

The Division of the Kingdoms:
A Problem in Modern Science Fiction

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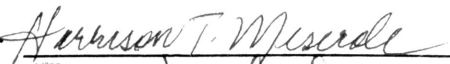
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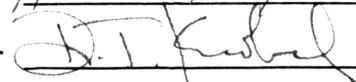
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I.

As perhaps the most widely read authority on the matter, C. G. Jung remarks that "a primordial image or archetype is a figure whether it be a daemon, man, or process, that repeats itself in the course of history wherever creative phantasy is freely manifested. Essentially, therefore, it is a mythological figure. If we subject these images to a closer examination, we discover them to be the formulated resultants of countless typical experiences of our ancestors. They are, as it were, the psychic residue of numberless experiences of the same type" (Preminger, 48-49). These archetypes are clearly visible in both modern fantasy and science fiction. For example, the evil genius can be seen in the necromancer common to many fantasy works as well as the mad scientist of much early science fiction. Although these two characters are on the surface quite different, their root motivations and actions have much in common.

Jungian archetypes are said to exist in society's collective unconscious. Each individual grows up with these archetypal myths and characters residing in his subconscious mind. The development and verbalization of these myths has been the province of fantasy and, in recent history, science fiction as well. Not many will question that modern fantasy is unadulterated myth-making. High fantasy in particular is defined by the sub-creation of a secondary world. The creation of this new mythos, almost always involving a level of technology more primitive than that of the

present, may be seen as an attempt to get in touch on a more primal level with the archetypes out of our ancestral past. Science fiction on the other hand is myth-making in modern terms. It works towards the development of more modern, technological renderings of older, traditional myths and images. Mainstream literature by comparison is more likely to run towards the mundane, leaving its archetypes much more on a sub-textual level if present at all. Hence, this idea of direct manipulation of the collective unconscious may be seen as a foundation linking fantasy and science fiction, while at the same time helping to form distinctions between them within the context of the larger division.

One text which I have found interesting in this framework is the novel *Mythago Wood* by Robert Holdstock, which takes place on the edge of an enchanted, primal forest in England. When within the bounds of this forest, talented individuals may see their collective unconscious projected into visible form. By carefully tapping it, they may produce myth-images which take physical form and independent existence. This process parallels one view of the creative process of writers, who tap into their sub-conscious to produce myth-images (from archetypal characters and processes) which interact to take physical form in a novel. Hence, *Mythago Wood* may be seen on one level as being meta-fiction, fiction about the writing of fiction, at least in a symbolic sense. It might even be considered to be one extreme of fantasy, the making of myth about myth-making, quite fascinating.

Part of my work involves finding an acceptable definition of fantasy and science fiction for the direction I am taking. Norman Spinrad takes what is probably the simplest route by defining science fiction as anything published as science fiction. In a sense this is quite appropriate since any definition I use must include those works which, in my own judgement, I already classify as science fiction. Beyond that, however, its usefulness ceases. Asimov seems to me to be close when he talks about science fiction as the branch of literature dealing with human responses to changes in the level of science and technology. This applies in most cases, but misses some alternate Earth stories such as *Bring the Jubilee* by Ward Moore and *The Man in the High Castle* by Phillip K. Dick, both of which involve extrapolation to the present based on a changed event in the past (differing results in the Civil War and World War II respectively) without necessarily involving a change in technology. As both of these works have received acclaim and awards as science fiction, I believe that the definition still falls short.

Fantasy seems just as difficult to define satisfactorily, for the fantastic has existed as a recognized genre for a much longer time. Perhaps I had best mention that for my purposes I am focusing on modern fantasy and science fiction, i.e., from the mid to late twentieth century with only its roots reaching further back into the past for solid foundation. Lloyd Alexander defines fantasy as reality pretending to be a dream. Again, a

facile definition, but a good starting point. It implies the internal consistency of any given fantasy's defined reality as well as the dream-like sense of wonder and style of prose so characteristic of the fantastic. Tolkien talks about fantasy (or faery story as he was calling it then) as "Sub-Creation combined with 'strangeness and wonder'" (Wolfe, *Critical Terms*, 38). To Tolkien, "sub-creation" means the building of a secondary world by the writer, with its own internally consistent reality.

Tolkien felt that the world should be created in much more detail than is necessary or even seen in the story in order to obtain a feeling of accuracy and sub-textual substance. Tolkien also brings in the strangeness and wonder, the elements of the fantastic which he too feels are necessary in good fantasy. Also of interest to me is the fact that while many describing or defining fantasy are concerned with the fantastic or the marvelous, so too those talking about science fiction are concerned with the sense of wonder created. Of course the sense of wonder in science fiction originates in the awe at the extrapolative possibilities in reality, while the sense of the fantastic in fantasy finds its origin in the marvelling at the impossible or non-rational coexisting in a rational framework.

For my purposes I have found the definitions of Lester del Rey to be most useful. He defines science fiction as "an attempt to deal rationally with alternative *possibilities* in a manner which will be entertaining" (*World*, 5). Correspondingly, he sees fantasy as "an attempt to deal rationally with alternate

impossibilities [in a manner which will be entertaining]" (*World*, 9). By requiring rational dealing, he is demanding internal consistency. He distinguishes the two by calling science fiction the literature of the possible (although not at all necessarily probable) and fantasy the literature of the impossible. Works of fantasy and science fiction which are not entertaining are not bought, which means they are not published, which means that for the most part they are not written, hence del Rey's insistence that they must be done in an entertaining manner. Perhaps del Rey does best when he modifies his definition one step further. He sees the two together as literature which "accepts change as the major basis for stories"--an association borne out almost entirely by the works I know, and thus, convincing as a critical stance (*World*, 9). What is interesting is the fact that the literature of change is also the literature most directly dealing with the myths and archetypes from the collective unconscious.

II.

Given definitions for the fields on a global basis, I need some means of defining individual works which have a tendency to vary significantly within the context of the larger definitions. Perhaps the best place to start is with Nathaniel Hawthorne's comments in the preface to *The House of the Seven Gables* concerning the distinctions between the Novel and the Romance.

The Novel as a "form of composition is presumed to aim at a very, minute fidelity, not merely to the possible but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience. The former [Romance]--while as a work of art, it must rigidly subject itself to laws, and while it sins unpardonably so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart--has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer's own choosing or creation. If he think fit, also, he may so manage his atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the lights and deepen and enrich the shadows of the picture. He will be wise, no doubt, to make a very moderate use of the privileges here stated, and, especially, to mingle the Marvellous rather as a slight, delicate, and evanescent flavor, than as any portion of the actual substance of the dish offered to the public. He can hardly be said, however, to commit a literary crime even if he disregard this caution" (351). This seems a tacit invitation to the writing of science fiction and fantasy: remarkably modern from a novelist in 1851. Again the stipulation of internal consistency, as well as a requirement previously assumed as unwritten law that characters must have a foundation and act rationally, given the motivations of that foundation (even if the rational act is to be irrational). Science fiction is accommodated here as restricting itself to the possible, clearly not fitting the probable and ordinary course of events, while fantasy falls quite specifically within the context of Hawthorne's comments. What is most leading is his comment on the

mingling of the "Marvellous." It is this flavor which helps to color the background setting, characters, and action as well, which may prove most useful in definition. Eric S. Rabkin makes similar statements concerning what he defines as the "Fantastic" in his work *The Fantastic in Literature*. He, in fact, sketches a continuum of the fantastic for assistance in defining science fiction and fantasy (and individual works therein) in relation to each other, as well as in relation to the mainstream--an ingenious way of skirting the problem of grouping individual works under one or two (or even three or four) all-encompassing labels. This is especially important at a time when so much is being written which seems to defy neat labels.

The dispute over what constitutes the dividing line between science fiction and fantasy is a continuous one with a long history. As publishers attempt to categorize works in order to increase reader familiarity and comfort, many pseudo-subdivisions of the super-genre (that which describes both fantasy and science fiction) are being conjured into existence. Readers are being induced into judging a book by its cover and accepting the implied genre divisions therein. However, the question of literary distinctions also exists. Clearly, the full range of science fiction and fantasy constitutes more than can be comfortably confined to a single genre. The question also arises of what to do with those works which seem to cross the boundaries defining the fields. Perhaps the best place to begin, therefore,

is to identify what it is besides myth-use that binds these fields together and then seek to make distinctions.

As I have discovered, one theme runs through almost all of the secondary literature. This is that science fiction and fantasy create a certain "feel" in the reader. Hawthorne talked about the presence of the "Marvellous." Many writers mention the sense of "wonder" engendered in science fiction, especially in the earlier days of the genre. For an indication of its import, one need only glance at the titles of the period magazines in the "Age of Wonder": *Amazing Stories*, *Astounding Science Fiction*, *Science Wonder Stories*, *Air Wonder Stories*, and *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, to name a few. Fantasy to some degree takes its name from the sense of the "fantastic" which it generates. This sense of wonder, of the marvelous, of the fantastic is certainly one of the primary attributes of both science fiction and fantasy, yet the way writers achieve that sense may be seen as distinct. To best understand this, we must first define exactly what we mean by the "fantastic" (quite a task in itself).

Perhaps as an indication of the opinion of the traditional critics, the 1965 *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* does not even mention the fantastic or the marvelous, or fantasy or science fiction, or even gothicism for that matter. However, its discussion of Romanticism includes the twentieth century and a neoromanticism "reviving 'everything that reinforces our irrationalism' (Malraux)" (Preminger ed., 721). This does sound somewhat like a keyword for our topic, the irrational. Gary Wolfe

in his *Critical Terms* defines the fantastic as "Tzvetan Todorov's sense of the uncertainty, when reading an apparently fantastic work, as to whether the impossible events are really occurring or whether they may be rationally explained." Wolfe goes on to comment that as the uncertainty is resolved, the work belongs to "the related genres of the Marvelous (the supernatural accepted) or the Uncanny (the supernatural explained)." He also talks about the French scholar Caillois's use of the term as a "'break in reality,' . . . characterized by the intrusion of the supernatural or marvelous into an otherwise well-ordered world" (37). Finally, Eric Rabkin in what is quickly becoming the standard on the subject, *The Fantastic in Literature*, seeks carefully to pin down his version of the fantastic: "One of the key distinguishing marks of the fantastic is that the perspectives enforced by the ground rules of the narrative world must be diametrically contradicted" (8). Rabkin goes on to distinguish the fantastic from other "non-normal occurrences." He mentions the unexpected, when an ordinary occurrence is not expected but is still basically pedestrian, using as an example the ordinary character not before mentioned entering a story in the tenth chapter. He also mentions the dis-expected, "those elements which the text had diverted one from thinking about but which, it later turns out, are in perfect keeping with the ground rules of the narrative" (9). He suggests jokes employing double-entendre as an example of this and mentions this tactic's

frequent appearance in works of the fantastic. Finally he identifies the anti-expected, which brings the presence of the fantastic. Employing a geometric metaphor to develop the differing senses of the unexpected, he remarks: "The truly fantastic occurs when the ground rules of a narrative are forced to make a 180 degree reversal, when prevailing perspectives are directly contradicted. . . . Less complete reversals, say a 90 degree turnabout (like the dis-expected punchline of a joke) or a 120 degree turnabout . . ., participate in the complex of feelings of surprise, shock, delight, fear, and so on that marks the fantastic, but are not themselves truly fantastic; they are flavored by the fantastic" (12). And last, Rabkin names the irrelevant as distinct from the fantastic, distinguishes the apparently irrelevant from the actually irrelevant, and concludes that the apparently irrelevant may or may not be fantastic in its own right.

With this brief survey of some of the relevant definitions, some sifting is in order. One consensus sees the fantastic as a feeling of uncertainty as to the reality or unreality of a work (in other words, is there a logical explanation for this or is it just weird?). The other considers it as the feeling achieved from a shift in perspective; more specifically a diametrically opposed viewpoint to that previously seen in the framework. But this shift is actually an attack of unreality in relation to the reality previously established by the framework. So now we have the fantastic as an isolated instance of unreality within a

larger reference framework. How does this function within the framework of a novel? According to Rabkin, we can for instructive purposes establish a continuum of the fantastic to provide a scale for the number of fantastic occurrences within a given work in any field. The problem I see in Rabkin is that he does not confront the origin of the fantastic in a work when defining its level. For example, a story could be set in a totally fantastic world with a totally fantastic set of rules, yet it seems that as long as these rules remain constant and the storyline basically straightforward and non-reflexive, the only fantastic occurrence lies in the initial move to the story framework from the reality framework we are in. This story would then be classified as less fantastic than others in much more mundane worlds with a couple of fantastic occurrences in the plotline.

My view is that the fantastic, as described by Rabkin, has four major sources. There is a level of fantastic in the creation of the world itself. Tolkien's act of sub-creation can involve a world entirely divergent from our own, or one similar in most respects with one or two unexpected (fantastic) differences. It may be here that the best distinction between fantasy and science fiction lies. Much science fiction prides itself on its extrapolative ability. It tries to change one or two parameters in the real world and its rules and thus create an entirely new environment for its characters to interact in. The world may be quite different, but it is all logically derived from the one or

two fundamental changes which, while being pseudo-scientific, do not have to be entirely logical. From the fantastic viewpoint, those changes clearly defined by logic might give rise to the fantastic at first appearance, but with the logical underpinnings revealed, this would quickly fade. The only fantastic present in the story would be the few initial world-changes which initiate the story. Fantasy on the other hand has a tendency to make wholesale changes in the modern reference frame the reader commences from. Magic and the supernatural are often present in conjunction with a retreat from today's technological society. With the exception of the characters (and even they are in a more archetypal form), little we see in fantasy would seem to reflect modern technological life. If we define the modern framework as one based on science and technology, then fantasy can be seen to create the fantastic by the refutation of an entire framework and the introduction of a diametrically opposed one. This compares with science fiction's refutation of a part of the framework, but development of the whole still within that framework. It is in this sense that I see a spectrum of the fantastic as specifically relevant to the differentiation between science fiction and fantasy.

Yet there remain the other three sources of the fantastic that Rabkin and others deal with. They discuss events such as the unexpected interference of a god (or figure of equal power, a literal *deus ex machina*) in the plotline, which could be properly defined as fantastic. I see this more specifically as the

fantastic in storyline or plot. They also call attention to the noticeable amount of the fantastic in *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll. Here they especially appreciate the constantly changing rules of the game. Just when one thinks one understands the world and its rules, something new happens which redefines one or the other, or both. Clearly the fantastic is present here too. This is what I loosely term the fantastic in world-wobble (in other words, derived from the author's refusal to supply his characters with a level or steady playing field). And finally, they talk about the fantastic when a character shifts frame of reference on his own and all of a sudden addresses readers of the book with the full understanding that he is just a fictional character. Once again an indubitably fantastic occurrence. I tend to group it and others like it into the fantastic of the self-reflexive. These other forms of the fantastic, which Rabkin does not make a point of differentiating, have one characteristic in common for my purpose. They are equally at home in a work of science fiction or fantasy. Authors of both kinds have a right to self-reflexivity, and certainly both will use anti-expected plot occurrences to keep readers alert. And the change in world rules may be accomplished by literal change of planets or times in science fiction, or planes or realities in fantasy. The fantastic spectrum, by combining all forms of the fantastic, loses its viability as a useful vehicle for distinguishing between modern fantasy and science fiction. On

the other hand, I am convinced that the use of a spectrum of the fantastic in world creation is a necessary strategy for that self-same purpose.

Another defining characteristic I perceive in both fields is something I term the level of rationalization. What I mean by this is the amount of logical exposition and rational underpinnings which support the worlds in science fiction and in fantasy. For example, the "wonder" full serial *Flash Gordon* and others like it were replete with art-deco space ships and ray guns which remained unexplained. How these worked was not discussed or implied in a rational context, with the only exception a passing mention using technical-sounding terms with no grounds in reality. Such works rank very low on my proposed rationalization scale. The writings of Anne McCaffery, conversely, feature among other things a lost colony whose technology has degenerated due to absence of contact. However, upon arrival colonists had used genetic engineering to mutate small flying lizards with some telepathic ability into large dragons with which they were able to defend their planet from the natural disaster of "thread," spores from a nearby wandering planet. Although from the characters' viewpoint some of this background is magical and mystical at best, readers recognize the scientific connections. And although some points are not strictly supportable within the present technological framework, they do remain a part of the framework, and are rationally explained with that in mind. *The Dragonriders of Pern* more clearly ranks near

the high end of the scale of rationalization. By the same token, a world in which magic exists, is accepted, and is used but is never really thought about, would be lower on the scale than one where magic exists but has an elucidated or implied structure of rules governing its use and an understanding, in some sense, of its origins.

Within this focus, my "scale" would seem intellectually biased towards science fiction, with the implication that science fiction is rational and carefully worked out, while fantasy is irrational and merely pieced together without a logical framework supporting it. Such could be the conclusion of the science fiction critic. From the fantasist's perspective, the real value of these works lies in the creation of myths and archetypal stories. Clearly, he would say, fantasy ranks higher on the archetypal or myth scale. Our figures are fairly unadulterated referents of pieces of the human psyche, while science fiction tends to muddle these behind screens of technology and rationalization. We are the much purer form. In their own way, the fantasists would be absolutely right. However, this is not how I attempt to define the scale per se. It carries a dual meaning. One portion is linked to the rationality of worlds, and as such, one grounded in the modern science/technology framework is more rational than one grounded in its mythical/magical cousin. But it also deals with the level of elucidated rationality of whichever framework was involved. For example,

Tolkien's Middle Earth, with its well defined history, languages, races, magic, and the origins and *raison d'être* for all these qualities, would rate high within fantasy on this scale. What this scale does achieve is some view of the middle ground, that maligned and misgrouped area often collectively labeled science fantasy. The first two works mentioned, the ghastly *Flash* and the great *Dragonriders*, have at times both been consigned to this area. *Flash* is a story strongly in touch with its attempt (albeit non- or sub-literary) at fairly pure archotyping (a technique of fantasy) garbed in the trappings of science. *Dragonriders* on the other hand displays trappings of fantasy (a low technology, feudal society with a warrior class mounted on dragons) with a science fictional structure. This scale would rank *Flash* down towards fantasy even with its scientific trappings, while distinguishing McCaffery's work as closer to science fiction. Unfortunately, to some it becomes a simple matter: *Flash* is fantasy with a science fiction background, hence science fantasy; *Dragonriders* is science fiction with a fantasy background, hence science fantasy. And as a result we have an unworkable sub-genre which contains *Flash Gordon* and *The Dragonriders of Pern*. Is it any wonder that science fantasy, the crossing-over between the two fields, is often greeted with confusion if not outright derision?

The final touchstone for differentiation of fields is the set of "rules" which each field has a tendency to define for itself. For instance, science fiction devotees declare that the

sub-created world must rest on logical supports consistent with known scientific knowledge. It must also possess rational underpinnings based on careful extrapolations from the modern scientific/technical framework and their interpolation into the sub-created framework, given one or two accepted (especially conventional) changes. They further qualify that these changes must at least have a technical or rigorous feel. Anything less is playing with the net down (fantasy) and beneath contempt. Fantasy on the other hand has a strong tendency to deal with non-technological societies, especially medieval ones, inhabited by magic and mystical creatures and depicting bold panoramas within which good and evil are opposed on an epic scale. Archetypal quests, companies, heroes, and, of course, heroines are the players on this vast stage. These are by no means strict rules, but general tendencies. One might be tempted to use a final scale of technologic level for differentiation, but this would be redundant where it would hold value, and where it was not redundant it would be often inaccurate. The level of rationalization, based in our technological society, is already biased towards well constructed rationalized worlds. At the same time the scale of the fantastic we have proposed will accord higher rank to non-technological worlds because of their many unexpected divergences from our own. The problem with inaccuracy arises because there are some excellent science fiction and fantasy works which would be correctly identified by the first

two scales but be labeled incorrectly by the technologic scale. For example, Lester del Rey's "The Day is Done" is the story of one of the last Neanderthals trying to exist in an increasingly Cro-Magnon world. From its level of the fantastic and its level of rationalization it would appear to be science fiction (it is generally so regarded), but on a technological scale it would seem to be fantasy because the setting is primitive.

To this point we have two relative scales: one measuring the level of the fantastic in world creation on which fantasy inclines toward the high end and science fiction towards the low; another assessing the level of rationalization where science fiction takes the high bias. In both instances there is some crossover, and each scale is also useful within the genres being discussed. We also have the "rules" which seem to exist but are not playing a major part in our definition process (they tend to be too ephemeral and not global enough). But what does happen to those works which slip through the cracks, especially those defined by the rules? Arguably, some of the farthest reaching and most deeply engrossing works in either field are those which have crossed into the domains of both.

One such work is a relatively new one, *The Book of the New Sun* by Gene Wolfe. Published as four separate novels starting in 1980, with a fifth added later, it was described in a publisher's blurb as "a stunning blend of the lyric extravagance of fantasy and the keen edge of science fiction, meeting in a future so distant that it seems like the ancient past" (Wolfe, *Shadow of*

the Torturer). Robert Scholes, implicitly representing the "field" of science fantasy and using the preceding blurb as a tool, equates the "lyric extravagance" with "language spinning discourse out of itself, words flowing from previous words, sounds echoing sounds, textuality rampant, semiosis unlimited, narrativity unbounded . . . in principle interminable, affecting closure rather than effecting it" (Slusser ed., *Intersections*, 5). This echoes the softer, more myth-based feel from fantasy. The "keen edge" of science fiction is the cold rationality and logic driving its more technical writing style. The future is generally the domain of science fiction while the past is often that of fantasy, so the blurb clearly makes an effort to define at least a branch of science fantasy as one of contrasts and juxtapositions. Reconciling these divergent tendencies is one major task of studies in this field. At the same time the energy generated by the tension between the two may be one of the best features of science fantasy. The first novel of the Wolfe tetralogy is described by Aldiss and David Wingrove as "an extremely mannered novel that reads like a fantasy." They see its appeal as one of "intelligent, meaningful sword and sorcery--appealing thus to our wondering as well as our more thoughtful selves" (*Trillion Year Spree*, 423). This may be the best reason for the success of the integration that is well executed science fantasy. It is able to deliver the myth at its full power while maintaining the logical precision of impact

found in the best science fiction. It is a global effect, working to move both sides of the brain simultaneously. Even though science fantasy may not observe the common "rules" of either genre, it can satisfy the requirements of good literature. At its best it is possibly greater than the sum of its parts. The synergy involved in the absence of restrictions on the creative mind of the author may lead to the best works the super-genre may produce.

III.

The differentiation which has occurred between science fiction/fantasy and what I have called the mainstream, and between science fiction and fantasy, is also present in important form within the two fields. This distinction may be most effectively noted through the study of some of the key literary elements involved in each genre. By examining the construction, use, and relative importance of characterization, world-creation (setting), plot, and style, one may see the presence of two groups within both fantasy and science fiction. Parallels between these divisions in each field may also be noted.

To define most effectively both the elements and the divisions, I have chosen four modern authors who, in my opinion, are representative of the best in each of the areas I am examining. These authors have won both critical and popular acclaim within the field, although they are recent enough that

they have not attracted the widespread notice outside of the field given to older, well-known authors (Tolkien and Asimov, for example). I will first work to define the elements from a general, theoretical perspective, and then to illuminate the details using examples from my four authors in particular, as well as from the genres in general.

An acknowledged traditional authority, E. M. Forster (in his *Aspects of the Novel*) made an important distinction concerning character: "We may divide characters into flat and round" (46). Flat characters he saw in their purest form as "constructed round a single idea or quality" (47). He sees their advantages as being easily recognizable on an emotional level by the reader, and easily remembered afterwards, in part because of their ability to progress through many occurrences essentially unchanged (48). In comparison, Forster sees round characters as having more depth. While discussing Jane Austen's characters as an example, he describes them as "ready for an extended life, for a life which the scheme of her books seldom requires them to lead, and that is why they lead their actual lives so satisfactorily" (52). This general division of characters is solidly entrenched as a traditional perspective. It can be defined as follows. Those characters which are based on one or very few common principles and remain basically unchanging throughout the story are flat or two-dimensional. Those which have a more complex background and progress and mature as the story unfolds are well-rounded or

three-dimensional characters. A problem arises within science fiction and fantasy with a character type which is somewhere in between. Because both genres deal so much in myth, one will often find familiar figures from myth populating the stories. One may find a myth figure of the lost king, an adopted peasant child who is actually the heir and goes through obvious changes as he shifts from one role to the other. There may be evidence for both sides, as the character is often well described by the one idea previously mentioned but does go through the progression to maturity seen in round characters. The distinction depends to a great degree on how this character is handled by the author. I will use this terminology. If the character matures in a relatively unmotivated fashion, merely following standardized formulas, then I will refer to it as a stereotypical character. If on the other hand there is careful delineation, and a fullness of contemplation of movement (with perhaps distinguishing and relevant differences based on the situation the character exists in), then I will refer to the character as an archetypal character. In both instances the old myth structure is being brought into play and a general myth formula may be followed, but in one case the character involved is basically flat, and in the other it is more well rounded.

Of all the characters in the works I have studied, Stephen Donaldson's probably stand out as the most fully rounded characters. The two major characters in Donaldson's works are Thomas Covenant and Terisa Morgan (in *The Chronicles of Thomas*

Covenant, The Second Chronicles of Thomas Covenant, and Mordant's Need respectively). These characters have several things in common. First, both are residents of our world, as we know it, who are unexpectedly drawn off into another world, the sub-created world. Both have the difficulty of what to believe in. Finally, both have large scale personality troubles as a result of outside events which have affected their lives. Thomas Covenant is a leper, the fact which both marks and makes his life. Because of his leprosy, he has lost his wife and child (they moved away, concerned about contagion), lost his contact with society, and to some degree lost himself. As a leper, Covenant must always be on guard. In the fight against leprosy, apathy is deadly. Because of the loss of feeling one must always be checking to see if anything has gone wrong with one's body, for the pain sensors will not give their usual warning signals. If one becomes lax, then a minor cut or scrape can become gangrenous, leading to the loss of limb and eventually of life. Terisa, on the other hand, has trouble believing in her own existence. Her father is a wealthy man with no effective means of expressing love for his daughter outside of material gifts. Terisa receives little in the way of attention, unless she does something wrong; her father is always too busy (her mother had died while she was very young). When she does something to embarrass him, he locks her away in a closet where she can do so no longer. As she matures she keeps with her a feeling that she

is fading (the feeling she first found in the closet as a defense). She constantly keeps many mirrors about her so that she can look to make certain she is still there. She works (for almost nothing) for a preacher whose commitment is to feed the poor. The preacher is a man with laudable ideals who cannot effectively implement them. In short, Terisa floats through life with no friends, making no impact on the world, living in an impersonal environment constructed for her by her father.

Both characters are brought to new worlds fulfilling their best dreams and worst nightmares. Covenant is healed of his leprosy by the power of The Land. But if he loses his hard-earned habits and then returns to his original world he will suffer greatly. So, Covenant decides he must disbelieve what is happening to him. He experiences a series of events where he becomes the prime figure able to help save The Land, yet he refuses to believe it really exists, and so his actions are not really important. Terisa is delivered into Mordant as a savior, yet she knows not how to help those who called her. The mirrors she relied on so much at home are here the source of powerful magic. Anyone who looks into a mirror reflecting himself will effectively cease to exist. Suddenly Terisa has impact on a world, but she still has no self-confidence. She can only see herself as others view her, finding reality in the actions of others. As such she is a prime target for a manipulating woman chaser who, through flattery and physical contact, helps the shy girl feel that she exists. At the same time, Terisa becomes

convinced that she doesn't have a past, that she was only created by the mirror which brought her to Mordant, so that her actions don't matter. Thus, Donaldson has created two characters not sure of the reality of the worlds they are in, not sure of the true effects of their actions and their importance, and not sure of themselves. These two characters are required to grow and find themselves and their place in both worlds in order to successfully reach a happy conclusion. In essence, the stories are solely about the development of their main characters and may easily be read with that perspective in mind.

The leading characters of Orson Scott Card which attract us are deceiving at first glance. They appear to be facile stereotypes in programmed roles, but as their stories develop we find this is not so. Ender Wiggin, the hero of *Ender's Game* and *Speaker for the Dead*, is an excellent example. Ender lives on an Earth which has narrowly escaped being conquered by an alien race labeled the "buggers." As in many stories of juvenile science fiction, Ender is possibly the great hope for the humans. He is brought through an accelerated development process by a military cabal, and we watch as they try to turn an innocent and talented boy into a great general. Ender has two older siblings who did not possess appropriate qualifications. The oldest, Peter, had the killer instinct but lacked the empathy to enter the mind of the enemy. His sister Valentine was empathetic, but could not harm anyone. Ender seems to embody the best of both qualities. He

can do great harm when pressed, but only in the short term, and afterwards he hates himself for it. Again as in the juveniles, Ender is trained through a series of war games, such as many readers could envision themselves playing. His trainers work to make him into the best fighter, while maintaining his empathy. His maturation occurs at an extremely young age, and Ender (together with his brother and sister) is forced to accept adult responsibility at the cost of a lost childhood. Ender's final test is a mock invasion of the "bugger" system--a full-scale simulation which becomes more and more difficult for Ender as the killing mounts. Worse, he begins to be bothered by dreams of the lifeforms he is killing in this simulation. He finally gets to the alien home world, controlling his forces from a distance, and in order to quit, he adopts Peter's total ruthlessness, a kill-at-all-costs strategy which he feels will convince his instructors to let him go. He destroys the homeworld, completing the annihilation of the enemy, only to be told that what he has been doing is not a simulation, but the real war against the enemy. Ender is a hero. At this point a lesser work would end. But Ender feels nothing like a hero. All he sees is genocide, the destruction of an entire race over what he discovers to be a problem in communication. He retreats with his sister to colonize a new planet and there finds a message to him from the other race which had been sending him the dreams during the battles. Ender anonymously writes a book explaining the misunderstanding and the other race's perspective, and assumes a new role for himself as

caretaker of the future. Ender has matured into his own person, distinct from the pattern from which he emerged.

Jamie Teague is another example of this type of character. Card's loosely-linked collection of stories about a post-holocaust society, *The Folk of the Fringe*, opens with a group of city-bred Mormons persecuted and expelled from one of the few remaining civilized eastern towns. They are found and saved by Jamie Teague, survivor/scavenger extraordinaire. This wily mercenary, with the practical experience to survive where idealists fail to tread, is a familiar figure in post-holocaust fiction. Jamie, a self-defined loner, brings the confused and battered group, with their idealistic notions and dreams, along a hard road to an isolated community of people trying to survive in the hills. However, Jamie has a history which prevents him from truly becoming a part of the group. The familiar separation is one of an inability on the part of the city-bred to understand the operative frontier morals (such as killing to avoid being killed later). Jamie's problem is a more serious one. In childhood his parents forced him to lock his brother and sister in a bathroom for a period of years. As his unbalanced parents struggled on, and even forgot about the two other children, Jamie continued to feed them and keep them in captivity. Finally Jamie reported his parents to the authorities. His parents were then incarcerated, but his brother and sister were ruined by the experience, so Jamie had effectively destroyed every member of

his family. Jamie does grow and change by his exposure to the group he guides, so much so that in the end, he joins in their idealistic journey to a better life in Utah (where the group hopes the Mormon church has been able to maintain a civilized society). Once more, Card has taken an oft seen character and made use of the familiar expectations for that character to bring readers back a step to a fuller realization concerning both the ideas Card is presenting and the preconceived ideas of the reader.

David Brin, by comparison, while creating fresh and interesting characters does so in a more conventional way. In *The Postman*, a book formed from a series of previously published connected short stories (a great golden age tradition) concerning post-holocaust Earth, Brin's connecting figure is a survivor. Gordon, like Jamie, has developed a frontier ethics system to face harsh realities that more civilized systems were not designed to cope with. As he wanders looking for life and hope, he comes across a mail truck whose driver earlier had been killed by bandits. Recognizing a potential confidence game, Gordon takes the uniform and mail bag of the carrier and creates a story of a reviving government back in St. Paul City. He has been sent as an envoy to establish a mail route, bringing back to life the lines of communication so important to civilized existence. Gordon uses this identity to gain access as a loner to towns which are understandably suspicious about outsiders. His original motives, the desire to get food and shelter, were basic ones; but as

Gordon sees the hope he brings to people in the towns he visits, he grows to fill the role and works to establish a small mail system in the Oregon area in which he lives. Although the postman approach is a new angle, emphasizing the importance of communication as a civilizing force, the basic character move from self-interest to a more altruistic point of view is not an uncommon one.

In his galactic scale Progenitors series, specifically *Startide Rising*, David Brin again adopts a fresh approach to established character archetypes. *Startide Rising* takes place on board an Earth exploration vessel, the *Streaker*, which has been forced to land on a water planet while escaping from a large number of much more powerful alien races. The *Streaker* had discovered a large derelict fleet, which seems to be important to the political power structure of the universe. As the small vessel hides, a great battle occurs among the different factions as the political alliance system is Darwinian and chaotic, and the Earth ranks near the disrespected end of the scale. On board are many familiar characters. Creideiki, the ship's captain, a courageous and clever individual with daring insight, has already helped the ship escape capture so it could flee to Kithrup where it is presently hiding. He tries to follow Earth's orders: keep the fleet location secret and somehow escape to bring news of the find home for Earth to distribute in the fairest way. Akki is a young midshipman on his first voyage, eagerly supporting his

captain and desiring to do the right thing. Takkata-Jim is the new vice-captain, leader of a small and favored faction which sees itself as slightly superior. To him, the situation is hopeless; the captain is taking dangerous chances when he should be negotiating with the warring fleets for the Earth ship's free passage. This course of action would mean betraying information about the derelict fleet, but to him this is not important, just something the silly galactics should be left alone to squabble over and not in which to involve Earth. And K'tha-Jon is a petty officer, the strong man for the faction who has a dangerous background but is being used by Takatta-Jim for his purposes because K'tha-Jon's strength and power to intimidate are useful. Yet it is not certain who is using whom in this relationship. These are the sorts of characters one will see often in an interaction under pressure in a difficult situation. The unique aspect is that they are all dolphins. In this universe, parent races nurture promising new intelligences. In this instance man has raised the dolphins, and chimpanzees as well, to spacefaring levels of intelligence. Such a tactic adds dimension to the characters as they follow dolphin patterns of thought and engage in dolphin-related psychological battles, such as rescue fever (a primal reaction to sudden stress similar to the beaching reaction we know). There also are several humans on board. While not legally in charge, they are patrons whose advice carries much weight but who also may represent a threat to authority (especially usurped authority). Finally, the process of "uplift"

(the raising and nurturing of prospective intelligences) involves genetic engineering on a continual basis. One group of the dolphins (the vice-captain's faction) is a special variant, somewhat unauthorized. This adds to the instability and deeper character symbolism.

David Eddings works in much the same way as Brin, using different perspectives on well-used character-types to create fresh, interesting characters. Eddings' *The Belgariad* is an epic fantasy in the modern tradition formed around the quest motif. Because it is written in the mode of the legendary unfolding of a long-propheesied event, it is important that the characters bring clearly to mind the mythical archetypes from which they are derived, and they do. Two prime examples are Garion and Polgara. Garion is the lost heir. He grows up in humble surroundings, the repository of powers and obligations (as well as a destiny) he cannot comprehend. Polgara is his aunt, a homey, motherly woman who does the cooking and cleaning at the farm where they live. But this peaceful life is to be shattered by events which force Polgara and her father, the great wizard Belgarath, to take Garion and flee, and begin to reveal the truth. His Aunt Pol is the mighty sorceress of legend, Polgara. Garion is the long-lost heir to the kingship of Riva. And there are people who want to kill him because of what he is propheesied to do. Garion starts as a child excited by the great adventure. He then comes to fear the dangers and responsibilities he must bear. Plaintive at times, he

resents being the unwilling recipient of destiny's role. He gradually matures as events progress, learning to accept responsibility which is his, even if he didn't request it. He becomes a good, but human, leader and King, and fulfills his role in prophecy as the series ends.

The quest and the lost king are both recognizable archetypes. Eddings' work holds interest in several ways: the interplay between the classic medieval form and his own interpretation of these archetypal characters, the relative importance and emphasis of the differing members of the company which is formed to help complete the quest, as well as the use of almost satirical extremes of some archetypes, compared with the softening and subtle changes brought about in others. Eddings is aware of the referents his characters will suggest, and it is his manipulation of these referents which brings a freshness to the archetypal characters he creates.

We may view these characters as actors who must by nature have a stage upon which to act. In the creation of the stage, or world, several factors may be brought into play. First is the element of the fantastic in that creation which was discussed earlier. Albert Wendland in *Science, Myth, and the Fictional Creation of Alien Worlds* discusses two different facets of world creation. He sees a scientific conceptual world as one which is built through theory in an abstract sense: "solely logical and scientific constructions, almost animated essays which are appreciated primarily by human reason and not by a fuller range

of emotions and reactions. The characters in such books have contemporary personalities (if they have personalities at all) and wander ghostlike, or robotlike, in a logically conceptualized setting" (64). By comparison, he describes human perceptual worlds which stress "sensory perception, the 'feeling' of a world, its emotional impression, the reactions to the impartial physical data: what is felt when a human is on the planet" (62). He does caution that "descriptions using only perceptual means can lead to worlds which are not alien at all but just pictures of ourselves: the subjective worlds discussed earlier, products of psychological desires and fears. Such worlds--like those based on nightmares, traditional myths, or already experienced Terran landscapes--are even less alien than the scientific conceptual worlds" (65-66). He concludes that "while one set of alien-creation methods used in extreme can lead to only 'sketchy' essay-like logical worlds, the other in extreme can lead to self-enclosed labyrinths of psychological obsessions" (66). These different emphases on the conceptual and perceptual are by no means mutually exclusive. In fact, some amount of both must be present to avoid the extremes, though both the content and style of mix may vary. Wendland describes these two techniques with science fiction in mind, but I propose that the concept holds equal merit for fantasy. The distinction is that instead of scientifically rigorous conception, fantasy will reveal mythically rigorous conception, with the absence of perceptual

influence the key common factor.

Eddings' work will serve as an example of a conceptually built world. Perhaps I had better add that when I discuss world-creation I mean to include all aspects of a world, political and sociological as well as physical. From a geologic standpoint, the world is Earth with a rearranged geography. From a technologic standpoint it is straight from the age of chivalry. It is a time when horses and wagons are the advanced form of locomotion, and battles are fought with sword and arrow. The society is predominantly an agrarian feudal one. All of this is *de rigueur* for epic fantasy (involving the archetypal quest). What becomes more important is the presence of magic as an innate ability, as compared to one which is learned. As a distinguishing factor, the population is basically human, although of distinctly varied races. The most important aspect is the conflict which is built into the world mythos. A dispute among the Gods led to a division in the worldline at a point in the past. Two prophecies arose representing the possible outcomes of this division. Union is supposed to take place following a final battle between representatives of these prophecies. What is distinctive here is that the prophecies are sentient, selecting and guiding representatives to the battle under rules of a compact between the two. The point is also carefully made concerning the relative nature of this battle. It is not necessarily one of good versus evil, but rather one between conflicting viewpoints, each of which legitimately considers its side as right. The entire world

is revealed from an objective viewpoint. The characters' perceptions may be gleaned from the text, but the characters are definitely not the main mode of communicating the world's existence and parameters.

In direct contrast, both "The Land" and "Mordant," Donaldson's worlds, are quite perceptual in definition. The Land embodies the common features of much modern fantasy. It is an agrarian, feudal society with medieval arms and an earthlike environment. However, The Land's magic is a combination of earth magic and icon magic. In a symbol-laden environment, perception maintains as much value as physical reality. An excellent example of this is a race called the Bloodguard. These defenders of The Land and its rulers have such an intense devotion and sense of honor and duty that they never need sleep and are effectively immortal. However, when the "Illearth stone" perverts a single bloodguard into betrayal all of the rest are affected. Their perfect vigilance as guards is lost because of a single flaw. In a harkening back to Arthurian legend, as the land goes politically, so goes The Land. As the evil Lord Foul gains power, the land in The Land suffers. The magic dries up and blows away. The healing hurtloam which cured Covenant's leprosy loses its powers and the Bloodguard are lost. As the political outlook becomes barren, so too the land itself parches. From a myth standpoint, the creator of The Land closed his universe using a firmament based on white gold, but he sealed evil inside his

creation in the person of Lord Foul. The creator cannot directly intervene without destroying the foundation upon which The Land is built, but he can introduce Covenant to try to save The Land from the evil which was in himself. Covenant's power derives from his existence as an outsider and, magically, from his wedding band of white gold which contains the "wild magic." The description of The Land is done solely from Covenant's perspective. Because he refuses to believe in its objective existence, his perceptions are key and distinct in creating a subjective reality. The constant presence of symbolic imagery and rather obvious naming (the evil threat is Lord Foul and our unbelieving hero aptly is [doubting] Thomas) serves to reinforce this feeling of subjectivity. The human perceptual style of world creation is pushed towards the extreme as only fantasy can do.

While relying less on direct symbolism and more on archetypes, the world of *Mordant's Need* also favors the perceptual over the conceptual, although less so than *Covenant*. Mordant is a civilized feudal nation in between two barbarian hordes of different breeds. In Mordant the magic is in mirrors. People and things are translated through them to other worlds and other places on Mordant's world. Both an innate talent and some training are required for mastery of mirrors. The training is in the making and shaping of mirrors (mirrors that view other worlds are not flat) and the talent is in the using of them. The King of Mordant has gathered most of the imagers (mirror magicians) to a large school in Mordant (the Congery). Together

they conduct research, and by being bound to King Joyse do not act against him in wars. Joyse has been a political King, playing his two more powerful neighbors off on each other to enable Mordant's existence, and introducing the concept of trade as an alternative means of existence to conquest. However, Joyse's friend and top imager, Adept Havelock, has lost control of his mental faculties in the final battle with the last evil imager (seemingly vanquished) and the peace and prosperity gained have been broken by mysterious occurrences and alliances. Through all this the King remains inactive, apparently uncaring, thus giving rise to Mordant's need. Again the view of the world is entirely that of the outsider Terisa. Events are colored by her changing perceptions of reality. In many ways Terisa, and the jumbled prophecy (a collection of images, unclear by definition) she appears in, define the world. As such it too bears the mantle of the human perceptual world.

Card's worlds also are more perception than conception, although not in so direct a way as the fantasies can be. The universe of Ender Wiggin is one in which spacefaring travel does exist. Man has just recently developed the means of interstellar travel. Mankind is driven by the events of first contact with the "buggers." They have arrived in man's solar system and precipitated a war, refusing to acknowledge man's attempts at communication. The "buggers" were basically thrashing mankind, until in a climactic battle Mazer Rackham somehow pulled a

miraculous victory out of certain defeat. Man, having lost confidence and fearing a real attack (as this force seemed more exploratory than military), has launched a counter-attack against the aliens' home. Earth has grouped itself under a unified government for this purpose, having been frightened enough to forget (for the moment) petty differences of nationality. Like the characters, this setting of man unified in a battle against severe odds is a facile and all-too-regular background. However, our view of this is given by Ender Wiggin from the perspective of a child forced into maturity too early, supplemented by the views of his sister Valentine detailing a course of events parallel to his actions (again from an overly mature ultra-intelligent child). Finally, for comparison, commentaries from those guiding Ender's development provide an adult view of the occurrences. Without Ender's (and Valentine's) perception this universe would be unquestionably different to the reader. This, in combination with some of the evidenced subjectivity in naming (Ender, Valentine, Peter, and the "buggers"), lends credence to the perspective that Ender's world shows more influence of the perceptual side of world-creation, although as science fiction it has less freedom to partake in rampant subjectivism.

The worlds of *Folk of the Fringe* and Brin's *The Postman* are probably the most difficult to define in these terms because they are so close to our own world as to not qualify as alien-world creation fiction. Both take place soon after a holocaust on planet earth and deal with individual struggles to put the pieces

of life and civilization back together. The key difference lies in the emphasis of the writer. Card writes about individual people (and an individual group of people, the Mormons collectively) and their reactions and interactions given the initial set of conditions. This tends to color the setting toward the human perceptual style. Brin, on the other hand, though using one lead character (while Card uses many different individual stories), is more interested in the effects on society and its means of putting things back together. It may be the physical actions of the "postman" Gordon that are followed, but it is the ideas of communication and its relationship to civilized life and mutual understanding, and of man's ever present hope and willingness to believe in the face of despair that are being examined. As such the setting is detailed from a more conceptual point, as a locale for the theoretical interaction of ideas, rather than as a subjective environment for the byplay of individuals.

Brin's *Startide Rising* much more clearly fits the mold of the scientific conceptual world (or universe in this instance). This is a universe in the comfortably distant future. Faster-than-light travel permits a galaxy-wide society. The key defining feature is the uplift. As we recall, this is the process by which a patron race genetically engineers a lower, primitive race, enabling it to achieve the intelligence to join the group of starfaring races. In payment for this uplift, the client race

serves as indentured servants to its patrons until the patron race is satisfied that full uplift has been achieved and fair restitution made. Clearly a situation rife with possibilities. Another feature is the presence of the Library, a collection of knowledge started by the first race (according to legend) and passed on and added to by succeeding races. Outlets are made available by an "unbiased" Library commission made up of representatives of the major patron races. The Library is so ancient and has become so large that none of the races does independent research any longer, but instead simply satisfy their needs in the Library (since in the long course of history somebody has almost certainly had the idea before and improved upon it). Mankind has just recently emerged into this universe (very, very recently on its time scale). Man apparently had no patron race, a wolfling species. Other groups prefer to think that Man's patrons deserted him at some early to middle stage of uplifting. Since the chimpanzees and the dolphins have been uplifted by Man, he is accorded the status of a patron race, but he is definitely a destabilizing influence on a very delicately balanced dynamic equilibrium. The political structure is a Darwinian one with alliances constantly forming and breaking off, with the races banding together every so often when one race or family of races (patrons, clients, former clients, and their new clients) becomes too powerful. One may recall the power structure in Herbert's *Dune* with the knowledge of the Library replacing spice as the key to power. The Earth races are awarded a few

planets to colonize, and remain unique in their insistence upon original research and general refusal to use the technologies of the Library they cannot understand independently (even though they can easily follow recipes to build them). It is into this environment that the *Streaker's* discovery of the derelict fleet is introduced, definitely upsetting the balance.

The information on this universe is presented from many points of view. Brin is careful to allow the reader to see through the eyes of many different races at many different times in order both to grasp the objective world-view and to glimpse the personalities of some of the many races engaged in this conflict. Yet this whole environment, with its complex manipulations and wheels within wheels, is clearly a theoretical construct. The reader must constantly reevaluate the environment as each new piece of data is brought to light (or handed down by the author). As such, this work pushes the limiting extreme of the scientific conceptual world with the proviso that some fresh characters exist and have some motivated role to play in the story.

The story is, in the words of E. M. Forster, "the lowest and simplest of literary organisms. Yet it is the highest factor common to all the very complicated organisms known as novels." "It is a narrative of events arranged in their time sequence . . . it can only have one merit: that of making the audience want to know what happens next. And conversely it can only have

one fault: that of making the audience not want to know what happens next" (18-19). Forster sees the story or narrative as a lower order subset of the plot. I view the plot as a series of linked, related episodes and the progression of the narrative through them. The narrative, or story as Forster called it, provides the movement through the episodes. It is the impetus for the novel. The structure on the other hand is the static group of events through which the narrative progresses. The path taken is also part of the structure. In the words of Forster, the narrative stimulates the reader response of "And then--and then--." In other words, it is using the reader's curiosity. The plot, by comparison, with the addition of structure, requires intelligence and memory, stimulating the response "why?" (60).

In *Ender's Game*, Orson Scott Card uses perhaps the simplest structure in the works under consideration. The novel is told almost completely from the point of view of one individual, Ender Wiggin. Even the rare forays to another perspective are generally done only for a greater understanding of Ender and the events surrounding him. The novel also flows along one straightforward timeline with no real division in the storyline. There is one minor subplot involving the machinations of Valentine and Peter back home (which is told from Valentine's perspective), but even this is heavily dependent on Ender's story, and seems to have been done to set up the conclusion and allow some insight to the two individuals who have the most impact on Ender's life. The simple structure seems to have been chosen to maintain the focus

of the narrative on an individual. It is the central character that is the main motivating force in the novel. The environment could be quite different, but the story would in all likelihood remain the same. In essence, it is a story of characters rather than a story of events. An example of this is the emotional high point of the novel. In an event-centered work, the defeat of the "buggers" in simulated battle and the revelation that the simulation was real would have been the climax, followed by a quiet denouement. Instead, the real impact point is Ender's reaction to the news. This was built up in his increasing troubles of conscience, with Ender progressively worsening as the battles became progressively more successful. His eventual self-labeling as a "genocide" is far more important than the physical battles that caused the destruction of the "bugger" race.

The Folk of the Fringe presents a different problem. As a collection of short stories which are only related thematically and by virtue of taking place in the same created world, it does not have a unified narrative or structure. Instead it works as a series of unrelated events which do occur sequentially in time. Each episode does have a focus in a narrative sense. Again the emphasis is on character as the driving force. Jamie Teague's story is concerned with his decisions more so than with the successful arrival of the group he is guiding to the haven in the hills or to Utah. There also is a form of thematic storyline in

the collection. The recurrent motif is one of individuals displaced by events beyond their control and their reactions and decisions which result. Again the events and ideas behind them are there, but it is the interaction of the characters that is the focus.

The Postman, by David Brin, is also a collection of short stories. These, however, are linked by a common character, Gordon. As such, the book reads more like a very episodic novel, but one with a single consistent timeline and storyline. In contrast to *Folk of the Fringe*, *Postman* is not so much about characters as about ideas. It envisages the post-holocaust world with an individual pretending to be a postman, and then spends its time exploring and developing that concept. Gordon does have an existence as an individual character, but his major import is as the representative of the idea. In this way, it is the world and the ideas therein which are the motivating force of the narrative.

Startide Rising has a similar motivation of narrative. The waters are muddied, though, by the increasing complexity involved in the structure. There are a large number of sub-plots developing simultaneously in the book. These include the large scale effort on the part of the *Streaker* to escape to Earth, the battle between the pursuing races to determine who will capture *Streaker*, the internal conflict between the factions in the *Streaker's* crew, the individual struggle of the humans on board, and the discovery of and communication with the two different

unexpected races which exist on the planet *Streaker* is hiding on--to name a few. To deal with so many storylines all interweaving within the larger storyline, Brin uses an episodic structure told from many points of view. The reader is given the view through the eyes of a key participant in one of the storylines. That storyline is then followed for a time, and then the reader is moved to a new point of view, involved in a different storyline. This move often requires a move back on the timeline to pick up that individual sub-plot's events and perspectives on those events. In this way, a large number of events occurring simultaneously in different locations are seen on an individual basis as well as in respect to all other events. Some of the sub-plots are motivated by individual character progressions; however, the characters are in large part archetypal, and these progressions may be seen as defined by the myth structure established in the creation of the world. The larger part of the work, though, is clearly a battleground of ideas: competing myth systems, competing social systems, etc. It is this interaction which constitutes the large-scale movement of the novel. The individual interactions flow into and out of the larger view contributing to the crescendo until the work climaxes with the escape of the *Streaker*. Here it is an event which provides the key for the work, rather than a character. This is not to say that internal conflicts and decisions do not exist, but the narrative is moved more by those external occurrences

which reflect the interaction of ideas.

David Eddings' *The Belgariad* is structured in a way very similar to that of *Startide Rising*. It too is based on a series of episodes from different points of view, and must move back and forth on the timeline, as each new point of view must be brought up to date with events since its last appearance. This format is similar to that used by Tolkien and to other fantasy works involving a company on an archetypal quest. The storyline follows the company and as events cause the company to split apart so too the storyline splits, with a storyline following each group in the division. These works are complex, but the individual storylines do progress in a mostly linear fashion; it is only in the shift of viewpoint that time shifts occur. These novels' structural complexities add to the tension. At the early stages of division, a large amount of time is spent on each storyline, but as the excitement builds, it is mirrored by quicker movement from one viewpoint to another. This increases the impression that events are accelerating towards a grand conclusion. Again, it is events that move the narrative towards a conclusion. The myth structure established at the beginning of *The Belgariad* defines that movement. Exploration of the interaction of the competing prophecies and the archetypal development of the quest generates the interest. Some of the excitement lies in the continuing revelation of the world in which events are taking place. The narrative, like that of *Startide Rising*, is driven by the interaction and exploration of ideas in the form of the created

world and the archetypal events occurring in it.

In contrast, Donaldson's *Covenant* and *Mordant's Need* are motivated by the maturation of the protagonist in each of them. Like Brin and Eddings, Donaldson uses numerous sub-plots. Unlike them, at most times he meticulously restricts his structure to one point of view, that of the protagonist. This tactic keeps the timeline basically linear. The only exceptions are flashbacks in which other characters describe to Covenant or Terisa what happened while they were away. The other major shifts involve those in which Terisa and Covenant move or are moved between Earth and their respective fantasy worlds. The restriction to one point of view while several sub-plots proceed provides suspense as events in a sub-plot which occur outside the sphere of the protagonist are not known to the reader until the protagonist learns of them. And even then, if the protagonist is misled, so too may the reader be misled. The result is an attractive rapport between reader and protagonist, essential because these stories hinge on the thoughts and decisions of the main character. It is the main characters' coming to terms with their own mental troubles which is mirrored by the external events. The events may help lead the characters in their development and self-understanding, as does Covenant's rape of the young girl (Lena) or Terisa's amorous encounters with the slick Master Eremis, but nevertheless the characters themselves are the focus. Thomas Covenant cannot save The Land or himself until he suspends

his disbelief and starts living again. Terisa is of no use to Geraden in fulfilling Mordant's need until she comes to believe in herself. In the self-fulfillment of the characters the works themselves achieve fulfillment.

Not least among the qualities that determined my choice of novels for discussion in this paper is that of style. The Princeton *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* opens its entry on Style with the question, "How are we to distinguish between what a poem says and the language in which it says it?" and goes on to note that most definitions of style rely on the use of metaphors, either mechanical or organic depending upon the view of style as an addition or an integral part of a work respectively. The mechanists compare style "to flowers, to jewels or embroidery, even to 'the crimson taint which should be laid upon a lady's lips.'" The organicists may be represented in the words of Middleton Murry: "style is organic--not the clothes a man wears, but the flesh and bone of his body." Given that style may be viewed as something added or part of an organic whole, it must also be considered "what it depends on or reflects. There are three main answers to this: that s[ty]le depends on subject, or an author, or on period" (Preminger ed., 814). For our purposes, we need not be concerned with period, as all four authors are distinctly contemporary, so any differences should arise from author and subject. As discussed to some degree earlier, the "rules" will tell one about the influence of science fiction versus fantasy in style. Fantasy is generally written in a

figurative language with flowing metaphors, archaisms, and striking adjectives. Science fiction by comparison typically is concise in a technical, prose way. Though neither of these "rules" is restrictive, they do serve as accurate representations of the medians for the two subjects. Consequently, when examining our authors' styles, I have kept their subjects and approaches in mind.

Donaldson's style may be seen as a prime example of the fantasy style executed to its fullest extent. One cannot read Donaldson without being struck by his words and phrasing. This paragraph from *Lord Foul's Bane* is indicative of the feel which pervades his work.

Enclosed in the Hills, surrounded by such tangible and specific vitality, he became more and more surprised that Atiaran did not wish to linger. As they hiked over the lambent terrain, penetrating league after league deeper into Andelain, he wanted to stop at each new revelation, each new valley or avenue or dale, to savor what he saw--grip it with his eyes until it was a part of him, indelible, secure against any coming bereavement. But Atiaran pushed on--arising early, stopping little, hurrying late. Her eyes were focused far away, and the fatigue mounting behind her features seemed unable to reach the surface. Clearly, even these Hills paled for her beside her anticipation of the unexplained "Celebration." Covenant had no choice but to urge himself after her; her will tolerated no delay.
(*Lord Foul's Bane*, 152)

In his naming, Atiaran and Andelain for example, and in his choice of *league* as a measurement of distance, Donaldson creates a tone of antiquity which is crucial to defining his fantasy

world in relation to Earth. His careful and apt diction, such as his use of *lambent*, displays an almost poetic delicacy of touch while demonstrating a powerful command of the language. Like Covenant himself, we tend to want to linger, savoring each word, but the narrative, as does Atiaran, moves us relentlessly onward.

At the same time Donaldson demonstrates his careful management of dialogue.

So it was with us, the Unhomed. In our long-lost rocky land, we lived and flourished among our own kind, and when we learned to travel the seas we only prospered the more. But in the eagerness of our glee and our health and our wandering, we betrayed ourselves into folly. We built twenty fine ships, each large enough to be a castle for you humans, and we made a vow among ourselves to set sail and discover the whole Earth. Ah, the whole Earth! In twenty ships, two thousand Giants said high farewells to their kindred, promising to bring back in stories every face of the multitudinous world--and they launched themselves into their dream.

(*Lord Foul's Bane*, 186)

Gruffly, Covenant said, "Then tell your friends to brace themselves. You're not going to like what I've got to say."

But Mhoram relaxed slowly, as if he had not heard Covenant's warning. One finger at a time, he released his grip until the staff lay untouched in his lap. Then he smiled softly. "Thomas Covenant, I am not altogether reasonless when I assume that you are not an enemy. You have a *lillianrill* staff and a *rhadhamaerl* knife--yes, and the staff has seen struggle against a strong foe. And I have already spoken with Saltheart Foamfollower. You have been trusted by others. I do not think you would have won your way here without trust."

(*Lord Foul's Bane*, 227)

The preceding are three different quotes from three different

characters. The first speaker is Saltheart Foamfollower, of the race of the Giants, relating part of the saga of how his people were overly ambitious and have been separated from their home. The syntax brings solidly to mind that of the traditional sagas and legends, especially those of the Scandinavians. The second speaker is Thomas Covenant, who converses in standard colloquial English (note the consistent use of contractions). In direct contrast is the courtly, formal speech of Mhoram, a member of the inner circle of the ancient, proud, and noble race which leads the fight against Lord Foul for the sanctity of The Land. Such command of tone and speech pattern marks Donaldson's skill in composition throughout his work.

David Eddings, though a fantasy writer like Donaldson, is by no means as loquacious. He tends to restrict himself to shorter paragraphs and sentences evincing a more homey, earthy feel. This is especially noticeable in *Pawn of Prophecy*, the first book in the *Belgariad*, when Garion does not yet realize the scope of the quest he is on nor the magnitude and importance of those around him.

The sacks of musty-smelling turnips were lumpy, but Garion soon managed to push and shove a kind of half-reclining seat for himself among them just behind Aunt Pol and Mister Wolf. He was sheltered from the wind, Aunt Pol was close, and his cloak, spread over him, kept him warm. He was altogether comfortable, and, despite the excitement of the night's events, he soon drifted into a half-drowse. The dry voice in his mind suggested briefly that he had not behaved too well back

in the wood, but it too soon fell silent, and Garion slept.

(*Pawn of Prophecy*, 76)

Eddings' word choice is colloquial and comfortable (in its use, for example, of such words as *lumpy* and *musty-smelling*) rather than awe-inspiring. Perhaps at times more subtle than Donaldson's, it nevertheless maintains the figurative style of fantasy. His most interesting differences occur in his dialogue. The speech patterns of each of his breeds of man are distinct, sometimes satiric, and always informative of character. Further, as Garion changes from peasant to king, his language becomes increasingly formal in tone, but this change is subtly accomplished. As this metamorphosis occurs in Garion's speech, a concomitant metamorphosis may be observed in Eddings' own prose, as it too becomes more formal. Eddings seems to strive for the apt simplicity of a storyteller revealing a favored old myth or legend, and in my mind achieves it.

Orson Scott Card's style in *Ender's Game* is, like Eddings', a simple one. His phrasings are concise and less figurative, with frequent reliance upon dialogue. These qualities are especially apparent in the critical, high-tension scenes. His style, however, varies considerably from work to work. In *The Folk of the Fringe*, he manages a rather somber, religious tone, in keeping with the importance of religion in the life of the individuals about whom he writes. Like Eddings particularly, Card attempts to emulate the styles of the traditional works which he

is contrasting. As discussed earlier, *Ender's Game* appears at first glance to be a facile retelling of a traditional juvenile-turned-hero story, yet Card takes advantage of this to make points concerning the values therein which are implicitly assumed and goes on to define his work against those implicit assumptions. His use of a traditional style helps to lull the reader into the initial assumptions, thus setting him up for the turnaround to come later. The reason I believe that Card's relatively basic style was affected is that in several other works in different areas his language is decidedly more figurative and expansive. The *Tales of Alvin Maker* comes to mind immediately as an example of Card's sensitive awareness of style as a key element in story-telling.

Brin, by comparison, uses a spare style; perhaps more appropriate to science fiction. His language is not especially metaphorical but rather discursive, frequently delivered in short bursts. It also is peppered with a more technical, practical word choice.

Sah'ot clapped his jaw in assent, pleased. Not that Creideiki, with his language centers burned, would be able to make out anything but static. It took all of Sah'ot's subtle training and experience to trace the refrain. Except for that one time, when the voices from below had shouted in apparent anger, the sounds had been almost amorphous.

(*Startide Rising*, 308)

The preceding, with the phrases *language centers* and *amorphous*

sounds, could almost be mistaken for a lab technician's report on a patient. However, Brin also experiments with different language patterns for his dolphin speakers. He has envisaged a primal language for them which has much in common with the Japanese poetic Haiku.

Orley noticed his friend's mood. He pursed his lips and whistled. His breather mask amplified a faint sound-shadow picture. The little echo danced and hopped like a mad elf from corner to corner in the oxywater-filled chamber. Workers in the weapons pod lifted their narrow, sound-sensitive jaws to follow the skipping sonar image as it scampered unseen, chittering in mock sympathy.

* *When one commands,
One is envied by people--
But, oh! the demands! **

The sound-wraith vanished, but laughter remained.
The crew of the weapons pod spluttered and squawled.
(*Startide Rising*, 60)

Though this particular burst of "Trinary" was whistled by human lips (those of the very knowledgeable Tom Orley), it serves well to indicate the figurative language of the dolphins. The language supports well Brin's supposition that the dolphins' basic mode of thought is not the linear cause and effect mode of humans, but rather an imagistic mode with multiple levels of meaning. It should also be noted that Brin's own prose becomes more figurative as it comes into proximity with the dolphin Trinary, further reinforcing the imagistic impressions on the reader.

As we consider these four writers, it is possible to see a distinct pattern among them. The conceptual writers, Brin and Eddings, write about conceptually perceived worlds with characters which are archetypal in nature. Their plot structures hold in common a shifting point of view as different aspects of multiple storylines are kept in balance, and each follows a style comfortably within the median area for his subject, without making it the key emphasis in his work. Donaldson and Card, on the other hand, the perceptual writers, emphasize one main protagonist who maintains the point of view throughout. The world is seen through the eyes of this protagonist and defined and colored by him. The interaction of the protagonist with other characters serves as the principal motivating force behind the narrative (as compared to the interaction of ideas which is the driving force in the conceptual narrative). And each one's style is an important aspect of his fiction.

IV.

Three divisions have suggested themselves through the course of my research. The first is the division between the super-genre (the two kingdoms of science fiction and fantasy) and the mainstream represented in the strong myth-making capacity present in both fantasy and science fiction. The second is the division between the two kingdoms which may be defined in terms of the scale of the fantastic in world creation and the scale of

rationalization. The third is the division within each kingdom which may be seen between the perceptual authors and the conceptual authors. What is interesting is that this division exists in parallel in both kingdoms, science fiction and fantasy.

The question that comes to mind is, should a field with so many dividing factors rightly be considered a field? There are many who see science fiction and fantasy as distinct areas which should not be grouped together. I am not one of those. I see modern science fiction and fantasy as inextricably linked in a literary sense as they are in a publishing sense (hence their marketing on the same racks). They are, first, linked by the strong presence in both of a reliance upon the collective unconscious, or making of myth. Although each goes about this task in its own fashion, together they do so in a way distinct from the mainstream. Second, an emerging group of writings clearly exhibits characteristics of both genres. These works of science fantasy belie the existence of a large gap between the fields. In ignoring the restrictions brought about by a rigid separation of science fiction and fantasy, these novels constitute some of the strongest literary works in the two fields combined. Finally, and most important, is the evidence of the last division, the division within the fields themselves. Its presence in close parallel in both science fiction and fantasy leads me to believe that a strong interrelation exists between them. Given this interrelation, critical works which consider

science fiction and fantasy as separate entities (as most do) miss insights which come from critical consideration of the super-genre as a whole. Thus, recognizing that science fiction and fantasy evince distinguishing differences, and aware of the value of examining them separately, I argue that there is equal value to be gained by considering them together. The kingdoms should not be divided.

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