-s-allies-the-eu-and-un/> [accessed on 30 May 2016].
[65] Martin and Steuter, pp. 109-110. Jack G. Shaheen, *Reel Bad Arabs: Hollywood Vilifies a People* (New York: Olive Branch Press, 2001), pp. 15, 29.
[66] John Dumbrell, 'American Leadership into the New Century', in *American Thought and Culture in the 21st Century*, ed. by Martin Halliwell and Catherine Morley (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), pp. 35-48 (p. 45). In these early post-Cold War years, Robert Tucker and David Hendrickson warned America of 'the imperial temptation.' Robert Tucker and David Hendrickson, *The Imperial Temptation* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1992).
[67] Martin and Steuter, pp. 35, 37.
[68] Bacevich, pp. 80, 83-88. This was championed by The Project for a New American Century, formed in 1997 by neoconservatives and influential members of the defence community, and buttressed by a collection of right-wing groups and think tanks committed to the militarization of

The threat of terrorism after 9/11, furthermore, served to reinforce the 'long-held myth that U.S. power (by definition benevolent) was needed to overcome the chaos and violence of a Hobbesian universe filled with evildoers intent on destroying American freedom and democracy.'[69] This also drew on the American 'war story' – which is defensive, instigated by an aggressor, and just in nature – discussed by Tom Engelhardt's *The End of Victory Culture*. Engelhardt argues that America's victory culture ended after World War Two and the atomic explosion over Hiroshima, but that that there was a second victory culture after 9/11, although that too dissolved after a few years. Much like Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush attempted to revive the triumphalist attitude toward war characteristic of the post-World War Two era.[70] The myth of a Hobbesian universe and second victory culture contributed to the revival of 'Good War' themes in the 1990s and 2000s, which 'beyond simply reliving and romanticizing a time of crucial victories', affirmed ideas of the righteous war, of U.S. supremacy and triumph, of manifest destiny, and of Exceptionalism.[71] Two long-running military SF series, by Ian Douglas and John Scalzi, offer differing representations of this theme of American Exceptionalism and the corresponding myth of a Hobbesian universe requiring the intervention of U.S. military power.

Ian Douglas' *Semper Mars* (1998) is the first novel in his 'space opera paean to the U.S. Marines', the Marines in Space series, composed of three trilogies, starting with the Heritage Trilogy.[72] Ian Douglas is a pseudonym of author William H. Keith; Keith served during the Vietnam War in the United States Navy as a hospital corpsman, worked in the civilian medical field, then became a professional artist and writer in the games industry, before becoming a full-time author in 1984. In

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policy and the use of military power, including the Heritage Foundation. See, *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces, and Resources for a New Century*, by 'The Project for the New American Century' (2000), which advocated the maintenance of U.S. nuclear superiority, military expansion, the development of global missile defenses, and the control of space and cyberspace. As Franklin writes, it is difficult to distinguish between this strategic document and militaristic/technophilic military SF. H. Bruce Franklin, 'How America's Fictions of Future War Have Changed the World', in *Future Wars: The Anticipations and the Fears*, ed. by David Seed (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), pp. 32-49 (p. 45).

[69] Boggs and Pollard, p. 7.

[70] Engelhardt, pp. 5, 10, 306, 315.

[71] Boggs and Pollard, pp. 127-128, 129. Michael S. Sherry, *In the Shadow of War: The United States Since the 1930s* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 464.

[72] Markley, p. 292. The Heritage Trilogy was followed by the Legacy Trilogy and the Inheritance Trilogy, depicting the United States Marine Corps (and its descendants) as it battles hostile human and alien threats beyond the solar system.

Semper Mars the United States goes to war with the United Nations to control alien technologies found inside the 'Face on Mars', technologies which promise their possessors the power to overcome the problems of over-population, energy generation, and ecological collapse. These were all issues gaining significant attention in U.S. media and popular rhetoric during the 1990s and increasingly so at the start of the twenty-first century. The novel opens with Russia and the U.S. as the last two major powers on the planet who have not signed the UN Reorganization Charter of 2025, which calls for the

> establishment of a United Nations government that would have jurisdiction over the national governments of the world, the gradual abolition of all national militaries, and new international laws and regulations governing the exploitation, shipment, and sale of the world's resources.[73]

The UN is increasingly concerned about global warming, rising sea levels, and natural resource depletion, and, as explained by one American character, has cast the U.S. and Russia 'as villains, holdouts selfishly clinging to outmoded sovereignty simply because they feared a little thing like dictatorship.' The U.S., however, argues that a tyrannical world government is unnecessary. Two new factors were about to 'break the deadly cycle of poverty and scarcity on Earth once and for all': first, 'the wholesale industrialization of space'; second, 'the discovery of artefacts on Mars, artefacts representing a technology that was old five hundred thousand years before humans had domesticated animals, developed an alphabet, or dreamed of riding ships into space.'[74] In June 2040, U.S. President Markham addresses the nation:

> At 10:45 Eastern Daylight Time this morning, I asked the Congress of these United States to recognize that a state of war now exists between the United States of America and the governing body of the United Nations… I wish to stress that we have no quarrel with any member nation of that body. This war was forced upon us by the hostile and unreasonable demands made by the UN, by their violations of American sovereignty, and by their takeover of the International Space Station.

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[73] Ian Douglas, *Semper Mars* (New York: Eos, 1998), p. 30.
[74] Douglas, *Semper Mars*, p. 31.

We call upon men of courage, vision, bravery, and goodwill in all nations to help us now as we face together this corrupt tyranny that claims to be a world government but so far has proven only that it is a world disgrace…[75]

The United Nations reacts by launching cruise missiles at the continental U.S., moving troops across the borders with Canada and Mexico, and demanding the U.S.'s complete and unconditional surrender. The war continues into the second novel of the Heritage Trilogy, *Luna Marine* (1999), in which the U.N. continues hostilities because of its fear the U.S. and Russia 'were using their superiority in spaceflight technology to grab the newly discovered archaeological discoveries and exotechnologies for themselves.'[76] The U.S. achieves victory in the conflict. The third novel, *Europa Strike* (2000), witnesses a looming war between the United States and China, based on similar issues as the UN War.

In his Heritage, Legacy, and Inheritance Trilogies, Douglas projects the Manichean conflicts of right-wing politics 'back in time and out into the galaxy.' Interstellar space is home to 'warring races, heroic virtues, and humans or their stand-ins fighting to throw off the yoke of slavery,' and the narrative ultimately links 'human evolutionary and socio-political history to the machinations of malevolent aliens out to destroy competitor races when they near the threshold of interstellar travel.'[77] Douglas does this through the series-spanning threat of the Xul, originally known to humanity as the *Ur-Bakar* or 'Hunters of the Dawn', a xenophobic predatory group-mind species, driven by Darwinian imperatives – a survival-of-the-fittest mentality – to seek out and destroy all other species capable of posing competition to, or a threat to, their eons-long dominion over the Galaxy.[78] In the words of one character: they are a 'race of Galaxy-faring psychopaths intent on wiping out emerging civilizations by smacking them with asteroids.'[79] The unavoidable conclusion, humanity discovers is that there was no way to co-exist with the Xul: 'either Humankind would wipe out the Xul, or the Xul would wipe out Humankind.

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[75] Douglas, *Semper Mars*, p. 252.
[76] Ian Douglas, *Luna Marine* (New York: Eos, 1999), p. 93.
[77] Markley, pp. 292-293.
[78] Douglas, *Luna Marine*, p. 306. Ian Douglas, *Europa Strike* (New York: Eos, 2000), p. 134. Douglas, *Star Marines*, p. 1.
[79] Ian Douglas, *Battlespace* (New York: Eos, 2006), p. 360.

There would be no middle ground, no basis for cooperative rapprochement, no peace short of the final peace of genocidal annihilation.'[80]

The Manichaean framework is complicated, however, by United States – later United Federal Republic of America – interactions with other human polities and with alien species other than the Xul. Before the existence of the Xul was confirmed, one theory was that the Hunters of the Dawn were a number of separate species, part of a galactic cycle of destructive civilisations, and it was suggested that humanity might be the next iteration of the Hunters.[81] Aggression and warfare does appear to be innate, and even in the twenty-second century on Earth wars are everywhere, exacerbated by climate change: in a thirty year period

> Marines had deployed to Mexico and Egypt, to Siberia and the Chinese coast, to a dozen other shores and climes, fighting at one time or another troops of the Kingdom of Allah, the Chinese Hegemony, the European Federation, the Ukrainian Nationalists, Mexicans, Québecois, Brazilians, Colombians, and forces of the Pan-African Empire. The Great Jihad War of 2147 was now being called World War V. Already there was talk of a World War VI… The black forces of War, Pestilence, Famine, and Death were abroad in the world, and it seemed that not even the UFR/US Marines could possibly hold them in check much longer.[82]

More positive relationships are established with aliens – despite initial hostilities – in the second trilogy of the series: first, with the Ahannu on Ishtar, and then with the N'mah of the Sirius Gateway, in both cases after they are encountered by a United Federal Republic Marine Interstellar Expeditionary Unit (MIEU). These encounters introduce ideas about 'culturally biased perspective' when dealing with other species, and the recognition that other species are not inferior or superior to humanity, just different. Further, not every species is inherently hostile: the N'mah are presented as having a completely contrary ideology to the Hunters, it being in their 'nature to help other species survive, to nurture them', in contrast to the Xul nature 'to pluck them up and destroy them.'[83] Douglas interrogates, in some ways,

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[80] Ian Douglas, *Galactic Corps* (New York: Eos, 2008), p. 129.
[81] Douglas, *Luna Marine*, p. 328.
[82] Douglas, *Battlespace*, p. 85.
[83] Ian Douglas, *Star Corps* (New York: Eos, 2003), p. 335. Douglas, *Star Marines*, p. 165.

ideas around American Exceptionalism and Manichaean conflict, but also maintains a narrative focus on the resourceful, courageous, and capable Marine Corps (inherently linked to the U.S., even once that polity has ceased to exist) and the terrible and terrifying Xul (the ultimate dichotomous Other).

Three other leading military SF series of this post-9/11 period share similar Manichaean right-wing frameworks: William C. Dietz's Legion of the Damned series, John Ringo's Posleen War series, and Rebecca Meluch's Tour of the Merrimack series. In the first two novels of Dietz's sequence, *The Legion of the Damned* (1993) and *The Final Battle* (1995), the Human Empire and – its successor, after the deposition and death of the tyrannical and insane Emperor – the Confederacy of Sentient Beings wages war with the Hudathans. Evolving on a hostile world of fluctuating climate and temperatures, the Hudathans 'felt the universe was out to get them' and saw 'the very existence of another sentient species as an unendurable threat… that must be encountered, controlled, and if at all possible, completely eliminated.' [84] However, this hostility is not inherent to interspecies relations, as proven by the Confederacy itself, 'an interstellar civilization that was unparalleled in its complexity, richness, and depth.' [85] The Manichaean framework is maintained in the rest of the series, the last book of which was published in 2011. In Ringo's Posleen War series, starting with *A Hymn Before Battle* (2001), humanity is recruited by the Galactic Federation to fight the ravening Posleen, a species genetically determined to an eternal quest for newer, fresher worlds to conquer and consume. [86] Finally, in Meluch's five-book Tour of the Merrimack series – starting with *The Myriad* (2003) – the twenty-fifth century U.S.A. possesses a culture, a military superiority, and a sense of manifest destiny unchanged from the early-twenty-first century. It wages war – with little aid from the apathetic and possibly treacherous 'League of Earth Nations' – against the all-devouring Hive, 'marauding omnivores from outer space.. wholly without redemption.' [87]

John Scalzi's Old Man's War series offers a more reflective view of exceptionalism, militarization and conflict through John Perry's changing understanding – and

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[84] William C. Dietz, *Legion of the Damned* (New York: Ace Books, 1993), p. 9.
[85] William C. Dietz, *The Final Battle* (New York: Ace Books, 1995), p. 162.
[86] John Ringo, *A Hymn Before Battle* (Riverdale, NY: Baen Books, 2000).
[87] R. M. Meluch, *The Myriad* (New York: DAW Books, 2005), pp. 17, 144.

eventual challenging – of the Colonial Union and Colonial Defence Forces (CDF) which he serves. In this homage to, and subversion of, Robert Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*, Scalzi offers a warning and a critique of the right-wing policies that have embroiled the United States in unwinnable wars, while also problematizing the militaristic assumptions of the military SF subgenre.

Old Man's War (2005) tells the story of John Perry, a 75-year old American who volunteers to serve in the CDF, his consciousness transferred into a genetically- and cybernetically-modified Defender Series XII, 'Hercules' model body.[88] Perry and his fellow recruits are told their purpose is 'to keep humanity alive in our universe', a universe of alien species in fierce competition to colonize new (sometimes already inhabited) worlds in pursuit of racial survival. The Colonial Defense Forces have three mandates:

> The first is to protect existing human colonies and protect them from attack and invasion. The second is to locate new planets suitable for colonization, and hold them against predation, colonization and invasion from competing races. The third is to prepare planets with native populations for human colonization.[89]

Perry initially buys into the rhetoric of 'kill or be killed', but his experiences cause doubt about the CDF. He is forced to engage in a string of atrocities, from pre-emptive strikes against the pterodactyl-like Gindalians to the literal stomping of the lilliputian Covandu: he finally breaks down after spending 'three hours stepping on intelligent beings like they were fucking bugs.'[90] This reflects a post-9/11 zeitgeist combining two key elements: the perception of, and desire for protection from, perpetual, existential threat, and, on the other hand, growing discomfort at the costs – moral and material – of endless and pre-emptive war.

In *The Ghost Brigade* (2006) – dealing with the Special Forces of the Colonial Defense Forces and the threat of the traitor Charles Boutin – the militarism and aggression of the Colonial Union is further reinterpreted and challenged. The main character finds out that the universe is hostile to the Colonial Union because '*the Colonial Union is hostile to the universe*': 'In all the time humanity has been out in

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[88] John Scalzi, *Old Man's War* (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 2007), p. 83.
[89] Scalzi, *Old Man's War*, pp. 106-107.
[90] Scalzi, *Old Man's War*, p. 187.

the universe we've never not been at war with nearly every other species we've come across.' It is actively hostile to ninety-six percent of the six hundred-odd intelligent species it has encountered; it is the only species that tries to fight '*every other species*' it comes across, its 'constant wars' fuelled not by competition from the outside 'but paranoia and xenophobia from the inside.'[91] In response to attitudes like this, other polities are forming the Conclave, a massive alliance of species trying to 'create a workable framework of government for the entire region', to stop the fighting 'for real estate by apportioning new colonies in a systematic way' and enforcing the system with a 'multispecies military command that would attack anyone who tried to take a colony by force.'[92] The Colonial Union refuses to even send representatives to discussions, let alone join the Conclave, and the Conclave's existence is kept secret by the highest-levels of the Union government. In the third book of the series, *The Last Colony* (2007), in which the colony world of Roanoke is a ploy in a complex power play by the Colonial Union against the Conclave, the Union irrevocably rejects the cooperative paradigm, showing no interest in peace, and seeing the Conclave only as an impediment to its expansionary ambitions. Perry, now a civilian colonist on Roanoke, chooses to betray the manipulative, undemocratic Colonial Union. He meets the Conclave's alien leader, General Gau, who explains the Conclave was founded when diverse alien species realised their civilisations 'operate as a system, and our limiting factor is war', remove war 'and the system thrives… can focus on cooperation… can explore rather than fight.'[93] Inspired, Perry organises a trade mission of all Conclave species to – quarantined – Earth, thus breaking the Colonial Union's dominion and giving humanity the chance to decide democratically whether to join the Conclave.[94]

According to Gregory A. Daddis, U.S. Army colonel and historian at the United States Military Academy, preparing for war – even engaging in war – without asking why war is necessary has arguably become part of the American national psyche. Not only is war 'indispensable', the U.S. has 'been at war so long that, collectively, its citizens and leaders have become uncomfortable with, if not

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[91] John Scalzi, *The Ghost Brigades* (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 2007), pp. 294, 311.
[92] Scalzi, *The Ghost Brigades*, p. 295.
[93] John Scalzi, *The Last Colony* (New York: Tor, 2007), p. 196.
[94] Scalzi, *The Last Colony*, pp. 310-311.

frightened of, the very idea of peace.'[95] As well as rhetorics around the enemy and around American Exceptionalism, part of the popular acceptance of war is the growing cultural divide between the military and civilians, between those who serve in the military and those who do not.

Military-Civilian Divide

As discussed by James Fallows in *The Atlantic*, Americans have developed a 'reverent but disengaged attitude toward the military', and this 'distance from the military makes the country too willing to go to war, and too callous about the damage warfare inflicts.' [96] There is a growing cultural and experiential gap between those – one percent of the U.S. population – who serve in uniform and those who do not, between the American people and their military, and the majority of the population remains oblivious to the price of war.[97] Modern military SF has represented this military-civilian divide through 'bred' soldiers. This focus on bred soldiers is ironic considering the military-civilian divide in consensus reality is partly the result of the all-volunteer military that has emerged in the United States since the draft ended in 1973. This military is less representative of and responsive to popular opinion, takes pride in a warrior ethos rather than in the old-fashioned citizen-soldier ideal, and encourages soldiers to insulate themselves from civilian society. This trope is not new – for example, being a part of C. J. Cherryh's Alliance-Union series, and, linking the divide to the soldier alienation of the Vietnam Era, Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War* – but became more common after 9/11 and the beginning of the Iraq War.[98] It is most notable in Steven L. Kent's

[95] Gregory A. Daddis, 'America: Addicted to War, Afraid of peace', *The National Interest*, 11 June 2015, <nationalinterest.org/feature/america-addicted-war-afraid-peace-13085> [accessed 15 September 2015].

[96] James Fallows, 'The Tragedy of the American Military', *The Atlantic*, January/February 2015 issue, < http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/01/the-tragedy-of-the-american-military/383516/ > [accessed 20 February 2015].

[97] This ignorance of the price of war is also the result of fighting a 'redacted war', in which horrors and mistakes are suppressed, whistle-blowers are punished, civilians are *encouraged* to not pay too much attention to war's casualties and costs, and "Support Our Troops" has become a substitute for thought. William J. Astore, 'War Is the New Normal: Seven Deadly Reasons Why America's Wars Persist', *TomDispatch.com*, 1 February 2015 ≤http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175950/tomgram%3A_william_astore,_groundhog_day_in_the_war_on_terror/> [accessed on 18 February 2016].

[98] The most well-known use of this trope in popular culture is probably *Star Wars'* Grand Army of the Republic clone troopers, as seen in a range of media (film, television, literature, comics, and video games).

Clone series (starting with *The Clone Republic* in 2006), John Scalzi's Old Man's War series (starting with *Old Man's War* in 2005), and T. C. McCarthy's Subterrene War series (starting with *Germline* in 2011), with their, respectively, 'clones', 'Special Forces', and 'genetics.' The interest in such narratives – in military SF as a whole – could be seen as a result of the culture gap: the civilian-military divide, and the subsequent ignorance and exoticisation, results in the fetishisation of the military and the soldier, and a popular fascination with the military Other from whom civilians are disconnected.

The Clone series by Steven L. Kent – who served as a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, received a Master of Arts in Communications, and was a video game journalist before becoming a full-time author – is set in a Milky Way colonized by the Unified Authority. The U.A. is the pan-galactic evolution of the United States of America, which retains the U.S.'s myths of manifest destiny and Exceptionalism.[99] Unified Authority society is plutocratic, based on two documents – the U.S. Constitution and the third book of Plato's *Republic* – with a 'ruling class' of members of the Senate, a 'citizenry', and a 'military class'. The main character, Private First-class – later, because of an 'unstable career', everything from a colonel to a master gunnery sergeant – Wayson Harris, Unified Authority Marine Corp (U.A.M.C.), is a member of the military class, a military clone created and raised by the government.[100] In the U.A.M.C. all enlisted soldiers come out of the clone farms the government euphemistically refers to as 'orphanages': synthetic soldiers are deemed more manageable and more expendable than natural-born soldiers, they are engineered to respect authority, to be strong and patriotic, and to be ignorant of their origins.[101] None of the Marines are aware they are clones because 'through the miracle of neural programming', they think of themselves as natural-born people and are hardwired 'not to speak about cloning among themselves', so orphanages manage to raise thousands of

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[99] The common view of the U.A. is expressed by Fleet Admiral Bryce: it is 'one of man's crowning achievements', which has 'conquered the galaxy.' Not all agree, however, and discontent at the policies of the U.A. leads, near the end of the first novel, to the Cygnus, Perseus, and Scutum-Crux Arms declaring independence from the Unified Authority, declaring themselves the Confederate Arms, and allying with the Morgan Atkins Separatists which wanted to topple the Unified Authority. Steven L. Kent, *The Clone Identity* (New York: Berkley Publishing Group/Ace Books, 2011), p. 80. *The Clone Identity* (2011) is an omnibus of first three novels in the series: *The Clone Republic* (2006), *Rogue Clone* (2006), and *The Clone Alliance* (2007).
[100] Kent, p. 778.
[101] Kent, p. 54.

clones without one clone telling the next he is synthetic.'[102] In addition, they are built with a 'death reflex', a gland in their heads that would 'secrete a deadly hormone into their blood if they learned they were clones.'[103] Harris is even further separated from the citizenry and ruling class: he is a Liberator. Liberators are smarter, more independent in their thinking, and more ruthless than a normal clone, with a 'combat reflex', a hormone surge which makes them vicious but clear-headed during battle, and which also encourages an addiction to war and violence.[104] The divide – and the role played in it by popular culture – is made explicit by a scene in *Rogue Clone* when Harris sees a film about the massacre of a Marine regiment, with only seven survivors (including Harris): 'this portrayal of military clones was painfully propagandistic. This movie was the kind of jingoist shit that Hollywood always churned out during times of war; something meant to build patriotic morale.'[105]

The depiction of 'genetic soldiers' in T.C. McCarthy's Subterrene War trilogy – a thematic trilogy, sharing a setting and a few secondary characters – is more brutal and fatalistic. McCarthy spent time with the Central Intelligence Agency and was at the C.I.A. during 9/11 attacks and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. *Germline* (2011) introduces a conflict underneath the Earth's surface, as the U.S. and Russia war over the mineral and metal rich Kazakhstan region. The narrator – Oscar Wendell, reporter for *Stars and Stripes*, later civilian historian for U.S. forces – encounters genetically-engineered female super-soldiers placed on the front lines as the elite fighting forces.[106] These germline soldiers, or 'genetics', are indoctrinated by the government to believe their ultimate goal is to fight and die in the service of God; their holy text is the Modern Combat Manual, in part based on the Christian Bible. They are 'discharged' – executed – after a two year lifespan, the point at which they start to undergo 'the spoiling' during which they rot alive

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[102] Kent, pp. 18-19.
[103] Kent, p. 687.
[104] Kent, p. 687.
[105] Kent, p. 343.
[106] T. C. McCarthy, *Germline* (New York: Orbit, 2011). The United States fields female germline soldiers, while Russia had created an army of 'eunuch warriors' and is experimenting with genetic-machine hybrids, China produced genetics – deformed, eyeless, armless and legless – designed to live out their lives in powered armour, and United Korea had begun creating its own genetics. T. C. McCarthy, *Exogene* (New York: Orbit, 2012), p. 152, 278. T.C. McCarthy, *Chimera* (New York: Orbit, 2012), p. 202.

from the fingertips inwards.[107] *Exogene* (2012) shows us the war from one of the female genetically-engineered soldiers on the front-line, Catherine – indoctrinated by the government, and undergoing the spoiling. In the final book in the trilogy, *Chimera* (2012), Sergeant Stan 'Bug' Resnick of Special Operations Command (SOCOM), is a hunter of genetically engineered soldiers ('satos') who escaped the Subterrene War.

John Scalzi's Old Man's War series contains the Special Forces of the Colonial Defense Forces, also known as the Ghost Brigades. These soldiers are 'created from the dead', 'born as adults, with skills and ability, but no memory', no self, no morality, no restraint; 'child warriors, in grown bodies.'[108] There is debate within the text about whether or not the Special Forces are slaves. While a soldier says 'we are born to this, but we're not slaves', that after serving a ten year term of service they can choose to retire, and to become 'like the realborn and colonize', he also realises that 'most of us stay with the Special Forces.'[109] In *The Last Colony* Perry's scheming in the dispute between the Colonial Union and the Conclave is aided by General Szilard of the Special Forces, whose own agenda consists of liberating his soldiers from their subjection to the Union: the Ghost Brigades are 'second-class citizens in the Colonial Union', estranged from – and taken for granted by, almost treated as slaves by – the citizenry they are meant to protect.[110] Even the regular soldiers of the Colonial Defense Forces experience this military-civilian divide. Earth is isolated – because of the 'Quarantine Laws' – from the Colonial Union and the perpetual wars being fought amongst the stars. Before they join at age 75, people have no knowledge of what the CDF's role is, and once they join the CDF they can never return home: upon enlistment they terminate their local citizenship and Residential Franchise, meaning they are 'barred from subsequent return to Earth', instead they are relocated to a colony world upon the completion of their term of service with the CDF.[111]

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[107] McCarthy, *Germline*, pp. 190-191.

[108] Earlier attempts by the Colonial Union to use clone troops, like those of Kent's novels, has failed: 'many of its (relatively) lightly genetically-modified humans were not particularly pleased to discover they were raised as a crop of cannon fodder and refused to fight, despite the best indoctrination and propaganda efforts to persuade them otherwise. Unmodified humans were equally scandalized, as the effort smacked of yet another eugenics effort on the part of a human government…' Scalzi, *The Ghost Brigades*, pp. 24, 51.

[109] Scalzi, *The Ghost Brigades*, p. 89.

[110] Scalzi, *The Lost Colony*, p. 316.

[111] Scalzi, *Old Man's War*, pp. 13, 16.

The military-civilian divide is also a theme in Robert Buettner's Orphanage series and Ian Douglas' Marines in Space series, both using family-oriented metaphors similar to Kent's clone-raising 'orphanages': Buettner's persistent referencing of soldiers as 'orphans' and Douglas' idea of 'Famsit Corps.' After 9/11, Buetter believed that 'Americans would rise up and make a war somewhere', and that it would be a long war 'fought by only a tiny sliver of an American population blessedly ignorant of the military experience.'[112] His 'pro-soldier' works are 'written to say one true thing… soldiers fight not for flags or against tyrants but for each other. Combat soldiers become one another's only family. Strip away politics and, wherever or whenever, war is an orphanage.'[113] Douglas' Marines experience interstellar deployments that subjectively take a few years but objectively decades and come home to find themselves 'completely out of pace with everything', from technology to language, the culture as alien as anything they ran into on their extraterrestrial mission.[114] This 'culture drift' means most Star Marines find themselves 'more closely connected with the Marine Corps itself as a culture, than they did with the civilian cultures of Earth', and even Marines stationed on Earth tend to 'hang together, enclosed in their own world, with their own language, their own customs, their own rituals.' This is Famsit Corps in which the Marine Corps 'was father and mother, spouse and sib.'[115] Even after the development of faster-than-light travel Marines failed to connect with civilian cultures, maintaining their own' societal structures, language, calendar and timekeeping system, heroes, economy, history, goals, and concerns.'[116]

Conclusion

This chapter provided an outline and discussion of 'modern' military SF over the period 1989 to 2011, covering what this thesis calls 'the Pause' between 1989 and 2001, as well as the period arising after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. This chapter engaged with similar themes to those examined in the Chapter Five, with the continuation of neoconservative and militaristic attitudes in the 1990s and 2000s,

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[112] Buettner, *Orphanage*, p. 309.
[113] Buettner, *Orphan's Destiny*, pp. 307, 309.
[114] Douglas, *Battlespace*, p. 67.
[115] Douglas, *Star Marines*, pp. 261-262.
[116] Ian Douglas, *Star Strike* (New York: Eos, 2008), p. 170.

and argued that this reflected the general militarisation of American popular culture. The section on 'the Pause' discussed the subgenre's domination by 'feminized military SF' such as the works of Lois McMaster Bujold, David Weber, Elizabeth Moon, and David Feintuch. The main body of the chapter, however, examined three main themes of post-9/11 military SF: first, The Enemy, as depicted in works by Robert Buettner, Tom Kratman, and Michael Z. Williamson; second, American Exceptionalism and a Hobbesian universe, engaged with by Ian Douglas and John Scalzi; third, the Civilian-Military Divide, in which Americans have developed a disengaged attitude toward the military, as treated in works by Steven L. Kent, John Scalzi, and T. C. McCarthy.

The first theme analysed was the villainous roles played by the Terrorist and the United Nations in military SF. The monstrous, irrational Terrorist took over the dominant villain role once filled by Communism. Such a threat is presented in Buettner's *Orphanage* (2002) and the Jason Wander series, and in Kratman's *A Desert Called Peace* (2007). Kratman also gives rhetorical weight to the idea of the interfering United Nations as the Enemy. This reflected popular opinion – especially right-wing opinion – regarding the U.N. Williamson's *Freehold* (2004), likewise, depicts the U.N as a threat to freedom, with an authoritarian U.N. invading the Freehold of Grainne.

The chapter went on to look at military SF responses to neoconservative convictions that benign U.S. global dominion and military superiority would promote peace, and that U.S. power was needed to overcome the chaos of a Hobbesian universe filled with hostile Others. Two long-running military SF series, by Douglas and Scalzi, were explored. Douglas validates a right-wing Manichaean framework of the world in his series beginning with *Semper Mars* (1998), in which the U.S. must defend humanity against the Darwinistic galaxy-spanning Xul. Scalzi's Old Man's War series critiques such exceptionalism and hostility through his Colonial Defense Forces in a universe of alien species, supposedly, in fierce competition for racial survival.

The chapter ended with a short discussion of the Military-Civilian Divide – the growing cultural and experiential gap between those who have served in uniform and those who have not – and representations of this gap in the form of 'bred' soldiers. Kent, Scalzi and McCarthy all depict soldiers who are 'born' or

manufactured for the sole purpose of waging warfare, who live under the suspicion – and sometimes fear – of civilians, and who are virtual slaves fighting for civilians ignorant of war and the damage it inflicts on the soldier.

The distancing of civilians from war is also a result of the privatised military industry, as examined in the next chapter. In addition, Chapter Seven will, like this chapter, argue that military SF – reflecting American foreign and military policies becoming more interventionist and militaristic – continues its embrace of increasingly right-wing politics and attitudes.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Outsourcing War: Mercenary-Themed Military SF, 1950s-2010s

Just as mercenaries have always been a part of military conflict, mercenary-themed narratives have always been a part of the military SF subgenre. Despite this, these narratives have not been analysed – as mercenary narratives – in other major works of scholarship, such as those of I. F. Clarke or Tim Blackmore, while scholarship on mercenary narratives, such as that by Charity Fox, has not included military SF. This chapter does so. Breaking from the chronological frame of the rest of the thesis it focuses on, and engages with, mercenary stories directly. Not only do mercenary-themed military SF narratives offer another perspective on the militarism, or militarisation, theme that has been explored throughout this thesis, and throughout the history of the military SF subgenre, they respond to significant themes looked at in previous chapters, such as American Exceptionalism, soldier alienation, 'redeeming' Vietnam, the New American Militarism, the civilian-military divide, and the far-right.

Science fiction's depictions of mercenaries – depictions that are often non-pejorative and non-judgmental, showing a 'neutral' industry that offers the possibility of 'good' or 'bad' mercenaries – contrast with attitudes in consensus reality. In a way, this chapter argues, military SF correlates closer to 'popular' views of mercenaries, in contrast to those 'official' views prescribed by international law and the United Nations. The majority of mercenary organisations in military SF are presented as legitimate users of force, working for a properly constituted state party and acting in line with the rules of just warfare and acceptable practice. When this is not the case, the narratives recognise that the privatized military industry is no different from public institutions of the state, in that they can serve both good and evil ends. Charity Fox's literary and cultural history of the American mercenary narrative, discussed later, explores the 'tensions' between positive representations of mercenaries – often 'the paragon of rugged frontier individualism so prized

throughout American cultural history' – and the 'un-Americanness' of the general, negatively-connoted 'mercenary.'[1]

This chapter will explore mercenary-themed military SF in three chronological sections. First, early mercenary-themed military SF and the 'soldier of fortune' (1950s-1960s), including works by Gordon Dickson, Mack Reynolds, and Andre Norton. Second, Vietnam and post-Vietnam mercenary-themed military SF and the 'mercenary myth' (1970s-1980s), examining works by Jerry Pournelle, David Drake, and Robert Asprin involving 'alienated soldiers.' Third, modern mercenary-themed military SF and the 'corporatized' private military industry (1990s-2000s), with a focus on works by Elizabeth Moon, Leo Frankowski, Tom Kratman, and John Ringo. Within these sections this chapter will examine the changing view of mercenaries, and the use of mercenaries in warfare, over these periods, while affirming other scholars' argument that mercenary narratives appeared in popular discourse during times of contested social changes and international interactions. In addition this chapter will consider the major theme in military SF dealing with mercenaries: alienation from state authority, including government forces as inadequate and mercenaries as an alternative. It will also look at the increasing insistency and intemperance of right-wing attitudes in these works, as with the larger military SF subgenre.

Mercenaries: Definition, Prohibition and Pre-Twentieth Century History

The term 'mercenary' came into modern English via the Middle English *mercenarie* from the Latin *mercenaries*, meaning 'one who works for pay,' a hired worker.[2] The originally neutral word has acquired a general, pejorative – disreputable and even sinister – connotation. Often it is used to denote a person 'who works merely for money or other material reward… whose actions are motivated primarily by personal gain, often at the expense of ethics'; the narrower sense of 'mercenary' as a type of military combatant selling military services is more neutral, 'a soldier paid

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[1] Charity Fox, 'Manifest Mercenaries: Mercenary Narratives in American Popular Culture, 1850-1990' (unpublished PhD thesis: George Washington University, 2010), pp. 3, 8.

[2] Alan Axelrod, *Mercenaries: A Guide to Private Armies and Private Military Companies* (Los Angeles and London: Sage Reference, 2014), p. 109.

to serve in a foreign army or other military organization.'[3] For the purposes of this thesis, the definition of a mercenary has two key components: first, mercenaries are foreign, external, to a conflict and the parties to the conflict; second, mercenaries are motivated by financial gain.[4] However, it is recognised that both components of this definition are debatable: not all foreign fighters are mercenaries, and it is difficult to distinguish between mercenaries and other fighters on the basis of financial motivation. This thesis' definition is morally-neutral, rejecting the pejorative definition – the mercenary as disloyal, ruthless, and selfish – that is common, and seemingly accepted by modern law.

The hiring of mercenaries is prohibited in the modern age. There are two major legal sanctions against the mercenary trade. The first is Article 47 of Protocol 1 (Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts), appended in 1977, which explicitly withholds from mercenaries legal protections granted to state combatants under international law. The second is UN Resolution 44/34, which adopted the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, familiarly known (since its entry into force in 2001) as the United Nations Mercenary Convention, which makes it an offense under international law for any state, entity, or individual to employ a mercenary.[5] Despite these prohibitions, private military companies (PMCs) are active, and unregulated, participants in numerous conflicts. Neither the United Kingdom nor the United States are signatories to the convention, and it is not clear that the terms of Article 47 and the U.N. Convention can capture PMCs as mercenaries. Moreover, the United States has explicitly rejected the classification of PMCs as mercenaries. Likewise, private security companies (PSCs) which insist that they do not engage in any type of active combat, assert that 'not only are they not mercenaries, they are also not PMCs.'[6] This thesis does not distinguish between PMCs, PSCs and traditional mercenaries, recognizing that differentiation is limited.

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[3] "mercenary, n. and adj.". OED Online. March 2015. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/116635?redirectedFrom=mercenary& (accessed June 08, 2015)
[4] Sarah Percy, *Mercenaries: The History of a Norm in International Relations* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 52.
[5] Axelrod, p. 187.
[6] Percy, p. 206.

Mercenaries have been fighting in wars since the earliest recorded conflicts. Nearly every past empire, from the ancient Egyptian to the Victorian British, contracted foreign troops in some form or another, and during various periods of military history mercenary formations were the norm and their members constituted the majority of troops deployed.[7] The First Battle of Megiddo (1469 B.C.) is the 'earliest military engagement of which there is a reasonably coherent historical record' and is widely believed to have been 'the first documented (however marginally) deployment of a mercenary military formation.'[8] Other major mercenary forces in history include: the Varangians (or Varyags) who served the Byzantine Empire in the ninth and tenth centuries; the mercenary free companies of the Middle Ages; the Italian *condottieri*; the ninjas of Japan and the Janissaries of the Ottoman Empire, emerging in the fourteenth century; the nationally organized Swiss Export Armies; the German Landsknechts; the Wild Geese of Ireland; the Hessians and the Gurkhas, employed by the British Empire and the British East India Company; and, the American 'filibusters' of the 1850s. There have also been forces such as the French Foreign Legion, whose legionnaires are 'widely regarded as the very archetype of the soldier of fortune' – although many military historians object to this characterization of a state military formation – and the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War, who were foreign volunteers not mercenaries, and were motivated by ideology rather than financial reward.[9]

As Anthony Mockler writes, 'the use of mercenary soldiers in wars fought between European powers has generally been common and often predominant', only falling out of use with the growth of the nation-state and citizen armies.[10] The Thirty Years War and the following Peace of Westphalia (1648) saw the concept of sovereignty gain victory over that of empire. By the eighteenth century, with the growth of nation-states capable of raising and maintaining their own standing armies composed of citizens, 'the vocation of mercenary became decreasingly common as

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[7] P. W. Singer, *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008), p. 19. Axelrod, p. xix.

[8] Axelrod, p. 3.

[9] Axelrod, pp. xvi, 109. However, Axelrod does problematize the notion that the Ottoman Jannisaries were mercenaries: their service was not voluntary and was, in fact, a form of taxation, so the Janissaries (as they were originally conceived) can not be called mercenaries – although, as a palace guard, they did constitute a private army.

[10] Anthony Mockler, *Mercenaries* (London: Macdonald and Company Ltd., 1969), p. 14.

a feature of life and in the conduct of political and international policy.'[11] As patriotism and nationalism became increasingly seen as important for armies, a selfish and financial motivation became seen as inferior, both in terms of morality and practicability. [12] The 'ultimate inflection point' of this change were the Napoleonic Wars starting at the end of the eighteenth century: wars were increasingly fought by state militaries rather than by mercenaries, states almost entirely ended the practice of buying and selling soldiers from and to other states, and, as Deborah Avant writes, mercenaries 'went out of style in the nineteenth century.' [13] They largely disappeared from the international system after the Crimean War (1853-1856), until they 'made a spectacular and controversial re-entry' in the 1960s.[14]

Early Mercenary-Themed Military SF (1950s-1960s)

Like the larger subgenre of military SF, mercenary-themed military SF originated in the 1950s. The three main authors during this period were Gordon R. Dickson, Mack Reynolds, and Andre Norton, with, respectively, their Dorsai, Joe Mauser, and Star Ranger series about mercenaries – soldiers of fortune – in the future. They were written around the time that post-colonial Africa became a hotbed of mercenary activity, much of which involved Westerners – Europeans and Americans, for the most part – who proudly identified themselves as soldiers of fortune. This reappearance of mercenaries came as a shock. As Anthony Mockler writes, the word 'itself had fallen out of use, and the idea appeared utterly anachronistic, distastefully medieval.'[15] The heyday of these private warriors was during the decolonization period in the 1950s and 1960s, when they became prominent and problematic players involved in multiple African civil wars, first and most famously in the Congo.

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[11] Axelrod, p. 105.
[12] Percy, p. 121.
[13] Singer, p. 29. Deborah Avant, 'From Mercenary to Citizen Armies: Explaining Change in the Practice of War', *International Organization*, 54, 1 (Winter 2000), pp. 41-72 (p. 41).
[14] Percy, p. 167.
[15] Mockler, *Mercenaries*, p. 143.

Mercenaries in Africa

For most Americans the focus of the mid-century Cold War that followed World War Two was Europe and Southeast Asia, but during much of this same period the attention of many Europeans, particularly the British, French, Portuguese, and Belgians, was also fixated on Africa. African states began fighting for and achieving independence, and soon became 'pawns in the global Cold War contest.' The context for the mercenary revival is explained by Alan Axelrod:

> Adding to what might be called the "perfect storm" of poverty, valuable resources, invalid and destructive geopolitical groupings, and the ongoing Cold War contest of ideologies was the ample availability of weapons and of individuals willing and eager to become mercenaries. The mercenary pool was made up of demobilized World War II veterans, the former soldiers of former colonial powers, and veterans of service in the Vietnam War.[16]

These soldiers of fortune fought in Nigeria, Rhodesia, Angola, the Comoros Islands, and the Seychelles, but they were most notable during the war in the Congo (1960-1964). Here, private groups – known by the nickname *les affreux*, or 'The Terrible Ones' – were hired by mining firms to fight in support of the Katanga secession and then by the Congolese Prime Minister to fight a revolt known as the Simba Rebellion.[17] Mercenaries also operated in geopolitical hot spots in China and Latin America. Public opinion in the West never really accepted 'the moral condemnation of the mercenaries by the leaders of opinion: at first, admittedly, the general public was shocked and ready to believe the worst about the mercenaries in Katanga but during the Simba war there emerged 'feelings of uneasy admiration, for there were a handful of white mercenaries routing thousands of black savages and rescuing white mercenaries from appalling tortures.'[18] These mercenaries became cult heroes of a sort in popular culture, figures who were celebrated and romanticized.[19]

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[16] Axelrod, p. 161.

[17] Singer, p. 37.

[18] Mockler, *Mercenaries*, p. 147.

[19] This kind of 'romantic valorization' of the mercenary in literature and popular culture had previously happened in the nineteenth century, in which the 'individual mercenary military worker was elevated to the status of a soldier of fortune, a kind of adventurer or modern incarnation of the medieval knight-errant, a figure pictured as colourful, intriguing, daring, and valiant.' Axelrod, p. 105.

At the same time their garnering of attention led to attempts to create new international laws preventing the use of mercenaries, such as Article 47 of the Geneva Convention.

This period was the high-water mark of the soldier of fortune – of private warriors operating in the shadows rather than as for-profit companies in the open market – and witnessed the beginning of the transition from a mercenary 'industry' dominated by individual mercenaries to the modern privatized military industry. In 1965, Sir David Stirling founded WatchGuard International, a company which employed former personnel of the British SAS – which he also founded – to train the militaries of the sultanates of the Persian Gulf, as well as provide support for operations against rebel movements and internal dissidents, and which rapidly expanded to provide military advisors to foreign governments, particularly in the Middle East but also in Africa, Latin America and East Asia. Following WatchGuard, other British private military companies (PMCs) emerged, all led by ex-SAS officers and generally staffed by ex-SAS soldiers. These included Kilo Alpha Services (KAS), Control Risks, and Saladin Security, among others.[20] Watchguard and the SAS-PMCs became the model for all future PMCs.

Fox and Mercenary Narratives

Charity Fox argues – in her thesis on the literary and cultural history of the American mercenary narrative in television series, novels, memoirs and other mass-media cultural products – that such narratives

> appear in popular discourse during times of contested social changes and international interactions, roughly parallel to times of war, crises in white patriarchal masculinity, redefinitions of American Exceptionalism, and revisions of Manifest Destiny. Within the fun, action, and romance that attract consumers, mass-media mercenary narratives communicate narratives of social control, order, and hierarchy.[21]

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[20] Sean McFate, *The Modern Mercenary* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 36.
[21] Fox, 'Manifest Mercenaries', p. vi.

They appear, significantly, in historical moments when changes in social, political and cultural norms present challenges and threats to previously secure institutions and social hierarchies. In reaction, according to Fox, the mercenary narratives 'reify conservative, traditional social hierarchies based on race, gender, and class.' One such period was the early Cold War, a time of forced desegregation, ambiguous police actions, and anti-communist hunts, which all tempered pride in the U.S.'s newly-gained status as a superpower. A major theme in the texts Fox looked at for this period was spreading American Exceptionalism through exercising benevolent paternalism on the edges of civilization, on the frontier. These texts 'indicated a sense of confidence to be found within the safe paternalism of the mercenary figure, and a sense of national competence and organization in taking on uplifting missions that can be extrapolated to the cultural and political climate of the early Cold War.'[22] Such is evident in the works of Dickson, more ambivalent in those of Norton, and challenged in those of Reynolds.

Dickson, Norton, and Reynolds

The most important mercenary-themed military SF author during the 1950s and 1960s was Gordon Dickson, with his novel *Dorsai!* (1959), first book in the so-called Childe Cycle.[23] As well as being a prototypical military SF text, as seen in Chapter Three, *Dorsai!*, is an important prototype of mercenary-themed military SF.[24] The Dorsai have a mercenary culture, produce the best soldiers in the inhabited galaxy, and have developed an economy based on the export of

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[22] Fox, 'Manifest Mercenaries', pp. 6, 37, 147.

[23] The Childe Cycle is also notable because of its influence on fandom: the books became so popular that they spawned a paramilitary gear-wearing subculture within SF fandom that referred to itself as the Dorsai. The Dorsai Irregulars were founded in 1973 by Robert Asprin, to provide security and other services at the 31st World Science Fiction Convention (Worldcon) in Toronto. Thomas D. Clareson, *Understanding Contemporary American Science Fiction: The Formative Period, 1926-1970* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), pp. 137-138. Don D'Ammassa, *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction: The Essential Guide to the Lives and Works of Science Fiction Writers* (New York: Facts on File, 2005), p. 121.

[24] This thesis situates Dickson's *Dorsai!* as a founding exemplar of military SF, along with Robert Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*, published the same year. Heinlein would also go on to write an interesting mercenary text, but one outside the purview of this thesis: the Hugo Award-winning *Glory Road* (1963; serialized in *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, July-September 1963), a science-fantasy narrative. In this narrative, Evelyn Cyril "Easy" Gordon, recently discharged from a war in Southeast Asia, now alienated, unemployed, and unappreciated, becomes a mercenary for Star, Empress of the Twenty Universes, achieving admiration as the greatest Hero in the Twenty Universes.

mercenaries to other planets; they are reminiscent of the old-style Swiss mercenaries who hired themselves out to the Italian states during the sixteenth century. Although Donal Graeme of the Dorsai prefers the term 'professional soldier' to mercenary, he emphasises to Anea, Select of Kultis, that mercenary 'isn't necessarily the dirty word somebody taught you it is', that mercenaries are not selfish, unscrupulous hirelings and can be, as proven by the Dorsai, just as honorable as regular soldiers.[25] The Dorsai are superior to the cheaper Soldiers of the Church of the Friendly Worlds – who wear 'the armor of righteousness and never retreat' – because a 'willingness to die in battle is not necessarily the best trait in a soldier.'[26] This was recognized by Graeme's ancestor, Cletus Grahame – founder of the Dorsai culture – in *Tactics of Mistake* (1971), who said mercenaries are 'in business to win military objectives *without* getting themselves killed. The fewer casualties, the greater profit – both to the mercenary soldier and to his employer.'[27]

The nature of the Dorsai is intrinsically linked to the early-Cold War historical-cultural context. However, this link is not necessarily the conservative reaction Fox writes about. As already seen in Chapter Three the Dorsai are fierce individualists, and, over the Childe Cycle as a whole, the Dorsai – Donal Graeme, in particular – have two goals: first, to prevent the 'inevitable conflict' between the 'tight' and 'loose' societies; second, to bring about a synthesis of the 'splinter cultures' into 'Ethical-Responsible Man.'[28] Graeme's career as a soldier could be seen as spreading a form of 'Exceptionalism' – in this series, spreading enlightenment in the course of creating Ethical-Responsible Man – through exercising benevolent paternalism. This safe paternalism of the mercenary figure reaches its climax with Graeme becoming Protector, Commander in Chief of the United Planetary Forces, and defending civilized space from his archenemy Prince William of Ceta, who attempts to install military rule over the worlds of New Earth, Freiland, Newton, Cassida, Venus, Mars, Harmony, and Association.[29] The 'Exceptionalism' of the Dorsai is not 'American': the Dorsai began with the purpose of removing Earth's

[25] Gordon R. Dickson, *Dorsai!* (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1988), pp. 21, 84.
[26] Dickson, *Dorsai!*, pp. 77, 169.
[27] Gordon R. Dickson, *Tactics of Mistake* (London: Orbit, 1991), p. 176.
[28] Gordon R. Dickson, *Three to Dorsai! Three Novels from the Childe Cycle* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), p. ix. Clareson, p. 138.
[29] Dickson, *Dorsai!*, pp. 239-240.

influence on the new colony worlds. This includes the influence of both the Western Alliance and Eastern Coalition, which were in a Cold War and using the colony worlds as 'proxies' in the conflict. With their creation, any colony could now affordably hire 'half the number of Dorsai troops that the Alliance or the Coalition supplies to their enemy – and defeat the Earth troops easily.'[30]

The second important mercenary-themed military SF author during this period was Andre Norton (Alice Mary Sheldon), with her Star Ranger series. Norton, author of historical, spy thriller, mystery, fantasy and science fiction novels, wrote *Star Rangers* (1953) and *Star Guard* (1955), later published as the omnibus *Star Soldiers*. These are precursor military SF works in which humanity is only allowed access to interstellar travel and the rest of the galaxy by acting as mercenaries.[31] When Earth (Terra) is discovered by Central Control, humanity is diagnosed with a 'will-to-compete against other races and species'; this 'in-born thrust to conflict' is channelled by Central Control, which appoints humanity to act as 'mercenaries of the Galaxy.'[32] Human mercenary units take the form of Hordes of 'Archs' – equipped with primitive hand weapons for fighting on low-tech worlds – and Legions of 'Mechs' – who are involved in technical warfare.[33]

In *Star Guard* Swordsman Kana Karr and Yorke's Horde are dispatched for a police action on the planet Fronn but – anticipating many of the devices of modern SF – encounter a hostile Mech Legion and betrayal by their employers, and must now fight two enemies.[34] The tempered pride in the U.S.'s newly-gained status as a superpower is discernible in Terra's – disgruntled and discontented – position in galactic society. On the one hand, humanity is seen as a threat to the older humanoid civilisations, who have sought to 'dissipate our strength in needless warfare which in no way threatens their control, sapping our manpower and so rendering helpless a race which might just challenge them in the future.' This state of affairs is accepted in order to gain access to the stars. On the other hand, humanity has also

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[30] Dickson, *Tactics of Mistake*, p. 236.

[31] An idea adopted fifty years later by John Scalzi's *Old Man's War*, although in that case the soldiers are not mercenaries.

[32] Andre Norton, *Star Soldiers* (New York: Baen Books, 2002), pp. 3-4. Norton's Central Control Terra is the first 'mercenary-economy world' in mercenary-themed military SF, and is followed by Gordon R. Dickson's the Dorsai, John Dalmas' Tyss, Joel Rosenberg's Metzada, Rick Shelley's Dirigent, and Leo Frankowski's New Kashubia.

[33] Norton, p. 4.

[34] D'Ammassa, p. 274.

– showing hints of benevolent paternalism on the edges of civilisation – been gaining more friends among alien races, training more people in the specialization of 'X-Tee/Alien Liaison', and preparing Terrans for another form of service, to 'provide not fighting men but exploring teams', the Rangers.[35] It is the remnants of these Rangers, and their Stellar Patrol, who try to dam the flood of disaster and disunion, to 'keep the peace and uphold galactic law', as Central Control's First Galactic Empire falls apart in *Star Rangers*.[36] These descendants of the Terran mercenaries – now including a variety of 'Bemmys' (slang for Bug-Eyed-Monsters) of numerous alien species – were the paternalistic guardians of the law under Central Control, independent of any planetary or sectional advisor or ruler. The survivors of the Patrol ship *Starfire*, crash-landed on an unknown world in the frontier, form part of the founding settlers who plan to, one day, rebuild interstellar civilisation.[37]

The third important mercenary-themed military SF author during the 1950s and 1960s was Dallas McCord 'Mack' Reynolds, with his Joe Mauser series. Reynolds attended the U.S. Army Marine Officer's Cadet School and the U.S. Marine Officer's School, served with the U.S. Army Transportation Corp during World War Two, and then began writing in 1950, becoming an extremely popular writer with magazine readers during the 1960s and 1970s. He was a regular member of John W. Campbell Jr.'s stable of writers despite his political leanings being decidedly liberal – he was an active member of the U.S. Socialist Labor Party – in contrast to his fellows.[38] Campbell's *Analog* carried the three works of Reynolds' Joe Mauser sequence: the short story 'Mercenary' (April 1962; expanded as *Mercenary From Tomorrow*, 1968), and the serials 'Frigid Fracas' (March-April 1963, book as *The Earth War*, 1963) and 'Sweet Dreams, Sweet Princes' (October-November-December 1964, book as *Time Gladiator*, 1966).[39] The Joe Mauser books are political satire as well as military SF: 'the governments of the world have

[35] Norton, pp. 198, 200

[36] Norton, pp. 243-244, 262.

[37] Norton, pp. 346-347.

[38] Although Campbell's *Analog* had a reputation for right-wing politics, the 'particular brand of right-wing politics it favoured… was a type of libertarianism praised for its hospitality to technological entrepreneurialism, and hence to the cause of progress – a cause to which Mack Reynolds was just as committed as such determinedly anti-socialist *Analog* regulars as Poul Anderson, Gordon R. Dickson, and Larry Niven.' Brian Stableford, *Science Fact and Science Fiction: An Encyclopedia* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), p. 392.

[39] Reynold's returned to the Joe Mauser series in the late-1970s with *The Fracas Factor* (1978).

largely been supplanted by corporate boards, and each company employs its own private army and conducts military operations against its rivals.'[40] In order to limit the damage, the contending forces in these inter-corporation, inter-union, or union-corporation fracases are restricted to combat in population-cleared 'military reservations' maintained by the Category Military Department of the government, and by the Universal Disarmament Pact, which bans post-1900 weaponry and technology in the fracases and is enforced by military observers.[41]

Mauser is the quintessential soldier of fortune: while from time to time during his long career he has taken semi-permanent positions in the bodyguards, company police or combat troops of various corporations, he recognises that 'if you were ambitious, you signed up for the fracases and that meant into a uniform and out of it again in as short a period as a couple of weeks.'[42] On the macroscale, the fracas serve as a challenge to American Exceptionalism: America's People's Capitalism has resulted in a similar social system to the Sov-world's People's Marxism – with the Uppers of America and the Party members of the Sovs wielding power – and the fracas' divert attention from the possibility of the 'benevolent paternalism' and 'uplifting missions' of the Cold War. While Baron Haer, CEO of Vacuum Transport, thinks the purpose of the fracases is to allow professional soldiers to gather 'experience in case a serious fracas with the Sovs ever develops', his daughter sees them more like the Roman 'circus.' She sees the fracas as the 'old Roman games, all over again, and a hundred times worse', blood and guts sadism for the Lowers: 'And every year that goes by the circuses must be increasingly sadistic, death on an increasing scale, or they aren't satisfied.' Once it was enough to have 'fictional mayhem' – 'cowboys and Indians, gangsters, or G.I.'s versus the Nazis, Japanese or Commies' – but now society needs '*real* blood and guts.'[43] For Reynolds the confidence in U.S. superpower and the reification of traditional hierarchies espoused by other mercenary narratives during this period are unwelcome ideas, capable of producing an oligarchy like that in the Joe Mauser series.

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[40] D'Ammassa, p. 306.
[41] Mack Reynolds, *Mercenary from Tomorrow* (New York: Ace Books, 1968), p. 81.
[42] Reynolds, p. 21.
[43] Reynolds, pp. 53-54.

Vietnam Era and Post-Vietnam Mercenary-Themed Military SF (1970s-1980s)

During the late 1970s and 1980s the most evident thematic focus in military SF was the mercenary, a focus explained by James William Gibson's discussion of 'the cult of the mercenary' and Tom Shippey's discussion of the 'mercenary myth'. As H. Bruce Franklin wrote, in the decades after the Vietnam War 'legions of science-fiction superwarriors stormed forth amid the militaristic frenzy that sought to redeem American wonder weapons and American "manhood".' The early works of mercenary military SF were joined by those of Jerry Pournelle and David Drake, veterans of Korea and Vietnam, respectively. Their works are sometimes seen as conservative/militarist power fantasies, 'dedicated to glorifying mercenaries and their war making.'[44] Both these authors – Pournelle in his works about Colonel John Christian Falkenberg III and Falkenberg's Mercenary Legion, and Drake in his stories about Colonel Alois Hammer and his armoured mercenary regiment, Hammer's Slammers – portray both soldiers betrayed by the government, forcing them to become mercenaries, and the effectiveness of those mercenaries compared with the underfunded and incompetent, even corrupt and untrustworthy, national government forces.[45] This estrangement between the government and the armed forces is a direct result of popular attitudes developed during the Vietnam War. The works moved away from depictions of individual soldiers of fortune which, by the 1970s, were widely regarded as 'disreputable, criminal, unreliable, ineffective, and, in short, illegitimate.'[46] This section also discusses Robert Asprin's *The Cold Cash War*, a satirical military SF work about corporate mercenaries, and works by Lois McMaster Bujold, Joel Rosenberg, and John Dalmas. The discussion is focused on alienation and paramilitary patriotism in the narratives.

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[44] H. Bruce Franklin, *Vietnam and Other American Fantasies* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), p. 169.

[45] Both authors produced more lightweight depictions of interstellar mercenaries – human soldiers kidnapped by aliens and impressed into service as mercenaries on alien worlds – in Pournelle's *Janissaries* (1979) and Drake's *Ranks of Bronze* (1986; originally 'Ranks of Bronze' *Galaxy*, August 1975), both of which owe much to Andre Norton.

[46] Axelrod, p. 188.

The Cult of the Mercenary and the Mercenary Myth

According to Tom Shippey, the Vietnam experience created 'both the kind of disillusionment transmuted into SF terms by Haldeman', as seen in Chapter Four, and 'a kind of *revanchisme*' which 'recalls much of the chauvinistically anxious literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries' investigated by I. F. Clarke, as discussed in Chapter Two. A critical alteration away from earlier trends, however, was the rejection of the idea of the state, and state-controlled military, and a turn toward the 'mercenary myth', with its exaltation of the figure of the mercenary, in post-Vietnam military SF.[47] As outlined by James William Gibson there soon appeared a 'cult of the mercenary' in American culture. Gibson's thesis, outlined in Chapter Five, is that post-Vietnam traumas created a crisis of self-image and (both national and personal) identity from the 1970s onwards in America. This was made worse by the developing distrust of a government which, by some accounts, had deliberately abandoned victory in Vietnam – either because it was too weak, cowardly, or incompetent – and betrayed the troops. This crisis of self-image led to fantasies about the 'powers and features of another kind of man who could retake and reorder the world': the paramilitary warrior, the mercenary, 'the independent warrior [who] must step in to fill the dangerous void created by the American failure in Vietnam.'[48] While America has always celebrated war and the warrior, what Gibson calls the New War culture was not so much military as paramilitary, its heroes born by questioning and rejecting the corrupt system and institutions that constrain them.[49]

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[47] Tom Shippey, 'Starship Troopers, Galactic Heroes, Mercenary Princes: the Military and its Discontents in Science Fiction', in *Histories of the Future*, ed. by Alan Sandison and Robert Dingley (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 168-183 (p. 176).

[48] James William Gibson, *Warrior Dreams: Paramilitary Culture in Post-Vietnam America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994), pp. 176-177.

[49] Gibson, p. 34. Related to the New War culture was so-called "reactionary populism", first noticeable on a large scale in the mid-1980s in the form of a variety of cults, sects, Posse groups, militias, and survivalist and enclave groups. As outlined by Boggs and Pollard, this was attractive to the familiar 'angry white male', had a diffuse ideology embracing 'the gun culture, xenophobia, conspiracy thinking, nativism, Christian fundamentalism, racism', and was fuelled by 'many of the same conditions that gave rise to historical fascism, such as joblessness, intense fear of change, hostility to progressive social movements, and alienation from politics.' Within this increasingly violent subculture 'many adopted the veneer of military structures complete with uniforms, chains of command, ribbons and medals, large arms caches, shooting ranges, and the lingo of an armed outfit.' Carl Boggs and Tom Pollard, *The Hollywood War Machine: U.S. Militarism and Popular Culture* (Boulder, NV: Paradigm Publishers, 2006), pp. 27, 30. For insights into the right-wing paramilitary culture, see also Jerry L. Lembke, *Hanoi Jane: War, Sex & Fantasies of Betrayal* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010).

Charity Fox elaborates, writing that American mercenary figures throughout Cold War-era popular culture 'were represented as benevolent heroes, connecting idealized displays of masculinity, rugged individualism, and patriarchal capitalism within fun, action-packed, romantic mercenary narratives.'[50] As mentioned earlier, mercenary narratives appear in popular discourse during times of contested social changes and international interactions, and one such time was the late Cold War, when the narratives were in conversation with the American 'crisis of confidence' of the 1970s and the Reagan Revolution of the 1980s. Mercenaries were what Fox called privatized warriors as American heroes, 'narratively cleaning up' remnants of Vietnam and the crises of confidence, and demonstrating 'new ways to prove masculinity, competency, and superiority in local and international affairs and regain the spot at the top of social hierarchies.'[51] Mercenaries in the late-Cold War period embody aspects of 'paramilitary patriotism', a term Fox uses 'to capture the dissonant contradictions between their mercenary and paramilitary actions against the state as well as their expressions of love for American ideals', between their 'isolation and rejection from society' – often the result of betrayal by their government – and their 'deep nationalistic patriotism.'[52] They believe in the American project – life, liberty, pursuit of happiness, etc. – and the American 'spirit', but they 'enforce their beliefs through violent means or threats of violence made from outside the authority of the state apparatus.'[53] This was during a time when many Americans were prone to 'dream and fantasize about becoming mercenaries.'[54]

Pournelle and the Falkenberg's Legion Series

The first important mercenary-themed military SF author during the 1970s and 1980s was Jerry Pournelle. He has been called Robert Heinlein's 'heir apparent,'

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[50] Charity Fox, 'Paramilitary Patriots of the Cold War: Women, Weapons, and Private Warriors in *The A-Team* and *Airwolf*', in *How Television Shapes Our Worldview: Media Representations of Social trends and Change*, ed. by Deborah A. Macey, Kathleen M. Ryan, and Noah J. Springer (New York and Toronto: Lexington Books, 2014), pp. 171-189 (p. 171).

[51] Fox, 'Manifest Mercenaries', p. 261.

[52] Fox, 'Paramilitary Patriots of the Cold War', pp. 171-189 (pp. 183, 186). Fox, 'Manifest Mercenaries', p. 37.

[53] Fox, 'Manifest Mercenaries', p. vii.

[54] Anthony Mockler, *The New Mercenaries: The History of the Hired Soldier from the Congo to the Seychelles* (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1987), pp. 5-6.

for his stances on patriotism, libertarianism, and militarism.[55] A signer of the 1968 pro-war *Galaxy* advertisement, Pournelle emerged during the 1970s as the 'loudest, most strident voice in science fiction exalting militarism and worshipping the complementary cults of the superweapon and the mercenary.'[56] He served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War as an artillery officer, before earning PhDs in psychology and political science, and working in the aerospace industry and as a professor of political science.[57] Pournelle's most important works are part of his Falkenberg series, military SF of an aggressively militaristic and libertarian sort, about a small army of interstellar mercenaries led by the charismatic military genius John Christian Falkenberg, finding employment resolving problems among the colony worlds of the CoDominium.[58] The CoDominium is the result of the U.S. and Soviet Union dividing the world between themselves, and setting up a world-government with its own armed forces, in theory controlled by the Grand Senate but in practice dominated by the two self-perpetuating oligarchical and class-divided superpowers.[59] Pournelle's mercenaries make their first appearance in a series of stories printed in *Analog* – 'Peace with Honor' (May 1971), 'The Mercenary' (July 1972), and 'Sword and Scepter' (May 1973) – and eventually collected as *The Mercenary* (1977).[60]

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[55] Thomas M. Disch, 'Speaker Moonbeam: Newt's Futurist Brain Trust', *On SF* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), pp. 213-219 (p. 215).

[56] Franklin, p. 158.

[57] Mike Ashley, *Gateways to Forever: The Story of the Science-Fiction Magazines from 1970 to 1980* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), p. 10. Pournelle was also a contributing editor at right-wing, jingoistic mercenary magazine *Soldier of Fortune*, which became popular in the early 1980s.

[58] According to Tom Shippey, the wars on these planets 'are always in a sense three-way': the mercenaries; the original settlers, representing 'traditional American pioneering values'; and the 'enormous numbers of forced immigrants' poured into settled planets from Earth's urban slums. The 'mercenary problem is to save the settlers by defeating the immigrants… but without antagonising the hostile bureaucracy of Earth.' Shippey, pp. 168-183 (p. 178).

[59] Jerry Pournelle, *Falkenberg's Legion* (New York: Baen Books, 1990), p. 209. Pournelle has said that the early Falkenberg stories were written when he was 'considerably less hopeful about the economic effects of technology, especially development of space resources, and considerably more hopeful about internal developments within the Soviet Union', when he believed that both sides in the Cold War would decide it would be better to share the world. Jerry Pournelle, 'Editor's Introduction to: Silent Leges', in *There Will Be War, Volume III: Blood and Iron*, ed. by Reginald Bretnor (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1984), pp. 312-313 (p. 312).

[60] Other works in the Falkenberg Series are: *West of Honor* (1976; later collected with *The Mercenary* as *Falkenberg's Legion*, 1990), 'His Truth Goes Marching On' and 'Silent Leges' (1975 and 1977; both incorporated into *Prince of Mercenaries,* 1989), and, co-authored with S. M. Stirling, *Go Tell the Spartans* (1991) and *Prince of Sparta* (1993). All these works were incorporated into the omnibus *The Prince* (2002).

The employment of Pournelle's dream mercenary army is 'dominated by a clear post-Vietnam scenario': initially they are the 42nd Line Marine Regiment of the CoDominium, but when Falkenberg is betrayed by the government – 'cashiered from the CoDominium Fleet under questionable circumstances' – they are disbanded. [61] Falkenberg takes his demobilized Marines, and they become a mercenary force secretly undertaking contracts for Grand Admiral Lermontov, gaining a reputation as 'one of the best-trained and most effective small military units in existence.'[62] The goal is to prevent the collapse of the CoDominium, or at least diminish such a collapse's devastating effects on Earth's colony worlds. The Legion is not fighting for governments, but for humanity as a whole, and Falkenberg, and the other clear thinking people in the stories, despair at the rising nationalism which threatens to lead to war, the destruction of Earth, the deaths of billions of people, and the collapse of human civilisation. This concern, a sort of paramilitary species-patriotism, dominates the narratives. When fifteen-year-old Falkenberg enlists with the CoDominium Navy, he is told by a lieutenant that 'We have no countries of origin among ourselves and no politics. Ever. The Fleet is our fatherland, and our only fatherland.'[63] The mission of the Navy is not to carry out the will of the Grand Senate – made up of corrupt politicians – but 'to exist' and 'by existing, to keep some measure of peace and order in this corner of the galaxy', to buy time 'for men to get far enough away from Earth that when the damned fools kill themselves they will not have killed the human race.'[64] This is the ideal that Falkenberg bases his entire career around, and one which he instils in the officers beneath him in both the 42nd Regiment and the Legion. For example, Lieutenant Hal Slater is told by the Colonel that the Fleet is the only thing preventing a war on Earth that 'won't end until billions are dead', that the Fleet 'keeps the peace, and as long as we do, Earth still lives.'[65] It is the responsibility of the Fleet to guard an 'uneasy peace built on an uneasy alliance' between two superpowers that hate each other.[66] This belief continues even after the creation of the Legion, and justifies the pragmatic military decisions made by Falkenberg, such as that in Pournelle's most

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[61] Shippey, pp. 168-183 (p. 178). Pournelle, p. 336.
[62] Pournelle, p. 337.
[63] Pournelle, p. 8.
[64] Pournelle, pp. 10-11.
[65] Pournelle, pp. 201, 220.
[66] Pournelle, p. 53.

controversial story, 'The Mercenary' (July 1972), when the Legion is brought in to deal with political rebels on Hadley, a backward mining colony, and Falkenberg's solution 'is to lure the rebels into the capital's stadium and slaughter them.'[67] The Freedom Party's massacre is justified because it prevents an economic collapse in which at least a third of the population will perish and after which Hadley will revert to barbarism.[68]

Drake and the Hammer's Slammer Series

The next major writer of mercenary-themed military SF during the 1970s and 1980s, and onwards, was David Drake. Drake was drafted into the U.S. Army out of Duke Law School in 1970 (after President Johnson removed the graduate student deferment in 1968), sent to Vietnamese language school at Fort Bliss, then for interrogation training at Fort Meade. He was assigned to the Military Intelligence detachment of the 11th Armored Cavalry, the Blackhorse Regiment, in Vietnam and Cambodia.[69] While a student he had sold two fantasy short stories, but upon his return from the Vietnam War he began writing 'stories about war in the future, assuming that the important things wouldn't change'; instead of 'brilliant generals or bulletproof heroes', he wrote 'about troopers doing their jobs the best way they could with tanks that broke down, guns that jammed – and no clue about the Big Picture, whatever the hell that might be.'[70] The stories of the *Hammer's Slammers* series (popularly termed the 'Hammerverse'), featuring Colonel Alois Hammer and his armoured mercenaries, were initially published at *Galaxy* magazine under the editorship of Jim Baen, beginning with 'Under the Hammer' (October 1974).

Mike Ashley writes that any similarity between the Hammer's Slammers and Pournelle's Falkenberg stories is superficial, distinguishing them in that Pournelle 'considers military engagements against political machinations', while Drake 'concentrates on military tactics in alien environments.' [71] Drake likewise distinguishes his work from Pournelle, writing that Pournelle's troops were 'saving

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[67] John W. Campbell had discussed a similar tactic in a provocative May 1969 editorial in *Analog*. Ashley, p. 11.
[68] Pournelle, p. 302, 333.
[69] David Drake, 'Foreword: A Professional Writer by Way of Southeast Asia', *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume One* (New York: Baen Books, 2009), pp. 7-10 (p. 7).
[70] Drake, 'Foreword: A Professional Writer by Way of Southeast Asia', pp. 7-10 (pp. 8-9).
[71] Ashley, p. 63.

civilisation from the barbarians, despite the scorn and disgust with which they were regarded by many of the civilians whom they preserved', while 'clearly' Hammer's Slammers 'weren't saving civilization.'[72] However, their similarities are more significant than both Ashley and Drake suggest. The close relationship between the two authors – and their respective fictional worlds – is explicated by Darko Suvin, who writes of how in militarist SF during the 1970s 'the torch began to pass from Pournelle's pioneering zest to the more routine activities of the entrepreneur-writer David Drake.'[73]

Like Falkenberg's Legion, Hammer's Slammers – 'the toughest regiment that ever killed for a dollar' – originated out of an official military force betrayed by its government.[74] This mirrored Drake's own views of the Vietnam War: he writes that the enlisted men he served with in 1970 were almost entirely draftees and that 'nobody I knew in-country… thought the war could be won', thought the government was even trying to win, or 'thought our presence was doing the least bit of good to anyone, particularly ourselves.'[75] Hammer's Auxiliary Regiment was assembled from off-world volunteers to fight for the Friesland government but, when they finish their service and try to return to their adopted home, are betrayed by a Friesland government afraid to let five thousand well-trained soldiers onto the planet. The Slammers fight their way off-world and begin their career as hired soldiers.[76] As with Pournelle's fictional mercenary force, this appears to originate from a sincere belief that the U.S. armed forces had been betrayed by their government.[77] They go on to fight for a range of clients – democratically-elected governments, dictatorships, religious fundamentalists, monarchists, rebel

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[72] David Drake, 'Afterword', *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume One* (New York: Baen Books, 2009), pp. 511-516 (pp. 513-514). Drake, unlike Pournelle, writes about what Sean McFate later labels contract warfare: in which 'wealthy clients would hire private armies to wage wars for their own interests... Contract warfare is literally a free market for force, where private armies and clients seek each other out, negotiate prices, and wage wars for personal gain.' McFate, p. xiii.

[73] Darko Suvin, 'Of Starship Troopers and Refuseniks: War and Militarism in U.S. Science Fiction, Part 2', *Extrapolation*, 48, 1 (2006), pp. 9-34 (p. 16).

[74] David Drake, 'The Butcher's Bill', *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume One* (New York: Baen Books, 2009), pp. 7-11 (p. 10).

[75] David Drake, 'Foreword: We Happy Few', *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume Two* (New York: Baen Books, 2009), pp. 35-56 (p. 36).

[76] David Drake, 'But Loyal to His Own', *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume One* (New York: Baen Books, 2009), pp. 61-86 (pp. 73-74, 85-86).

[77] Michael Levy, 'Fiction, 1980-1992', in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. by Mark Bould, Andrew M. Butler, Adam Roberts, and Sherryl Vint (New York: Routledge, 2009) pp. 153-162 (p. 158).

organisations – for as long as those clients can afford them or until the objective is achieved.[78] Often these clients are governments whose own regular armed forces are incapable of achieving victory, or victory is unachievable because of 'political implications' that mercenaries do not need to consider; in addition, standard contracts include the proviso that the outfit will obey civilian orders 'where it won't screw things up too bad.'[79] Despite Drake's claims that Hammer is different from Pournelle's Falkenberg, in that he is not out to 'save civilisation' and is not interested in paramilitary patriotism, the story 'Standing Down' (1979) depicts the Slammers returning to Friesland and Hammer becoming President after a coup. Hammer tells Major Danny Pritchard: 'You've been out there. You've seen how every world claws at every other one, claws its own guts, too. The whole system's about to slag down, and there's nothing to stop it if *we* don't.' The only way he knows that works is, in Pritchard's words, to 'create order by ramming it down peoples' throats on a bayonet.'[80] As President, Hammer hires out companies of the planetary army.

Asprin and *The Cold Cash War*

Robert Asprin's *The Cold Cash War* (1977) – set on a dystopian near-future Earth, where multinational corporations have effectively superseded governments and engage in covert corporate wars – offers a satirical take on mercenary-themed military SF.[81] However, it tends to comment more about the growing power of corporations rather than distrust of government, anticipating concerns around the Reagan Revolution and privatisation of traditional government functions during the

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[78] That is the 'one sure rule for Hammer's Slammers – no pay, no play.' Drake, 'The Butcher's Bill', pp. 35-56 (p. 43).

[79] David Drake, 'Liberty Port', *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume One* (New York: Baen Books, 2009), pp. 309-375 (p. 324). Drake, 'The Butcher's Bill', pp. 35-56 (p. 44).

[80] David Drake, 'Standing Down', *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume One* (New York: Baen Books, 2009), pp. 195-211 (p. 203). The mercenary industry was a symptom of this interstellar disorder: 'there was always someone willing to hire soldiers, somewhere' and 'world after world armed its misfits and sent them off to someone else's backyard, to attack or defend, to kill or die.' David Drake, 'Backdrop to Chaos', *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume One* (New York: Baen Books, 2009), pp. 107-109 (p. 109).

[81] Expanded from Asprin's debut work (and only work published in the SF magazines), the short story 'Cold Cash War' (*Analog*, August 1977). Asprin also published the MSF novel *The Bug Wars* (1979), which portrays an interstellar struggle between a species of highly advanced, highly militaristic intelligent reptiles and a coalition of huge insects.

1980s.[82] Asprin, who served in the United States Army (1965-1966), takes a more explicit approach to the idea of government as the enemy, with the corporate conglomerates and their mercenaries in conflict with the governments of the free world. Like the stories of Falkenberg's Legion and Hammer's Slammers, the main focus in *The Cold Cash War* is on mercenary soldiers who have abandoned any ideas they may have had of nationalism or glory: Tidwell and others now fight in a highly specialised form of war – initially 'simulated' and 'bloodless' war, later less so – for multinational corporations.[83] Unlike in the series of Pournelle and Drake, the corporate mercenaries show no inclination to paramilitary patriotism.

The corporate wars, such as the one between the Oil Combine and Communications Combine in Brazil, are at first covert and hidden from the world's governments. When they become public, the United States government, chooses to intervene, leading to a domestically unpopular, unsuccessful, and largely one-sided war with the corporations.[84] When the corporations refuse to comply with government directives to cease hostilities and openly challenge government authority, more nations join the U.S. in seeking to control the multinational corporations. Eventually, 'virtually all major nations of the free world [were] united in their opposition to the combined corporate powers' and begin to propose governmental intervention in the corporate wars. Negotiations between the corporations and the 'united free world governments' collapse after a corporate appeal to 'call off a situation involving needless bloodshed which the government troops could not hope to win.'[85] Government effectiveness in this conflict is dismissed by the mercenaries, the corporate leadership, and the media. The dismissive attitude of the mercenaries is clear in an exchange between a corporate mercenary and a government soldier in the jungle, in which the former tells the latter that none of the mercenaries 'want to fight you clowns… We just want you to clear the hell out and leave us alone.' When the soldier hesitantly says 'supposedly we're trying to keep you from destroying the world economy', the mercenary replies 'Bullshit. You wouldn't know a world

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[82] This privatisation movement was quite popular with the American people, although there was controversy over the increasing outsourcing of many of the functions of the national military. This process meant the occupation of the individual soldier of fortune was "normalized" by integration into 'the modern capitalistic corporate tradition.' Axelrod, pp. xiii, 183.
[83] Robert Asprin, *The Cold Cash War* (New York: Ace, 1992), pp. 32, 152.
[84] Asprin, p. 14.
[85] Asprin, pp. 152-154.

economy if it bit you on the leg... the corporations have *been* the world economy for over half a century now.'[86] The leaders of the corporations are equally dismissive of the governments in a meeting with the free nations' military representatives. When the military arrests the corporate leaders and orders 'a world-wide push to finish the war in one fell swoop', the corporations refuse to capitulate, and Yamada of the Zaibatsu warns the military that the corporate troops had not been fighting at their full capacity. After explaining that 'it is not in the corporations' best interests to indulge in the bloodbath form of warfare the governments' forces seem to favour', Yamada reveals that all government military radio communications were jammed and all officers 'in your forces above the rank of lieutenant colonel have been assassinated.'[87] Finally, the governments are dismissed by the media, which explains that the lack of favourable reports about the government troops during the war is because 'there was little if anything favourable to be said for their unbroken record of failures' and 'dismal incompetence.'[88] With near-universal scorn against the national governments it is unsurprising that Asprin takes his novel to its logical conclusion, the narrative ending with the United Board of Corporations in charge of things – dictating to governments – and a 'worldwide army of hard-core professionals' to maintain world peace, a mercenary global peacekeeping force.[89]

Other 1970s-1980s Mercenary Military SF Works

Other works during this period also offer commentary on themes of alienation from state authority, including government forces as inadequate and mercenaries as an alternative. They also offer representations of 'paramilitary patriotism', with its contradictory idealisation of paramilitary actions and isolation from society – often the result of betrayal by government – along with expressions of patriotic/nationalistic ideals. Among these works were Lois McMaster Bujold's *The Warrior's Apprentice* (1986) and *The Vor Game* (1990), John Dalmas' *The*

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[86] Asprin, p. 175.
[87] Asprin, pp. 188, 189.
[88] Asprin, pp. 168-169.
[89] Asprin, p. 201.

Regiment (1987) and *The White Regiment* (1990), and Joel Rosenberg's *Not For Glory* (1989).

Lois McMaster Bujold's *The Warrior's Apprentice* (1986) and *The Vor Game* (1990) are two Vorkosigan novels that focus on the main character's role as 'Admiral Naismith' of the Dendarii Mercenaries.[90] In the first book Miles Vorkosigan, in the guise of Naismith accidentally starts a mercenary company when he finds himself involved in a civil war. He also encounters the Oseran Free Mercenary Fleet, a motley 'free coalition of mercenaries' in which the captain-owners hold contracts for their crew.[91] In the second novel, Vorkosigan is caught up in a conflict brewing around the Hegen Hub, which involves a number of mercenary forces, including the Dendarii and Randall's Rangers. In all cases planetary governments have hired the mercenaries because their forces are insufficient, unsuitable, or downright incapable. The mercenary business in these works is morally neutral, with individual forces being 'good' or 'bad': for example, Captain Tung of the Oserans says 'a mercenary who can't honor his contract when it's rough as well as when it's smooth is a thug, not a soldier', while Commander Cavilo of Randall's Rangers plots a pirate raid on her employer, the planet Vervain.[92] At the end of *The Warrior's Apprentice* Emperor Gregor of Barrayar secretly declares the Dendarii a Crown Troop of the Barrayaran Imperial Service.[93] In *The Vor Game* the Dendarii are put on permanent retainer by Barrayar, with Naismith as liaison officer, after demonstrating the utility of being able to 'reach places cut off from our regular forces by political barriers.'[94] In the course of hiring themselves out they are also serving the ideals of the Barrayaran Empire, as paramilitary patriots.

These ideas about mercenaries fighting in the place of inadequate government forces and for paramilitary patriotism are also engaged with by John Dalmas (pseudonym of John Robert Jones) in his Regiment series. Dalmas was drafted in 1944 and trained as a parachute trooper; however, on the way to the Philippines and

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[90] "Naismith" and the Dendarii also play significant roles in the novella *Borders of Infinity* (1989) and the novel *Brothers in Arms* (1989).
[91] Lois McMaster Bujold, *The Warrior's Apprentice* (Riverdale, NY: Baen Books, 1986), pp. 103-104, 130.
[92] Bujold, *The Warrior's Apprentice*, p. 185. Lois McMaster Bujold, *The Vor Game* (New York: Baen Books Books, 1990), p. 248.
[93] Bujold, *The Warrior's Apprentice*, p. 301.
[94] Bujold, *The Vor Game*, p. 340.

the 11th Airborne, the nuclear bombs were dropped. After working in the Philippines for a while, Dalmas returned to U.S. in 1946. He went to college on the WW2 GI Bill, majoring in forestry, and later got a PhD in Ecology, leading to a seventeen-year research career. His Regiment series includes *The Regiment* (1987) and *The White Regiment* (1990).[95] In the first book of the series, a journalist covers an insurrection on the 'gook world' of Orlantha, where two regiments of T'swa mercenaries from the planet Tyss – the 'supersoldiers' of 'adventure fiction' – are being deployed by the Confederation of Worlds.[96] The second book details the raising and training of a 'white regiment' of Confederation teenagers, who are schooled in the style of the T'swa mercenary regiments, and will be hired out 'as a mercenary unit' to warring factions on the trade worlds.[97] Tyss is unique for its exports of fighting men, who start training as little children and from then onwards 'that's pretty much all they do – train as warriors and study T'swa philosophy.' The T'swa will not operate as part of large units; they operate as 'a contracted independent force' not under normal chain of command, and they are most renowned for their exceptional value in breaking guerrilla insurgencies which regular Confederation forces are poorly suited to engage.[98] Their philosophy means that the T'swa warrior 'has no enemy', only 'opponents' or 'playmates' in war, and that they 'do not make War to get money'; their pay is not their purpose, only a means – to finance the training of more children, 'to make possible our way of life.'[99] The paramilitary actions of the T'swa – steeped in 'American' values of independence and patriotism – ultimately serve Tyss and its people.

Joel Rosenberg's *Not for Glory* (1988), concerning the missions of Tetsuo Hanavi, staff officer and ninja in the service of the mercenaries of the planet Metzada, also portrays mercenaries operating in the interests of their nations because of paramilitary patriotism.[100] Rosenberg was born in Winnipeg but grew up in the U.S., and had dual American and Canadian citizenship. He studied to be a social worker and counsellor, but took to writing, and was an avid gun rights activist. The

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[95] And continued with *The Kalif's War* (1991), *The Regiment's War* (1993), and *The Three-Cornered War* (1999).

[96] John Dalmas, *The Regiment* (Riverdale, NY: Baen Books 1987), p. 22.

[97] John Dalmas, *The White Regiment* (New York: Baen Books, 1990), p. 6.

[98] Dalmas, *The Regiment*, pp. 45, 53, 101.

[99] Dalmas, *The White Regiment*, pp. 85, 98.

[100] The Metzada Mercenary Corp series also includes the novels *Ties of Blood and Silver* (1984), *Emile and the Dutchman* (1985), and *Hero* (1990).

inhabitants of Metzada – descended from Jewish refugees from the State of Israel and the North American Federation on Earth – live in warrens burrowed beneath its surface and subsist almost entirely on imports paid for with money earned by its mercenaries. Metzada is a poor world and does not import luxuries: luxury 'would be reducing the number of young boys we send offworld to die in other people's wars.'[101] The mercenaries do not approve of civilian control – 'civilians tend to keep modifying objectives and making tactical and strategic decisions they've got no business making' – and Metzadan contracts reflect this, leaving such decisions to the commanding general.[102] Dispatched to execute the traitor Shimon Bar-El, Hanavi does not kill him because he realises Bar-El is too valuable to Metzada, exiled or not, and that the true purpose of war – even the mercenary wars of the Metzada Mercenary Corps – is to aid in the survival of the nation, not greed, aggrandizement, or glory: both Bar-El and Hanavi place the welfare of Metzada – their tribe – before everything else.[103] In Rosenberg's books, likewise, the French Foreign Legion, based now on the planet Thellonee, is a mercenary army 'of moderately trained scum soldiers' who fight in the interests of Greater France.[104]

Modern Mercenary-Themed Military SF (1990s-2000s)

The corporatization of military service provision begun in the 1980s continued into the 1990s and the twenty-first century, emerging as a new multi-billion dollar global industry in the post-Cold War era. Private military companies (PMCs) have become a regular part of the military landscape, with the U.S. making the most extensive use of their services, and the United Nations Convention is viewed as, at best, a curiosity. These PMCs are (cosmetically) different to the individual mercenaries of the 1960s and the modern era, the contracted units of past centuries, and the charter trading companies of colonial times, such as the East India Company.[105] They are 'expeditionary conflict entrepreneurs structured as multinational corporations that

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[101] Joel Rosenberg, *Not For Glory* (New York and Scarborough, ON: NAL Books, 1988), p. 1, 13.
[102] Rosenberg, pp. 110, 213.
[103] Rosenberg, p. 225. Despite their explicitly patriotic ideologies, the T'swa and the Metzada still conform to the definition of 'mercenary' adopted by this thesis: they are foreign to the conflicts in which they engage, and they are – if not solely or chiefly – motivated by financial considerations, even if just to finance their way of life or their service to their people.
[104] Rosenberg, p.58.
[105] Singer, p. 45.

use lethal force or train others to do so', and they work hard to distance themselves from the loosely organised and more colourful – some would say seedy – mercenaries of earlier eras, especially the *les affreux* of the 1960s.[106] Unlike previous periods the narratives do not focus on a particular representation of mercenaries – be it soldiers of fortune, alienated regiments, mercenary-economy worlds, or PMCs –instead presenting examples of all of them. The focus of this section is how mercenary-themed military SF comments on mercenary forces doing what government militaries cannot – or cannot be seen by the public to be doing – and reflects the increasingly far-right views and attitudes espoused by military SF in the twenty-first century. Significant authors include Jerry Pournelle, S.M. Stirling, Leo Frankowski, Tom Kratman, John Ringo, Elizabeth Moon, and Rick Shelley.

Post-Cold War Emergence of PMCs

The end of the Cold War was at the heart of the emergence of the modern privatized military industry and the corporate 'normalization' of the mercenary trade. It created the historical conditions that formed a market for a corporatized private military: funding cutbacks for state militaries and a deluge of ex-soldiers and weapons onto the open market; the fragmentation of the bipolar world order into a multipolar world in which threats, though not necessarily existential, multiplied; state collapse, new areas of instability, and the emergence of new non-state conflict groups; a 'security gap' resulting from these new global threats; and the continuing privatization of government services, functions and institutions.[107] Perhaps it is unsurprising that the first real mercenary firm emerged in Africa in the form of Executive Outcomes, the first combat-offensive PMC, 'a true mercenary firm… a fully functional, self-contained military organization, complete with its own air

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[106] According to McFate, PMCs have five characteristics that distinguish them from other armed nonstate actors in global politics: first, they are 'motivated more by profit than by politics'; second, they are 'structured as multinational corporations and participate in the global financial system'' third, they are 'expeditionary in nature, meaning that they seek work in foreign lands rather than providing domestic security services'; fourth, they 'typically deploy force in a military manner, as opposed to a law-enforcement one'; and fifth, they 'are lethal and represent the commodification of armed conflict.' McFate, p. 13.
[107] Axelrod, pp. 188, 191. Singer, pp. 20, 49-53, 60-66.

force, which could conduct full-spectrum combat operations for the right price.'[108] Beginning in the 1990s, PMCs were active in zones of conflict and of transition throughout the world, used in several regional conflicts including Angola, Sierra Leone, Papua New Guinea, and Yugoslavia, some hired by regional warlords and would-be political leaders and others sent in by outside powers unwilling to commit their state militaries to intervention. PMCs were critical players in some conflicts.[109] However, these were peripheral states with no real options; strong states still did not consider the use of private combat assistance and the anti-mercenary norm continued.[110] In the early-twenty-first century, however, the majority of corporatized mercenaries were contracted by (mostly) Western militaries, to provide logistical, training, policing, intelligence, and other support functions, although a significant part of the mercenary industry consisted 'of men dressed and armed like soldiers, operating in hostile and contested war zones and performing operational functions involving combat.'[111] Their operations have become essential to the peacetime security systems of both rich and poor states and their customers range from ruthless dictators, rebels and drug cartels, to legitimate sovereign states, multinational corporations, and humanitarian NGOs, with the U.S. making the most extensive use of the privatised military industry, especially after its invasion of Iraq.[112]

According to P. W. Singer, the Iraq War (2003-2011) was 'a defining moment for the privatized military industry', its growth exploding after the invasion.[113] PMCs flooded Iraq after President George W. Bush announced the end of 'major combat operations' in May 2003, and after the realisation that the U.S. had grossly underestimated the number of troops that would be required for stability and security operations.[114] Insufficient U.S. fighting forces were sent for the mission

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[108] The South African government outlawed mercenaries in 1998, and Executive Outcomes was dissolved as mandated by the Regulation of Foreign Military Assistance Act. McFate, p. 38.
[109] Singer, pp. 7, 9. Axelrod, pp. 191-192.
[110] Percy, p. 224.
[111] Axelrod, p. 183.
[112] Singer, p. 15.
[113] Singer, p. 243.
[114] While the exact numbers are difficult to confirm, it is estimated that by 2006 there were at least 20,000 PMC employees assisting Coalition troops in Iraq, and that by the height of the war this number had increased tenfold, with some 200,000 PMCs (most of them performing logistical and other support functions) supplementing approximately 165,000 troops from the U.S. national forces. These PMCs worked for the Department of Defense, and their number does not count those employed by the Department of State, U.S. intelligence agencies, the Department of Homeland Security, and other branches of the U.S. government. Percy, p. 206. Axelrod, pp. xix, 223. David

expected of them and, even worse, 'there were no realistic plans or structures in place for what would come' after the invasion itself; PMCs seemed to provide an answer to many of the resulting policy dilemmas. The war's key architects believed that the privatisation of war could ensure greater military efficiency while cutting out wasteful spending; that PMCs could be a patriotic extension of the U.S. military. PMCs came to play key roles in Iraq: they provided logistical and technical assistance, training to Iraqi police, paramilitary, and army forces, intelligence and analytic work, and convoy escort and protection to key bases and facilities. In short, 'the Iraq operation could not have been carried out without private military support.' At the same time, the 'darkest episodes' of the Iraq War all involved privatized military companies: including the allegations of war profiteering against Vice President Dick Cheney's old Halliburton-KBR firm, the actions against and by Blackwater in Fallujah, and the Abu Ghraib prison abuse scandal.[115] In addition, stories emerged of private military contractor fraud and incompetence, and of reckless, even criminal, armed attacks by 'mercenaries' – in the pejorative sense – against innocent Iraqi civilians. American anti-privatization sentiments – with PMCs sometimes seen as unregulated and unprincipled hired guns – became more intense during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.[116]

Far-Right Mercenary Military SF

More than previous mercenary-themed military SF texts, the main works of this period are conservative narratives. Appearing during the Place Between Two Deaths and, especially, post-9/11, these narratives once again offer comments on times of contested social changes, international interactions, and redefinitions of American Exceptionalism. Charity Fox gestures towards this new spike in the production and consumption of mercenary narratives in American popular culture in the first decade of the twenty-first century, linking it to crises of American Exceptionalism such as the culturally contested result of the 2000 presidential

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Isenberg, 'A Government in Search of Cover: Private Military Companies in Iraq', in Simon Chesterman and Chia Lehnardt (eds.), *From Mercenaries to Market: The Rise and Regulation of Private Military Companies* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 82-93 (p. 84).
[115] Singer, pp. 244, 248.
[116] Axelrod, p. xiv.

election, the post-9/11 popular discourse of threats to national security, and the economic downturns suffered by the U.S. As seen in Chapter Six, modern military SF has become more stridently right-wing and this is reflected in mercenary military SF, most notably in works by Jerry Pournelle and S.M. Stirling, Leo Frankowski, Tom Kratman , and John Ringo. Less stridently right-wing narratives were also produced by Rick Shelley and Elizabeth Moon.[117] PMCs in these works are doing what government military forces cannot, both because they do not have the military capability and because military intervention needs to be concealed from the public. Both of these are familiar from the United States' use of privatized military forces in Iraq and other theatres of the Global War on Terror, and have contributed to the military-civilian divide examined at in Chapter Six.

As Sarah Percy writes, private forces 'upset the traditional relationship between the citizen and the state' and allowed 'the state to embark on war more easily, and to sustain unpopular wars.'[118] The Bush Administration's support for mercenaries was a crucial weapon in an arsenal designed to distance the war from the public; an arsenal that included reliance on air power and eventually drones, Special Forces operations and the training of proxy units, and media censorship.[119] It established the blueprint for the Obama Administration, which sustained an aggressive foreign policy by continuously subcontracting counter-insurgency operations, while expanding the use of air power and drones so that American combat fatalities were limited.[120]

The increasingly far-right attitudes and fantasies of some military SF is first seen in the two Falkenberg's Legion novels published in the early-1990s – *Go Tell The Spartans* (1991) and *Prince of Sparta* (1993), in collaboration between Jerry Pournelle and S.M. Stirling – and reprinted as part of *The Prince* (2002) just after

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[117] Not looked at here are a number of series depicting old-fashioned soldier of fortune-style mercenaries: Chris Bunch's Star Risk series – *Star Risk, Ltd.* (2002), *The Scoundrel Worlds* (2003), *The Double-Cross Program* (2004), and *The Dog from Hell* (2005); Michael Z. Williamson's Ripple Creek series – *Better to Beg Forgiveness* (2007), *Do Unto Others* (2010), and *When Diplomacy Fails…* (2012); and Andrew John Remic's Combat K novels – *War Machine* (2007), *BioHell* (2008), *Hardcore* (2010), and *Cloneworld* (2011).
[118] Percy, pp. 242-243.
[119] Nick Turse, *The Changing Face of Empire: Special Ops, Drones, Spies, Proxy Fighters, Secret Bases, and Cyberwarfare* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012).
[120] Jeremy Kuzmarov, '"Distancing Acts": Private Mercenaries and the War on Terror in American Foreign Policy', *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 12, 52 (December 2014), pp. 1-28 (p. 14) <http://apjjf.org/-Jeremy-Kuzmarov/4241/article.pdf> [accessed on 25 February 2016].

9/11. The Legion acts as mercenaries for Sparta, an interstellar dual monarchy that allows only those with militia service and membership of a fraternity – the 'Phaetries' or 'Brotherhoods' – to be voting citizens, and in which government has minimal interference in people's lives.[121] Sparta is facing an insurgency by the Non-Citizens' Liberation Front and its Spartan People's Liberation Army, calling themselves the 'helots', which is conspiring with a peaceful reform movement demanding more rights.[122] The rebellion is seen as the harbinger of the barbarian forces that will soon threaten civilisation. The first book ends with Lysander, one of Sparta's monarchs, deciding that the only solution is a fascist, authoritarian empire.[123] In the end, he is declared emperor of the emerging Spartan Hegemony by the military, and the implication is that Lysander, and his interstellar empire, is the solution – or at least, part of the solution, along with Falkenberg, now Protector of New Washington, and the remnants of the CoDominium Fleet based at Sparta – to the potential end of interstellar civilisation after the collapse of the CoDominium.[124]

Leo Frankowski likewise writes from the far-right. Frankowski is the author of *A Boy and His Tank* (1999), and co-author, with Dave Grossman, of its sequels *The War with Earth* (2003) and *Kren of the Mitchegai* (2005), about the mercenaries of New Kashubia. According to Frankowski, most of his fans consist of 'males with military and technical backgrounds,' while his detractors consist of 'feminists, liberals, and homosexuals.'[125] Dave Grossman, retired lieutenant colonel in the United States Army and professor of military science, is also the author of several non-fiction books about military violence.[126] The series' main character is Mickolai

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[121] Jerry Pournelle and S. M. Stirling, *The Prince* (Riverside, NY: Baen Books, 2002), p. 653.
[122] Pournelle and Stirling, 633.
[123] Pournelle and Stirling, p. 853.
[124] Pournelle and Stirling, pp. 1150-1151. Falkenberg's ascension is detailed in 'Sword and Scepter' (*Analog*, May-June 1973), incorporated in *Falkenberg's Legion*.
[125] He goes on to write: 'If you are a Feminist, with their desire for all the benefits and none of the responsibilities of citizenship; if you are a Liberal who thinks that productive people exist for the sole purpose of supporting non-productive people (and most especially Liberals); if you think that Political Correctness is just wonderful, and that The Cult of The Victim is justice... Well then, you'd probably be a lot happier spending your money somewhere else.' Leo Frankowski, "Should I Buy Frankowski's Books?", <http://web.archive.org/web/20120204191337/http://leofrankowski.com/content/?q=should_i_buy_frankowskis_books> [accessed 12 February 2016].
[126] Including, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (1995), *Stop Teaching Our Kids to Kill: A Call to Action Against TV, Movie, and Video Game Violence* (1999), and *On Combat: The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and in Peace* (2004).

Derdowski, inducted into the service of the Kashubian Expeditionary Forces, operating in a fusion-powered, multi-environment AI-controlled hovertank. New Kashubia is home to eleven million impoverished people forced by the Wealthy Nations Group to immigrate to the planet, where they live in overcrowded mine tunnels, importing air, water, food, and raw materials. The Parliament decided to go into the 'mercenary business' after nationalizing corporate property on the planet, including automated factories 'making and stockpiling vast quantities of war materials on a contract basis for the Wealthy Nations Group.'[127] The staffing of this mercenary force corresponds to Frankowski's views: he believes that a mercenary – who will kill for money – is either 'a psychopath who loves killing people so much that he is willing to risk his own life to do it' or someone 'who is so poor that it is rationally worth risking his life to keep his family from starving.'[128] For consensus reality, since 'it is illegal to starve to death in America', this means only the former group is available 'to man the few American mercenary outfits that exist.'[129] Their first clients are various factions on New Yugoslavia.[130] By the time of *The War with Earth*, the Kashubian Expeditionary Force is the only human interstellar military force in existence, after handily defeating the less proficient military forces of Earth and the Wealthy Nations Group. This novel also presents a vision of the military free from the ineffectiveness of the government. Asked to advise on the restructuring of the New Kashubian military, Derdowski suggests they 'make the military independent of politics', disband the entire existing military organization and 'defend the planet using the KEF.' In addition, he argues that they should establish a system of 'universal adult military service', with the right to vote depending on maintaining one's standing in the army, and 'everybody should get a tank or artillery piece of their own.'[131] The third book introduces the Mitchegai, "biologically evil" aliens; only the KEF is capable of defending humanity.[132]

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[127] Leo Frankowski, *A Boy and his Tank* (Riverdale, NY: Baen Books, 1999), p. 35, 37-38.
[128] Leo Frankowski, "A Boy and His Tank", <http://web.archive.org/web/20120206112430/http://leofrankowski.com/content/?q=a_boy_and_his_tank> [accessed 12 February 2016]. Frankowski, *A Boy and his Tank*, p. xi.
[129] Frankowski, *A Boy and his Tank*, p. xi.
[130] Frankowski, *A Boy and his Tank*, p. 41.
[131] Reminiscent especially of Heinlein, Frankowski espouses the view that 'If a person doesn't care enough about his country to serve in its army, he doesn't care enough to vote properly.' Leo Frankowski and Dave Grossman, *The War with Earth* (Riverdale, NY: Baen Books, 2003), pp. 311, 313, 325.
[132] Frankowski, "A Boy and His Tank" [accessed 12 February 2016].

Tom Kratman enlisted in the U.S. Army aged 17, served with infantry and airborne divisions, including in Panama, and became an officer. He was then part of the United States Army Recruiting Command, before serving with the 5th Special Forces Group during the Gulf War. Kratman left the regular army in 1992, and went to law school, but remained a member of the United States Army Reserve; he retired in 2006 as a Lieutenant Colonel and became a full-time author. His main military SF sequence is the Carrera series, starting with *A Desert Called Peace* (2007), in which Patricio Carrera, aka Patrick Hennessey, forms a mercenary army, the *Legion de Cid*.[133] Carrera's Legion is a brigade-sized expeditionary force – formed, organised, equipped and trained in the Balboa Republic on the planet Terra Nova – 'created to quell the scourge of terrorism wherever it might be found' and with the intention of hiring out to the Federated States of Columbia for their invasion of Sumeria.[134] In the second book, *Carnifex*, the Legion expands into a full-fledged self-contained military organisation, complete with a navy, an intelligence organisation, a military academy, and its own administrative bureaucracy. Carrera appears ambivalent about his status as a mercenary, alternatively admitting the legion are mercenaries despite calling themselves 'auxiliaries' while also declaring the 'loaded' term mercenary 'inaccurate', since the Legion does not meet all the conditions of 'Additional Protocols One and Two to Old Earth's Geneva Convention Four', which barred the use of mercenary troops.[135] What he is not ambivalent about, however, is the Legion's effectiveness in comparison to the Federated States' military forces: given a part of Sumeria to pacify, Carrera's forces prove to be more ruthless and more effectual than the FSC, despite their limited resources and relatively small numbers. In the process they face 'enemies', from the right-wing perspective, such as humanitarian organisations, human rights activists, environmentalists, the news media, and climate change proponents; in fact, later in the series, the Legion goes to war with Terra Nova's 'cosmopolitan progressives', the Tauran Union.

Another significant right-wing military SF narrative – for the purposes of this thesis, a mercenary narrative – is the Posleen War series, also known as the Legacy of the

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[133] Followed by *Carnifex* (2007), *The Lotus Eaters* (2010), *The Amazon Legion* (2011), *Come and Take Them* (2013), and *The Rods and the Axe* (2014).

[134] Tom Kratman, *A Desert Called Peace* (Riverdale, NY: Baen Books, 2007), pp. 275, 288, 402.

[135] Kratman, pp. 288, 742.

Aldenata series, by John Ringo. Ringo was a specialist in the 82nd Airborne Division, U.S. Army, and spent two years on reserve duty with the Florida National Guard; he studied marine biology, but became a database manager to support his wife and two daughters. The books, mainly focused on Michael O'Neal, ex-Army, a junior web consultant and science fiction fan, who re-enlists to fight the Posleen War, begin in contemporary times. The Earth is contacted by the Galactic Federation – containing a number of peaceful, nonviolent species, including the elf-like Darhel, the green-furred Indowy, and the frog-like Himmit – which brings news that it is 'in the midst of a multiplanet war' with the Posleen, which it is losing, and that the Posleen are headed to Earth.[136] The Posleen are 'leprous yellow centaurs', whose name for every other species is 'thresh', meaning 'food', and who ravage and deplete worlds before moving on to further conquests.[137] The Galactics appeal to the proven military abilities of humanity for aid in the war; humanity is mobilized and recruited as a mercenary force to fight a war the Federation is technically, and biologically, incapable of fighting itself.[138] Selling military forces to the Galactics provides the monetary support required to fund planetary defences, while also serving to train Earth's forces for its own impending invasion.[139] *A Hymn Before Battle* (2000) describes the reconnaissance of Posleen-conquered Barwhon by special operations veterans and the actions of the multinational Diess Expeditionary Force hired by the Darhel. *Gust Front* (2001) witnesses the beginning of the Posleen invasion of Earth. O'Neal, serving in the newly-formed Armoured Combat Suit Mobile Infantry, has to use his unit effectively despite interference from both military officers who do not understand fighting the Posleen, as well as politicians, including a President whose decisions during the first Posleen landings lead to 'the worst military disaster in American history.'[140] The series also ties back to post-Vietnam views of the paramilitary warrior: O'Neal's father – now living on an isolated farm with a large collection of illegal weapons and survival supplies – served in Vietnam as a government assassin, but was court-martialled for smuggling; he went back to 'being a soldier' on 'his own side', fighting in places

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[136] John Ringo, *A Hymn Before Battle* (Riverdale, NY: Baen Books, 2000), p. 36.
[137] Ringo, *A Hymn Before Battle*, pp. 115-116, 228.
[138] In addition to inducting every male of military age, Galactic supplied rejuvenation technology allows veterans of wars as far back as World War Two to serve again. Ringo, *A Hymn Before Battle*, p. 55.
[139] John Ringo, *Gust Front* (Riverdale, NY: Baen Books, 2001), p. 26.
[140] Ringo, *Gust Front*, pp. 113, 562.

like Rhodesia, 'making a living' but not 'making a difference: the gooks won every fuckin' time', before returning home.[141]

Also notable is the Posleen War collaboration between Ringo and Kratman, *Watch on the Rhine* (2007), in which the German Waffen-SS are given a chance to 'redeem' themselves when they are rejuvenated to fight the Posleen along with the other human 'barbarian mercenaries.'[142] While deploring the Nazis' genocidal racial policies and crimes against humanity, the narrative admires the perceived discipline, loyalty, and efficiency of their fascist, militarist caste system, and praises the Waffen-SS as 'perhaps the most cosmopolitan armed force in history.'[143] One of the most obvious ways in which right-wing attitudes are depicted is the novel's drawing of analogies between the fictional protests against resistance to the Posleen invaders and real-life anti-war protests of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. One protestor calls the Posleen War a 'stupid and needless war', blaming it on the Americans 'looking for trouble and becoming involved in a fruitless war, against a previously unknown alien civilization.'[144] The Author's Note explicitly links the book to the 'world war' that 'Western Civilisation' is currently involved in against Islam. The novel also explores the way 'environmentalists' – Green Germans who are no better than the Red Russians the Waffen-SS fought in World War Two – undermine the defences of Earth through their protests.[145]

Substantially less right-wing mercenary narratives were written by Rick Shelley and Elizabeth Moon during the late-1990s and 2000s, while still retaining an interest in mercenaries taking on jobs that government forces cannot do, or cannot be seen doing. Shelley wrote the Dirigent Mercenary Corps series, following the mercenary career of Lon Nolan. In the twenty-ninth century people who need military assistance, and do not want the domination of either the Confederation of Human Worlds or the Second Commonwealth, have only a handful of options, including mercenaries, and the largest and best organized source of mercenaries is

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[141] Ringo, *Gust Front*, pp. 59-60.
[142] The mercenarism of the humans is obvious: when the Chinese did calculations and determined that the wages the Darhel were offering were much less than the Darhel would have been willing to pay, 'they along with the other barbarians, simply held out and refused us aid until we had given them a better offer.' John Ringo and Tom Kratman, *Watch on the Rhine* (Riverdale, NY: Baen Books, 2005), pp. 7-8.
[143] Ringo and Kratman, p. 34.
[144] Ringo and Kratman, p. 16.
[145] Ringo and Kratman, pp. 30, 49.

the world of Dirigent. Over the course of six books – tracking his career from *Officer Cadet* (1998) to *Colonel* (2000) – Nolan is involved in contracts including the defense of Calypso against invasion by a neighbouring planet, peacekeeping on Aldrin in the face of imminent civil war, training a constabulary militia on Bancroft, and fighting mercenaries from New Sparta that have invaded the university world of Elysium. The Dirigenters are serving the state; the Dirigent Mercenary Corps and the planet of Dirigent are inseparable. The General, commander of the Corps, is also the head of the Council of Regiments and head of the planetary government. After his first action, Cadet Lon Nolan is told that while he is 'in the business of killing' he should trust that he is on the 'right side'; the mercenaries 'fight for Dirigent, for the Corps, for our mates.' They might be mercenaries but serving in the Corps is still an act of service to their world: 'We're serving our world, the same way you would have been serving your country if you had made it to the Army back home. We fight because we're Dirigenters.'[146] The Corps is also well known for its discipline, a discipline due in large part to, according to Lieutenant Colonel Flowers, 'the spirit that we instil in all of our men, the knowledge of what the Corps stands for.'[147] Being written during the 1990s, the Dirigenters clients are usually colony worlds and peripheral states.

Moon (born Susan Elizabeth Norris) is the author of a sequence of military SF novels known as Vatta's War.[148] The books follow the adventures of Kylara Vatta: expelled from the Slotter Key Spaceforce Academy, she becomes the captain of a trading ship in her family's company and then puts her military training to use when Gamis Turek and his pirate alliance threaten interstellar peace. Moon has bachelor degrees in history and biology, and served in the United States Marine Corps as a computer specialist, attaining the rank of 1st Lieutenant while on active duty. She is also the author of the seven-book Serrano series of military SF, but it is the Vatta's War series that offers two depictions of mercenaries: private military companies such as Mackensee Military Assistance Corporation (MMAC), and

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[146] Rick Shelley, *Officer Cadet* (New York: Ace Books, 1998), p. 82. Rick Shelley, *Lieutenant Colonel* (Ace Books, 2000), p. 228. The Dirigenters benefit from thinking they are 'one the side of the good guys', and it is suggested that thinking otherwise would impair their performance. Rick Shelley, *Captain* (New York: Ace Books, 1999), p. 58.

[147] Rick Shelley, *Lieutenant* (New York: Ace Books, 1998), p. 52.

[148] The series includes the novels *Trading in Danger* (2003), *Moving Target* (2004), *Engaging the Enemy* (2006), *Command Decision* (2007), and *Victory Conditions* (2008).

privateer fleets like that of Slotter Key. The first significant force of mercenaries in the Vatta's War series is Mackensee, a 'consultancy service' providing technical assistance and training, and offering 'additional services which may extend to the provision of personnel and matériel when employer resources are insufficient to the accomplishment of specific goals outlined in the contract.'[149] Mackensee does not 'sell war', just the expertise 'to people who otherwise will get themselves in unnecessary wars and cause a lot of damage.'[150] Despite any distaste over mercenaries, they are considered 'true military organizations.' Vatta realises that mercenary companies are 'just a business, really' and Mackensee has a 'familiar civilian style of corporate organization' with a 'business-suited CEO and CFO instead of a commander in uniform.'[151] However, despite the appeal, Vatta refuses a position with MMAC: 'Mackensee might be honourable, within the definition of *mercenary*, but that would not keep them from taking a contract from anyone with enough funds, against anyone – including, for instance, Slotter Key.'[152] The other significant force of mercenaries in Moon's books is the Slotter Key Space Force privateers, 'private armed vessels' authorized by the Slotter Key government – with letters of marque – 'to pursue and take action against the enemies of Slotter Key.'[153] Vatta discovers that her homeworld had a reputation for dealing with its neighbours arrogantly, with a 'combination of cheeseparing caution – using privateers for outsystem operations cost less than funding a real space navy – and exuberant flouting of the rules, such as they were, that governed such uses.' These privateers are commonly called 'pirates with a piece of paper' by other governments; as are foreign privateers by Slotter Key. However,

> every government finds itself in need of force – clandestine, unofficial, deniable force – in some situations. Vigilantes, privateers, bounty hunters, mercenaries, someone who would do the dirty work but whose dirty work could be disavowed if things went sour.[154]

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[149] Elizabeth Moon, *Trading In Danger* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003), p. 134.
[150] Elizabeth Moon, *Moving Target* (London: Orbit, 2004), p. 235.
[151] Moon, *Trading In Danger*, pp. 156, 215, 240.
[152] Elizabeth Moon, *Command Decision* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2007), p. 356.
[153] Moon, *Moving Target*, pp. 27-28, 149.
[154] Moon, *Moving Target*, pp. 21, 48.

In the third book, Vatta suggests the privateers of her anti-pirate fleet get the support of mercenaries. The privateers, who consider themselves patriots, look down on mercenaries, 'guns for hire' who could be bribed.[155]

Conclusion

This chapter examined mercenary-themed military SF narratives – spanning the history of the military SF subgenre, from the 1950s until the early-twenty-first century – and their depictions of mercenary characters, organisations, and industries. Mercenary-themed military SF narratives offer another perspective on the militarism, or militarisation, theme that has been explored throughout this thesis, and throughout the history of the military SF subgenre. In addition, this chapter argued, military SF dealing with mercenaries is dominated by the theme of alienation from state authority, including government forces as inadequate and mercenaries as an alternative. This idea is examined in three distinct periods.

The first chronological section examined early mercenary-themed military SF, 'soldier of fortune' narratives during the 1950s and 1960s, at a time when post-colonial Africa was a hot-bed of mercenary activity. Examining works by Gordon Dickson, Mack Reynolds, and Andre Norton, the discussion focused on the early-Cold War United States' newly-gained status as a superpower, and the idea of spreading American Exceptionalism through exercising benevolent paternalism and uplifting missions on the frontier.

The second section was concerned with Vietnam and post-Vietnam era mercenary-themed military SF, part of the 'cult of the mercenary' that James William Gibson argues resulted from the Vietnam War-derived crisis of self-image and distrust of government. The narratives of the 1970s and 1980s, such as those by Jerry Pournelle, David Drake, Robert Asprin, Lois McMaster Bujold, John Dalmas, and Joel Rosenberg, often depict 'alienated soldiers' who nonetheless displayed paramilitary patriotism.

The third section examined modern mercenary-themed military SF during the 1990s and 2000s, when corporatisation of the military industry increased and

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[155] Elizabeth Moon, *Engaging the Enemy* (London: Orbit, 2006), pp. 406-407.

private military companies (PMCs) became significant players in U.S. war-making. This section – focusing on works by Jerry Pournelle and S.M Stirling, Leo Frankowski, Tom Kratman, John Ringo, Elizabeth Moon, and Rick Shelley – argued that narratives depict mercenary forces doing what government militaries cannot – or cannot be seen by the public to be doing – and that the narratives reflect the increasingly far-right views espoused by military SF in the twenty-first century.

Within these sections this chapter examined the changing view of mercenaries, and the use of mercenaries in warfare, while affirming other scholars' argument that mercenary narratives appeared in popular discourse during times of contested social changes and international interactions. In all periods, this chapter argued, military SF's depictions of mercenaries – whether soldiers of fortune, mercenary legions, corporate soldiers, mercenary-economy worlds, private military companies, or privateers – are less inherently negative than the view suggested by international law, and appear to show the disjuncture between 'popular' and 'official' attitudes toward the private military industry. Furthermore, this chapter showed that not only are mercenary works often conservative narratives – as discussed by Charity Fox – but that they have become increasingly conservative and right-wing over the decades, and that mercenary-themed military SF reflects the continuing and increasing dominance of the militaristic stream in military SF. Both mercenaries in consensus reality warfare and in military SF narratives have a bright future, with increasing demand for privatized military services and increasing numbers of mercenary-themed military SF works.

CONCLUSION

After Action Report

Executive Summary: Introduction

This thesis represents the first full-length study to explicitly define, engage with, and undertake historical research on military SF, and to utilise these narratives in an examination of United States cultural history. Exploring military SF from its origins in the future war stories of 1870s Britain, through its evolution into a distinct – and perhaps quintessentially U.S. – subgenre during the 1960s and 1970s, to the post-9/11 far-right works of the 2010s, this thesis is both a literary and cultural history offering insight into a range of themes relevant to a century of militarism and military activity. It demonstrates the usefulness of these sources, and this interdisciplinary approach, to historians, in particular their usefulness in examining cultural militarism and military themes. It does so by examining U.S. popular attitudes toward war, the military, militarism, and militarisation, as well as other popular rhetorics, through these alternative primary sources and methodological assumptions, in order to expand – or simply reinforce or confirm – historical understanding of these attitudes.

Mission Overview and Outcomes: Summary of Main Points

After defining military SF – as science fiction in which military organisations, characters, culture, operations, technology, and viewpoint play important roles in the plot – this thesis examined its origins during the first half of the twentieth century, when it evolved out of the earlier subgenres of future war fiction and space opera. It went on to map the military SF subgenre (the 'archive' utilised by this thesis), and, after arguing that proto-military SF began during the 1940s and that the emergent phase of the subgenre began in the late-1950s with the publication of Robert A. Heinlein *Starship Troopers* and Gordon R. Dickson's *Dorsai!*, this thesis offered a periodisation of military SF literary history. This chronological periodisation – based both on important publication events within the subgenre and significant events in the wider historical-cultural context – divided the history of

military SF between the 1950s and the 2010s into a number of distinct phases: emergent, or early, military SF during the late-1950s and early-1960s; the beginnings of a self-conscious, mature military SF subgenre during the Vietnam Era; post-Vietnam military SF in the 1980s; the military SF of the Pause (the 1990s); and, post-9/11 modern military SF.

Structuring the chapters around this periodisation, this thesis examines the literary texts – as historically constituted cultural products – and the manner in which they engage with 'consensus reality' cultural, techno-cultural, ideological, and political ideas, discourses, and rhetorics during each period. This engagement could be either reflective or interrogative, either upholding dominant cultural attitudes or contesting them. The literary history of military SF becomes a significant source for a cultural history of the United States. Popular rhetorics and attitudes toward a variety of themes were explored. These included, but were not limited to, the rise of the military-industrial complex and U.S.-Soviet Union relations in the 1950s and 1960s, Vietnam War-derived soldier alienation and crises of national identity during the 1970s and 1980s, as well as engagement with the Strategic Defense Initiative and related rhetorics, and U.S. global interventionism and the War on Terror in the 1990s and 2000s. At the same time, the thesis discussed several ongoing concerns in American rhetoric and discourse, such as colonial fantasies and U.S. imperialism/neo-colonialism, social Darwinist ideas, the use of 'the Other' to justify war and a Manichaean worldview, the Cold War and anti-communism, the 'cult of the superweapon' and the interest in technowar, and American Exceptionalism and its 'crises' and 'redefinitions'.

The military SF engagement with these rhetorics was primarily right-wing – right-wing concerns and fears, aspirations and fantasies being dominant – but not exclusively so, and the subgenre's works show the complexity and variation in American popular culture attitudes. This complex engagement within military SF is obvious in the subgenre's 'two streams' – militaristic military SF and antimilitaristic military SF – which offer a range of views and attitudes throughout the subgenre's history. In addition, in the course of analysing military SF's expression and representations of these various concepts, rhetorics, and ideas, over various distinct periods, one overarching theme was observed and examined: militarism. This focus on militarism – and militarisation – was a result of both the

military-themed archive forming the basis of this study and of the dominance of the concept of militarism in the history of the United States during the twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries. This thesis offers a complementary discussion of military SF (popular culture) militarism and American national militarism, explicitly linking the two, and, in the process, combines arguments from a range of thinkers, such as Michael Sherry, Tom Engelhardt, James William Gibson, Darko Suvin, Carl Boggs and Tom Pollard, and Andrew Bacevich. The militarism of military SF reflects the militarism, and militarisation, of U.S. society, culture, and politics, and, perhaps, the fact that the U.S. is the primary producer of military SF reflects the importance (and resonance) of war and the military to U.S. culture and public consciousness. U.S. popular culture reinforces militarism, and U.S. state militarism encourages militaristic cultural products such as the majority of military SF works. Furthermore, it could be argued that military SF's popularity could be seen as owing, in part, to its promotion of rhetorics that relate closely to those of wider American political and popular culture discourses, including those around xenophobia, national security, and national exceptionalism.

Analysis and Evaluation: Implications and Limitations

This thesis has expanded the sources and methodologies available to scholars of history and literature. In the process it has contributed new perspectives to the fields of literary studies (in particular science fiction studies) and American cultural history, and made a strong case for interdisciplinary scholarship between these disciplines. Its focus is on the blurring of boundaries between 'literary' and 'historical' approaches. Both the study of literary sources can benefit from examining their historical contexts, with their social, cultural, ideological, and political concerns, and the study of history can benefit from the inclusion of literarure, with its potential insights into cultural interpretations of historical experience.

In studying the relationship between literary texts and their historical-cultural context, this thesis is significant for literary studies in two ways. First, it presents a basic definition, taxonomy, and history of a previously disregarded and marginalised subgenre of science fiction. Second, it proves the efficacy of New

Historicism, or more generally historical analysis, in the examination and interpretation of these literary texts by placing them within their social, cultural, political, and military contexts. These likewise contribute to the discipline of cultural history. This thesis presents military SF as a previously unexploited 'archive' of historical sources, and offers evidence of the usefulness of fiction – as 'primary sources' – in the exploration of American cultural history. As Marilyn Butler pointed out, supposedly peripheral literary figures – and, this thesis argues, genres and subgenres – are significant and crucial foci of academic study, and help scholars expand their understanding of discursive moments, an understanding not possible through a focus on canonical texts.[1] This thesis expands the range of 'valid' sources for historians and demonstrates that peripheral literature, more obscure works, can be revealing for historical understanding. The subgenre, and its analysis by the historian, can open new angles for scholars interested in the attitudes, values, ideas, rhetorics, aspirations, concerns, and anxieties of historical-cultural moments. This thesis, in summary, is significant because it proposes and demonstrates the advantages of interdisciplinary use of sources and methodological approaches in both literary history and cultural history. That is, the use of military SF and, in general, of minor or peripheral literature as primary evidence, and the use of literature as cultural artefacts in the mutual interrogation of history and literature.

As the first thesis to focus on military SF and U.S. cultural history, this was a broad, in some ways foundational, text, which endeavoured to show the usefulness of military SF narratives for historical research. In many ways this study has been limited by its broad focus and comprehensive approach: both chronologically and thematically there is much scope for further investigation. The distinct historical periods and the specific themes examined in each period could both benefit from further, more focused, exploration. Not only are there a wide range of sources unexamined – more obscure military SF texts, nonprint military SF – there have been gaps and exclusions in what a single thesis could cover. Numerous debates, themes, and rhetorics were only superficially addressed in this study, for example

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[1] As discussed in Chapter One, see Marilyn Butler, 'Repossessing the Past: The Case for an Open Literary History', in *Rethinking Historicism: Critical Readings in Romantic History*, ed. by Marjorie Levinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), pp. 64-84.

technophilia, libertarianism, masculinity, and many others, which would benefit from further research.

Recommendations: Further Research

Because this thesis is a foundational text for the examination of military SF and American history, with a broad chronological and thematic focus, it offers numerous avenues for further study. Such avenues include an exploration of ignored or neglected themes and rhetorics, and examination of a broader range of sources.

The first possibility of further research is the wide range of rhetorics and themes that this thesis did not discuss or touched upon only briefly. This could include reading military SF and its historical-cultural context for engagement with idea dominant in individual chronological periods. But more importantly, the subgenre can be examined diachronically for attitudes and views around a number of overarching themes evident throughout military SF's history. For example, these overarching themes included rhetorics around American Exceptionalism, the remnants of colonial fantasies, the (national and literary) Other, the Superweapon (following on from H. Bruce Franklin), political philosophy (especially civic republicanism, libertarianism, and fascism), the evolution of automated warfare, technophilia (and 'techno-fetishism') in military SF and U.S. military culture, and theories of (just or otherwise) war. Also offering both literary and historical insight is an exploration of gender and ethnicity (or 'race') in what is a predominantly white, middle-class, politically-conservative, and male/masculine literary subgenre. This, in addition, suggests a more comprehensive and focused study of female military SF authors (*as* female writers), such as Catherine Asaro, Elizabeth Bear, Lois McMaster Bujold, C. J. Cherryh, Michelle Cream, Tanya Huff, Jean Johnson, Shariann Lewitt, Susan R. Matthews, Anne McCaffrey, Elizabeth Moon, Laura A. Reeve, Andre Norton, and Kate Wilhelm.

The second possibility of further research is an expansion of literary sources. Subsequent explorations of military SF and American cultural history have abundant works of military SF available which were not examined for this thesis. The reading of such works, and a tighter and more in-depth focus on specific

periods of military SF and U.S. history offer a deeper reading of both texts and context, and the interaction between a range of rhetorics at any given historical moment. In addition, the subject offers scope for comparative scholarship: this thesis exclusively mapped and analysed military SF produced in the United States, but further studies could look at the military SF of other nations, first to discover if they produce military SF, and second, if they do, to compare and contrast it to the American tradition. Finally, this thesis, in proving the efficacy of studying military SF in relation to its historical-cultural context, opens other subgenres of science fiction to similar treatment: the cultural history of the U.S. could be expanded through other subgenre 'archives', ranging from the space opera touched on in this thesis to the cyberpunk which emerged in the 1980s.

The third possibility of further research is expansion of the media of sources: military SF, as with science fiction as a whole, is not restricted to literature, and military SF in other media offers a range of further works for study. These other mediums include, with some notable examples, original films (*Forbidden Planet*, *Aliens*, *Avatar*) and film adaptations of literary military SF narratives (*Enemy Mine*, *Starship Troopers*, *Ender's Game*), television series (*Star Trek, Babylon Five*, *Space: Above and Beyond*, *Stargate SG1*, *Battlestar Galactica*), video games (*Wing Commander*, *Battletech*, *Starcraft*, *Halo*, *Killzone*), comics and graphic novels (*The Alien Legion*, *Shrapnel*, *Drafted*), and full-fledged multimedia franchises (Halo, Battletech, Star Trek, Starship Troopers, Star Wars).[2] Although non-print SF – and even types of print SF, such as comics – have often been marginalised in SF studies, and undervalued as contributions to the overall genre and culture of SF, such works could be included in future explorations of military SF literary history and United States cultural history. However, awareness of concepts of medium specificity would need to be maintained when dealing with 'texts' such as, for example, military SF video games. As Pawel Frelik writes, drawing on work by Tom Gunning and Brooks Landon, non-literary SF can be approached as 'pseudo-

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[2] According to Steffen Hantke, these multi-media franchises make 'a compelling case that the key medium of military SF is no longer the printed word but visual-culture texts, especially films and, to a lesser yet steadily increasing extent, television and computer gaming'; that, in short literary science fiction has ceded 'its central position in the cultural mainstream to film, television, and games…' Steffen Hantke, 'Military Culture', in *The Oxford Handbook of Science Fiction*, ed. by Rob Latham (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 329-339 (p. 332).

morphs of literary SF', whose relation to the originals is that of a counterfeit to an original, with internal differences and a basic discontinuity.[3]

Closing Comments

This literary and cultural history – with its contribution to literary studies, American studies, science fiction studies, and cultural studies – offers new sources and methods of examining, interpreting and understanding twentieth and twenty-first century science fiction and United States history. The current popularity and right-wing rhetorical focus of military SF reflects the continuing far-right attitudes of contemporary American popular and political culture. The subgenre – white, masculine, and politically-conservative – seems especially insightful for studying the development and nature of the current U.S., with its entrenched national security state, continuing global interventionism, militarisation at home, and dominant right-wing rhetorics. This interdisciplinary study of literature, popular culture, and history – in particular with a focus on militarism and militarisation, and their relationship to national identity – is of vital interest in the political and cultural atmosphere of the modern United States of America.

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[3] Pawel Frelik, 'Video Games', in *The Oxford Handbook of Science Fiction*, ed. by Rob Latham (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 226-238 (p. 227).

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>Short Stories and Serials

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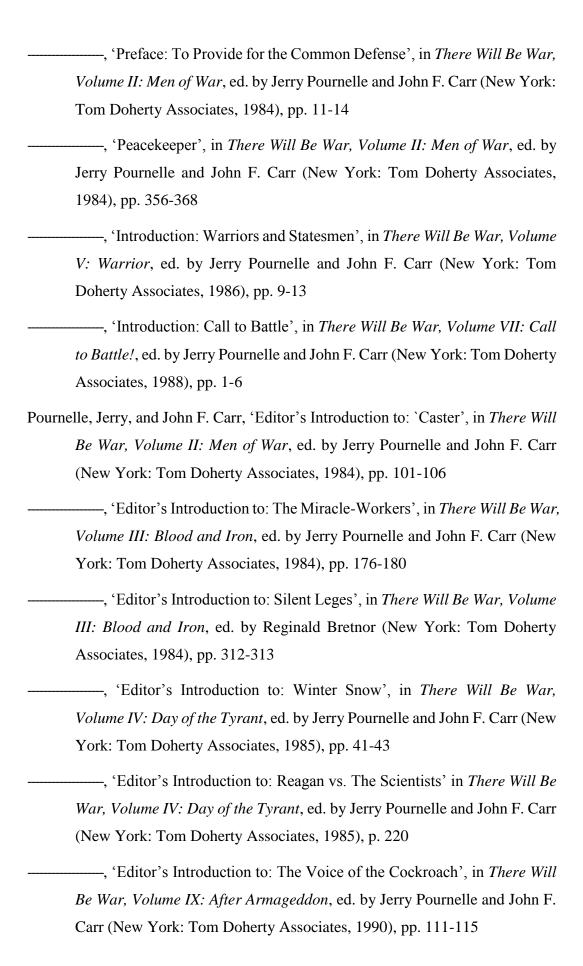
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