An Interrogation of Fantasy through the works of
Michael Moorcock

by

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ABSTRACT

Michael Moorcock is one of England's most prolific and popular authors. He has a cult following and an active international appreciation society. Moorcock has won British Fantasy Awards Nebula awards, a World Fantasy Award, a John W. Cambell Memorial Award and a nomination for the Whitbread Prize and yet he has never achieved great literary status.

Moorcock is both avant-garde and popular, translated into many languages, yet his novels rarely reach the best-sellers lists or university reading lists in Britain. One might argue that he is ahead of his time, or too experimental for the general public, but the most obvious reason for his marginalisation has something to do with the suspicion still felt towards science fiction and fantasy with which he is associated. Not only did he practically invent modern fantasy and reshape science fiction, but he is also an exponent of mainstream literature. This ignorance regarding one of England's greatest writers reveals a fallacy and problem with our culture's reception of literature.

Using Moorcock as my focus, the thesis also interrogates fantasy as an undervalued literary impulse. Since the Enlightenment, western culture has placed more value on rational thinking and demanded a more exact form of naturalistic representation in its artistic expressions. Since then symbolism and myth have been regarded with some suspicion and, today, fantasy suffers from the same prejudice.

Fantasy has something important to offer our culture in terms of re-evaluating its heritage and offering insight into a more mystical and spiritual reality. Moorcock, as a writer, explores themes and subjects which others dare not confront. He is also an elusive and protean writer whose works blur the generic boundaries.
The metaphysicians of Tlon do not seek for the truth or even for verisimilitude but rather for the astounding. They judge that metaphysics is a branch of fantastic literature.

Jorge Luis Borges

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INTRODUCTION

In his critical guide to gothic fiction *The Literature of Terror*, David Punter recognises the importance of fantasy and Michael Moorcock, leaving an opening for further discussion into sword and sorcery. He notes that 'There is unfortunately no room here for discussion of this school of writing but it is worth noting that it is another fruitful offshoot from the central stem of Gothic; Moorcock especially demonstrates a considerable power in the manipulation of mythic and quasi-mythic materials' [1]. Writing about fantasy in 1976, Lin Carter noted 'that today the primary living practitioners of this ancient craft of legend-spinning are all Americans, with the lone exception of England's Michael Moorcock' [2].

Whilst Moorcock is a writer 'aetatis suae', well-known for his fantasy from the sixties and seventies, Brian Aldiss importantly recognises that Moorcock is truly a mainstream author who continues to produce literature which pushes the literary boundaries. 'Moorcock must be admired for his independence of mind. Where he triumphs - and has done for many years - is in his ability always to produce good new work. It can be said of him, as of few other writers connected with SF, that his latest writing is both his most surprising and his best' [3]. Moorcock describes fantasy's relationship with the mainstream in the following way. 'The fantasy form has been progressing and refining itself for centuries. It has gone through the various stages of borrowing from or influencing "mainstream" fiction and is currently starting a phase where it will once again borrow and influence, until at length it is absorbed, for a while, back into the mainstream' [4]. This fertilising process is inevitable and vital to the survival of both fantasy and the mainstream, and Moorcock remains one of the leading crossover authors. Moorcock wrote in a letter to Foundation, 'I'd much rather be judged as a minor writer in the general fiction field than as a major writer in a genre (sf) for which I feel, by and large, active distaste' [5].
Moorcock has about a hundred books to his name (see Appendix 1) many of which are republished and even retitled, which causes huge confusion to the uninitiated. Such a large corpus of work has already proved bewildering to librarians and a bibliography has been produced by John Davey to help bring order to the chaos. Beginning in 1992, the British publishers, Millennium/Orion reissued practically all the titles that fit into his 'Eternal Champion Multiverse' in fourteen weighty volumes, of which the largest exceeds 800 pages. The series attempts to create a uniform omnibus collection of these particular books and involves some revision. Moorcock is not frightened of tampering with earlier work so as to develop a clearer interconnectedness and a contextual framework for his oeuvre. It is from these editions that I shall be quoting in the thesis.

Most of the amendments are slight, involving names, so that familiar characters can be reincarnated to make interconnections more explicit. For example, an early story from New Worlds 154, 'The Pleasure Garden of Felipe Sagittarius' has been adapted to fit in with The War Hound and the World's Pain, and the narrator's name is changed to von Bek, accordingly. The same is done to the story 'Flux' in Sailing to Utopia. Moorcock also extensively abridged and expanded the last two chapters of The Steel Tsar, the third book in 'A Nomad of the Time Streams', chronicling the adventures of Oswald Bastable, the grown up narrator of Edith Nesbit's The Treasure Seekers. The rewriting allows Moorcock to change a few names, and bring in references to books he wrote in the nineties, mentioning as he does, the Second Ether and an albino called Monsieur Zenith who connects Elric with the von Bek family. The new chapters are full of commentary regarding time and the multiverse, and develop some of Moorcock's political interest in anarchism, linking it more closely with the Pyat novels.

Moorcock's conscious rewriting of fiction follows a tradition of rewriting set by Henry James who revised all his fiction for the New York edition of his works. Moorcock does not allow his
manuscripts to become 'precious' museum pieces or finished opuses, but rather living works of artifice, which serve the author's greater purpose. Two novels, *The Golden Barge* and *Behold the Man*, were developed from previously published short stories.

As a writer 'of his times' Moorcock is a part of popular culture and makes an important link between fantasy and music, being himself a rock musician. Preferring the term 'Romantic fiction' to fantasy, Moorcock saw the sixties as a Romantic Revolution 'with drugs and rock music as its most potent and obvious expression' [6] wherein Keats and Byron were superseded by Hendrix and Morrison. This revival still exists but Moorcock bemoans the fact that much of what is published 'is shallow, imitative, worthless and without genuine resonances' [7]. His own work, however, is political, psychological and satirical.

Moorcock is recognised by some critics, but has not received the accolades he deserves. Author, Peter Ackroyd, wrote that 'Moorcock is the true heir to the nineteenth century, in his breadth of vision as much as in his fecundity, in his expansiveness as well as in his eclecticism' [8]. Like Dickens, Moorcock is a popular writer who extends realism with grotesque and fantastic devices.

Angela Carter called Michael Moorcock 'the master story-teller of our time' [9], and this is a well-deserved title for an author who has influenced the literary scene for over thirty years. Carter, herself an avid reader of Moorcock, was keen to persuade the reading public of the cultural importance of Moorcock's oeuvre in terms of our literary heritage. In her review of *Mother London* in The Guardian, she concludes with a celebration of the author. 'Posterity will certainly give him that due place in the English Literature of the late twentieth century which his more anaemic contemporaries grudge; indeed, he is so prolific it will probably look as though he has written most of it anyway' [10].
Notes

[8] *The Times*, December 14 1989, p17 a review of *Casablanca*
[9] Angela Carter, Introduction to *Death Is No Obstacle*
Chapter 1  A LITERATURE OF CHAOS

The reality around us, the three dimensional world surrounding us, is too ordinary, too boring, too common. We yearn for the unnatural, or the supernatural, the impossible, the miraculous. If you want to express something impossible you must keep to certain rules...
The element of mystery to which you want to draw attention should be surrounded and veiled by quite obvious, readily recognisable commonness

M.C. Escher [1].

This statement by the artist Escher parallels Michael Moorcock's dualism of chaos and order: a struggle that must be reconciled to achieve individual, creative or cosmic balance. The scales of balance between chaos and order are a political and even religious symbol in many of Moorcock's fantasies, and love can be achieved only when the two are in equilibrium.

In artistic terms, chaos is the realm of the imagination, necessary for any creative expression, and chaos better represents the world of fantasy, inhabited by dark, mystical forces, dreams and desires. For chaos to be expressed well, as Escher suggests, the artist needs to follow some rules, or conventional order, although there is no harm in breaking these occasionally to avoid sterility. Law and chaos are not the same as good and evil, but both are necessary to create a whole. Law creates order and consensus, whilst chaos is the origin of emotion and art. Both can be destructive or creative and each complements the other. If, in this model, chaos is fantasy and order is mimesis, then it becomes apparent that both literary impulses should have equal weighting if we want a balanced literary expression. However, mimesis has become the dominant form of artistic expression in our culture, and this imbalance is unhealthy, as too much order can be repressive, infertile and dull. Moorcock in his fantasy literature is calling us to reconsider the importance of chaos in much the same way that Nietzsche calls for the reawakening of Dionysus. Fantasy should not be marginalised or treated as a vague deviation from the norm. Fantasy is not a genre or sub-genre of literature, it is both a natural human impulse and the most basic form of human expression.
Expressing the Inexpressible

Fantasy may well be the oldest form of storytelling, and generations have relied on legends, myths and fables as part of their cultural heritage and system of socialisation. The origins of literature exist in magic and myth, not in realism. In one sense all literature is fantasy and words can stimulate the imagination so as to make ideal or illogical creations seem real. In literary terms, the concept of fantasy has become particularly concerned with supernatural events and imagery, or with directly depicting or symbolising sensational and romantic adventures on magical realms or alternate worlds. Fantasies with modern settings still rely on mythical or supernatural situations, creatures or paraphernalia. Fantasy has become a specific genre which usually gets confused with science fiction, possibly because profit-making publishers are keen to cash in on the cult success of fantasy and sf. Fantasy is, however, an attempt to express the inexpressible employing poetic devices in the novel format.

The symbolism of fantasy has become closely linked with the subconscious since Freud declared that the content of dreams relates directly to the psyche. Jung, however, relates the images of fantasy such as those found in Faust or The Arabian Nights to an evocation of a primordial experience, or a disturbing image of chaos, which transcends reality. Jung believed that 'primordial experiences rend from top to bottom the curtain upon which is painted the picture of an ordered world and allow a glimpse into the unfathomable abyss' [2].

Fantasy allows us to enter the primitive realm of the collective consciousness. Archetypes are presented which relate to those existing in the human collective consciousness and help us to create symbols to express our deepest fears and emotions. These archetypes include familiar characters such as the hero, wise man, shadow, or the anima/animus. Fantasy engages us in the
communication of those real parts of our lives which are psychic, perverted or supernatural and that which is deeply personal.

Moorcock has written much in celebration of the so-called 'literary' fantasy texts, linking them with Jung's important work.

Those critics who still decry it [fantasy] for its usual lack of deep characterisation do not see that it completely reverses the "real" world of the social novel - placing its heroes in a landscape directly reflecting the inner landscape of the ordinary man. The hero ranges the lands of his own psyche, encountering the various aspects of himself. When we read a good fantasy we are being admitted into the subterranean worlds of our own souls. [3].

Moorcock is one of Britain's leading exponents of modern fantasy and his texts demand a closer study and analysis to help identify the function of imaginative literature. Fantasists such as Jorge Luis Borges, Italo Calvino, Kurt Vonnegut, Angela Carter and Michael Moorcock have all pushed forward the progress of the novel through their modern, unconventional fantasies and all of them break down generic boundaries. Moorcock is also attempting to create recognisable signs for abnormal psychological states, continuing the work of Franz Kafka, William Burroughs and Herman Hesse by experimenting with the themes of paranoia, hallucination, transformation and alienation.

Raman Selden speaks in general terms about all writers of fiction when he claims that

The poet's world is not a literal representation of the external world ... or even a generalised representation. Nor is it an escape from reality into an ideal world of transcendent forms. It is a fresh vision of reality, a reconstruction of a human consciousness of 'things as they are' [4].

Writers of fantasy create this new reality with greater vision and ingenuity than mimetic writers. Fantasy writers are creating new expressions of 'reality'; they are our prophets and visionaries.

For art to be edifying or entertaining, its structures need not be necessarily mimetic or resemble physical, visual or materially acceptable frameworks, for then the mirror that we are holding up to
nature is merely reflecting what is apparent to our five senses. A new language is necessary with which to signify new ideas or sensations for which our culture has created no suitable sign or signifier.

Moorcock, in *An Alien Heat* (1972), devises a world at the end of time in which the characters can create any illusion they desire, and have become lazy and decadent, like Tennyson's Lotus Eaters. Jherek Carnelian builds whole cities at the sweep of a hand and death is meaningless: "Still, we have all of us died so many times and been recreated so many times that the thrill has gone" (p43). This is a world so vast and beyond complete comprehension, that it can be only hinted at and partially revealed in tantalising and evocative language.

A comparable fantasy text is David Lindsey's *Voyage to Arcturus* (1920), which presents a mystical quest in a surreal world in which the protagonist, Maskell, grows extra limbs and develops extra senses and perceptions. On Arcturus there are five primary colours and three states of perception, namely 'existence', 'love' and 'feeling'. He watches creatures appearing from thin air, which he does not so much see as 'sense'. 'Something was standing there that intercepted the light, though it possessed neither shape, colour, nor substance. And now the object, which could no longer be perceived by vision, began to be felt by emotion' [5]. Fantasy allows the reader to develop that sixth sense and this is the closest humans can get to expressing the inexpressible.

The boundary between where 'reality' begins and fantasy ends has become increasingly blurred in our so-called postmodern world. Moorcock represents this in *Gloriana* (1978), through Doctor Dees's poignant remark regarding some life-like mechanical toys: "And who can say ... whether these creatures are any less alive than we, of flesh and blood?" (p117).
Similarly, who is to say that heightened perceptions, dreams, sexual fantasies, emotions and spiritual experience are not as much a part of ‘reality’ as the conventional consensus of what is real, accepted or natural?

Mimetic or naturalistic techniques in literature fail to accept or admit that life is far more than a physical, material world which can be described in scientific terms. Émile Zola, in his preface to the second edition of *Thérèse Raquin* (1868), fails to realise that human behaviour, desires and experiences cannot be scientifically categorised, materially described and defined. He insisted that a novel should be like a post-mortem.

There is a complete absence of soul, I freely admit since that is how it is meant to be. I hope that by now it is becoming clear that my object has been first and foremost a scientific one ... I simply applied to two living bodies the analytical method that surgeons apply to corpses [6].

If 'absence of soul' is not disturbing enough, Zola later stated that 'Imagination no longer has a place' [7]. Mimesis is not the definitive method of representation, but only one fragmented form of artistic expression. We need fantasy to bring back our sense of wonder, and turn readers into active participants with the text, whose imaginations are being stimulated and exercised.

Erich Auerbach identified two distinct styles of representation in his survey of realism, *Mimesis* (1968). The first is a classical form with 'fully externalised description' and 'unmistakable meanings', whilst the second is more romantic and obscure, characterised by its 'abruptness, suggestive influence of the unexpressed ... multiplicity of meanings and the need for interpretation ... and preoccupation with the problematic' [8]. This literary dualism is reminiscent of Jung's identification of two modes of artistic creation, which he described as the 'psychological' when referring to works which reflect 'conscious human experience' [9] and the 'visionary' which provides 'glimpses of chaos' [10] and is closer to any definition of fantasy. Jung describes the creation and subject of a visionary text as
a primordial experience which surpasses man's understanding, and to which he is in danger of succumbing. The value and force of the experience are given by its enormity. It arises from timeless depths; it is foreign and cold, many sided, demonic and grotesque. A grimly ridiculous sample of the eternal chaos ... it bursts asunder our human standards of value and of aesthetic form [11].

Jung regards his two modes as opposites, but modern fantasists such as Moorcock combine the two modes to create a fantastic realism.

Moorcock's work is often apocalyptic; it breaks literary forms and conventions and it celebrates ambiguity. With a dissolution of space, time, character and form in fantasy, there grows a need for reinterpretation by the reader. Just as Bertolt Brecht demanded an active critical audience for his epic theatre, so fantasy demands an active reader with a developed imagination.

Fantasy successfully captures moods and cadences. Art, through its ambivalence, and its ability to shock or inspire depicts life with far more reality and truth than a cold description and definition of a world from which most people are attempting to escape. A 'realist' text is, ironically, not pure mimesis or realism, but because it is a piece of art it is, by definition, a flight of fancy. In this sense all literature is therefore fantasy. Even history or autobiography can never be objective, but all texts by their very nature are embellished and exaggerated, and any written expression of a factual account is not the actual event itself, but can only ever be an interpretation and is therefore prone to bias due to the limitations of language.

Fantasy's marginalisation has much to do with the Enlightenment notion that art was separate from reason or that artistic expression is not concerned with 'real' knowledge. This was the split between art and science. Within literature it was believed that only mimetic texts were concerned with reality and that fantasy had no connection with reality. Mimesis is concerned with accurate reflection and the 'reality' of symbolism and abstraction was rejected. This was a dangerous premise, and it belittles the power of the symbol and of artistic expression. A problem confronts the
literary student: because fantasy transcends explicit meaning and reality is transfigured, then scientific and literal tools of enquiry are inappropriate. Literary theory acts like an exact science, but it seems absurd to use scientific tools to examine art and romance.

Definitions

E.M. Forster's definition of fantasy is vague; symptomatic of the difficulty discussed above. You will expect me to say that a fantastic book asks us to accept the supernatural. I will say it, but reluctantly, because any statement as to their subject matter brings these novels into the claws of critical apparatus, from which it is important that they should be saved... So I would rather hedge as much as possible and say that they ask us to accept either the supernatural, or its absence [12].

J.R.R. Tolkien aligns fantasy with folklore and mythology and points to terms such as imagination and enchantment to conclude that 'fantasy is, I think, not a lower but a higher form of art, indeed the most nearly pure form, and so (when achieved) the most potent' [13]. This leads to his famous definition: 'Fantasy is a natural human activity' [14] whereby he argues that escapism is a worthy function providing joy and consolation to the reader, almost as an opposite to catharsis. For this he coins the term 'eucatastrophe'. C.S. Lewis builds on this discussion of escapism, which he calls 'castle-building'. Concerned with self-indulgence he makes the surprising but logical comment that 'the more completely a man's reading is a form of egoistic castle-building, the more he will demand a certain superficial realism, and the less he will like the fantastic' [15].

Professor Malcolm Bradbury offers a more inclusive definition after discussing the work of writers including Moorcock. He highlights how fantasy intrudes into all literary fields and contravenes all conventions. Fantasy is not so much a mode as a protean element ready to add texture and flavour to any melting pot.

Fantasy is a mode of artistic dissolution breaking down the borders of familiarity and identity, opening the door into otherness, acknowledging unconscious forces, at times admitting to fiction an ultimate loss of order and signification [16].
Once again we see fantasy releasing chaos into the literary world, like Pandora's box.

One of the most important works of fantasy research is *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, a huge reference book with scholarly definitions and bibliographies, in which John Clute and John Grant develop and create a vocabulary for reading fantasy. Clute regards fantasy as 'a most extraordinarily porous term', but finally settles for the concise description that 'A fantasy text is a self-coherent narrative'. He alludes to the concept of the 'polder' or microcosm, which follows its own logic and sense of reality and claims James Joyce's *Ulysses* as a fantasy text. The different names used for varieties of fantasy can become tiresome, but the encyclopedia is patient and helpful. 'Heroic fantasy' is linked to myths, legends and epic romance, and the familiar canon are referred to as 'taproot texts' from which authors draw ideas and inspiration.

Two related terms are the confusing 'science fantasy' which was used to justify heroic fantasy in science fiction pulp magazines, and the more descriptive term 'sword and sorcery' which is used for Moorcock's Eternal Champion novels explored in Chapter Three. Another of Clute's neologisms includes 'wainscot', which refers to hidden societies or 'otherworlds', including the anthropomorphic fables with speaking animals. 'Dark fantasy' is synonymous with gothic and horror, whilst both the important 'nonsense' and 'absurdist fantasy' are given rightful space. Clute also relates magic realism to surrealism and the ensuing definition has a close correlation to much of Moorcock's work, especially those texts in which 'the regions of the real may be irradiated with dream imagery, dislocations in time and space, haunting juxtapositions' [17]. In this sense, as Moorcock's work is always related to the real, which is then manipulated to suit him, he may be placed alongside recognised magic realists.
Fabulation

Clute does list Moorcock amongst the 'fabulators', a critical term developed by Robert Scholes who saw fabulation as a movement. In a discussion of romance, allegory, comedy and the grotesque, Scholes identifies a form of experimental fable or 'metafiction' that had turned its back on realism. Scholes explains further that 'Reality is too subtle for realism to catch it. It cannot be transcribed directly. But by invention: by fabulation, we may open a way toward reality that will come as close to it as human ingenuity may come' [18]. Scholes identifies fabulation as being 'self-reflexive', that is, with the ability to comment on itself, and Moorcock's work has a strong element of intertextuality and internal referencing, which is typically postmodern. Writers like Italo Calvino also employ the playful techniques of fabulation in an attempt to transcend the usual laws of fiction.

Science fiction is itself an equally challenging term to define and I deal with sf in more detail in Chapter Two. Within the field of sf, which can be split into innumerous categories, one that seems relevant to Moorcock is Bruce Sterling's 'Slipstream', which identifies postmodern 'mainstream' writers who employ darker and non-realistic devices. Edward James, editor of Foundation, describes slipstream in terms of its representative authors: 'Writers who do not consider themselves to be sf writers are writing novels which are very similar to sf works; writers brought up in the sf world are breaking into the mainstream' [19]. Examples of the former include George Orwell, Lawrence Durrell, Anthony Burgess and William Golding, and those who fall into the latter group include H.G Wells, D.M. Thomas and Iain Banks.

Moorcock is a protean and mainstream writer who is best known for his fantasy and his work ranks alongside that of Mervyn Peake, Kurt Vonnegut, Peter Ackroyd and perhaps even Charles
Dickens. Whilst I prefer the title 'fabulator' or 'slipstream' author, Moorcock shall be referred to as a fantasist, and the very fact that he cannot be pigeon-holed is entirely the point of my argument.

Fantasy Theory

Tzvetan Todorov in his ground breaking study, *The Fantastic*, gives a formalist analysis of, amongst others, Poe, Maupassant and Henry James, and in summary he writes: 'we have given a definition of the genre: the fantastic is based essentially on the hesitation of the reader' (p157).

There are two interesting points here. Firstly, it is a typically structuralist approach to view fantasy as a genre, although even here Todorov concedes that the fantastic appears within the genres of 'the uncanny' and 'the marvellous', and for him 'fantastic' and 'supernatural' are practically interchangeable. It is disappointing to read Robert Scoles' preface which condemns the fantastic as being 'one of the humbler literary genres' (pviii). Secondly, it seems too limited to suggest that the fantastic is merely connected with a reader's hesitation. Todorov's analysis of uncertainty and ambiguity highlights an important area for further research, and is a useful starting point for the student of fantasy, but *The Fantastic* is by no means an exhaustive piece of research. The purest example he offers of fantastic uncertainty is Henry James' ambiguous narrative *The Turn of the Screw*. Todorov examines two aspects of fantasy; its structure, which makes up the main body of the book, relying heavily on Northrop Frye's archetypes and classifications and on Freud's psychoanalytical concepts and then Todorov cursorily discusses the social functions of the supernatural. His conclusion, that 'the function of the supernatural is to exempt the text from the action of the law, and thereby to transgress that law' (p159), anticipates Rosemary Jackson's thesis that Fantasy is the literature of subversion.

Todorov naively suggests that 'psychoanalysis has replaced (and thereby has made useless) the literature of the fantastic' (p160), as if people no longer rely on supernatural explanations (the
marvellous) because science gives us rational answers (the uncanny). This may well be the case for fantastic literature as he defines it. However, he does go on to suggest that 'modern' literature, such as *Metamorphosis* by Kafka, defies hesitation and adapts a literal, non-allegorical absurdity: 'sharply distinguished from the traditional fantastic stories' (p171). Literature expresses a balance between what is real and unreal, and this is the very tension that defines fantasy. This equilibrium echoes Moorcock's tension between chaos and order. When Todorov asked 'why does the literature of the fantastic no longer exist?' (p166), he was writing in 1968, just before the appearance of Michael Moorcock's most important early novels, *The Final Programme* and *Behold the Man*, seminal texts from a writer who changed the face of postmodern fantasy.

Rosemary Jackson builds on Todorov's concept of the fantastic in *Fantasy*, helpfully interpreting Todorov's thesis by showing how the fantastic lies tenuously between the marvellous and the uncanny, the latter of which Jackson reminds us is a psychoanalytical term which is related to a sense of estrangement. Her aim is 'to extend Todorov's investigation from being one limited to the poetics of the fantastic into one aware of the politics of its forms' (p6) and her study becomes a cultural and psychological investigation into texts including gothic romance and novels by Dickens, Tolkien, Kafka and Pynchon. She develops Todorov's scheme by arguing that the fantastic is not a genre, but 'a mode, which then assumes different generic forms' (p35). She uses the terms fantasy and the fantastic interchangeably.

Her most erudite definition of fantasy occurs when it is related to what is considered real. Fantasy is not in opposition to it; rather it subverts the real. 'Fantasy recombines and inverts the real, but it does not escape it: it exists in a parasitic or symbiotic relation to the real. The fantastic cannot exist independently of that 'real' world which it can find so frustratingly finite' (p20). In this sense all literature has an element of both realism and fantasy, which makes the term 'fantastic
realism' all encompassing. All literature is unreal and artificial, by definition, but at least fantasy acknowledges and celebrates its own artifice.

It is worth remembering that most fantasy texts, if not realistic, do have an internal coherence. This is important when examining Moorock's extensive oeuvre as he has created a huge system of internal referencing and interconnectedness called the multiverse, which embraces all his fiction.

The symbiotic relationship between fantasy and reality is the key to appreciating the importance of fantasy as a mode or 'langue', which interrogates the important human activities of imagination and desire. Fantasy is positioned in that uncertain and unstable realm situated between the magical and material world. In Jackson's words, it is 'Between the marvellous and the mimetic, borrowing the extravagance of one and the ordinariness of the other, the fantastic belongs to neither and is without their assumptions of confidence or presentations of authoritative truths' (p35). Now Fantasy has become a literature of 'chaos', to borrow Moorcock's term, where conventions and meanings fluctuate and dissolve into ambiguous signification. It must be stressed that ambiguity is a strength, not a weakness. After a discussion of the Freudian principles of transgression and taboo, Jackson links desire with the image of entropy, an important extended metaphor in Moorcock's corpus. The entropic pull towards homeostasis is present in the writing of de Sade, Dickens and Mervyn Peake and links with themes of sexuality, transformation and death. It is through such themes that fantasy can subvert and undermine the existing cultural stability.

Jackson widens the fantastic canon so as to include such notables as the Brontës, Hardy, Conrad, Flaubert and Eliot. Like Moorcock today, they were mainstream novelists also employing non-realistic modes. Jackson further argues that 'Fantasy has not disappeared, as Todorov's theory would claim, but it has assumed different forms' (p165). The nature of fantasy is such that as soon as one scholar creates a definition or identifies rules, then they are bound to be subverted.
Fantasy causes tension because it confronts a society's epistemological and ontological taboos, and it is this openness which is often still rejected or ridiculed by some critics. The vital place of fantasy still has to be established, and the continuing dismissal of fantasy says more about the society and culture than about the merits of individual fantasy texts. Just as Freud warns us that repression of desire can lead to individual neuroses, so we should heed the warning that the suppression or marginalisation of fantasy, which expresses human emotion and chaos, could be dangerous for that culture. Kathryn Hume, in *Fantasy and Mimesis*, goes back to classical philosophy to uncover this misunderstanding of fantasy and is clear in pointing the blame.

Plato and Aristotle between them tore a large and ragged hole in western consciousness. Ever since their day, our critical perceptions have been marred by this blind spot, and our views of literature curiously distorted. To both philosophers, literature was mimetic, and they analyzed only its mimetic components. Moreover, insofar as their assumptions allowed them to recognize fantasy at all, they distrusted and disparaged it. Aristotle judged literature according to how probable its events and characters were ... Although Plato frequently used fantastic myths to clarify his more mystical arguments, he ... banned it from the Republic (p5-6).

She further argues how the Protestant Church has dismissed fantasy as frivolous or heretical.

Hume takes the debate further by insisting that fantasy is not a genre or even a mode, as Jackson had argued. 'It is truer to literary practice to admit that fantasy is not a separate or indeed a separable strain, but rather an impulse as significant as the mimetic impulse, and to recognize that both are involved in the creation of most literature' ((pxii). Having said that, she does define fantasy simply as 'any departure from consensus reality' (p21), adding that 'it is the fantastic elements which allow literature to convey most of its varied sense of meaning' (p28). But meaning is layered and complex because of its ability to convey multiplicitous symbols. Fantasy can signify very powerfully. She argues that science, and therefore realism, is limited because 'It aims to be unambiguous. Fantasy instead aims for richness, and often achieves a plethora of meanings' (p194).
She identifies four literary responses to reality and I have suggested Moorcock texts that fit each category. I must stress that the categories are vague and overlap, and just doing this task made me realise how fake it is to limit a text to such narrow confines. But it does amply demonstrate Moorcock's protean nature as a writer. The first type is 'Escapism', which includes comedy and pornography (e.g. *The Brothel in Rosenstrasse*). Secondly, the 'Literature of Vision' presents alternate worlds or even new interpretations of reality (e.g. *An Alien Heat*). The third type, 'Didactic literature', offers moral or cosmological fabulations (e.g. *The War Hound and the World's Pain*). Finally, 'Perspectivism' is a literature that subverts expectations to create 'anti-form' (e.g. *The Final Programme*). So many of Moorcock's novels defy generic classification, or refuse to fulfil the expectations of genres or modes.

Hume's thesis is a well-argued and timely call for a paradigm shift in critical theory. Our postmodern world no longer depends on solely rational thought, because the metanarratives have been deconstructed and science does not necessarily have the answers. In a time of renewed spirituality, literature can once more come to the fore as an artistic and philosophical force, but it will only achieve this if it grapples with the imagination, creativity and mysteries of life itself. As Hume concludes - 'The rediscovery of fantasy should be a cause for optimism, and good reason to alter our critical vocabulary ... Acknowledging the fantastic impulse in all its manifestations, from the trivial to the transcendent, should loosen some of the repressive bonds constricting twentieth-century writers' (p196).

Lucie Armitt manages to break down generic boundaries by integrating various theoretical discourses, such as Freudian and feminist readings and Bakhtin's notion of carnival, in her approach to texts as different as fairy tales, gothic horror, nonsense and science fiction. She begins her apologetics of fantasy, *Theorising the Fantastic*, by echoing Hume with the claim that 'The history
of the novel is generally read as the history of mimesis' (p2) suggesting that we still read fantasy from a mimetic perspective and with a mimetic interpretation. Armitt demonstrates how fantasy is an innovative source of desire and imagination; a resource available to every writer. 'Now we can look at the fantastic as a form of writing which is about opening up subversive spaces within the mainstream rather than ghettoizing fantasy by encasing it within genres' (p3). This concurs with Moorcock's own view.

I have difficulty defining 'Fantasy' as a readily defineable genre - or frequently even as an element. I don't believe that any technique or method is more or less useful than another - everything depends upon individual human talent in the end. The authority of the author is often all we're talking about [20].

Moorcock is a protean fantasist, who transcends literary modes, writing comedy, fantasy and realism. He blurs the generic boundaries of sword and sorcery, sf, horror, adventure and also writes non-fiction. His novels defy categorisation because they are greater than the limitations of the critic's vocabulary. Moorcock is, rather, a sophisticated postmodern author whose novels have a great deal to offer any reader or student of literature.

His dislike for generic terms was expressed in the following way.

I don't believe there is such a thing as fantasy or science fiction or detective fiction and so on. I think there are certain writers who in their field shine and in every one of those fields you'll get some good writers emerging. Sometimes the field itself can limit the writer's work and then frequently the writer does something about it [21].

Moorcock, I shall be arguing, is one of these 'good writers', and he is certainly a writer who has changed the face of literature, not only through his radical editorial policy of *New Worlds*, but through his own works which are playful and poetic.

Structuralism fails to enable readers to understand a text, Armitt argues, because it is so often 'Obsessed with classifying' (p18) leaving a text as an empty piece of data. This leaves fantasy literature and literary theory in a dialectical tension. Armitt is paraphrasing other critics when she
writes, 'If... fantasy is at its most subversive when located on the margins of the canon, then surely there is much to be said for it being likewise located on the margins of theory' (p3). More explicitly, J.G. Ballard, one of the leading exponents of fantasy, expresses antipathy for all literary theory and responds to literary questions with some invective. He believes 'all schools of "English literature" should be closed ... fiction is meant to provoke, exhilarate, entertain, inform, amuse and scandalise - not to be poked and prodded like a cadaver on an autopsy table' [22]. These functions aptly describe the fiction of Moorcock who sometimes achieves all six in a single novel. Ballard developed his ideas further by suggesting that the danger of theory is that the theory itself sometimes becomes more important than the text being studied and that vital concepts such as the imagination and entertainment get lost behind a jargon-filled discourse that ends up eating its own tail like the ouroboros serpent. Ballard's comments are to the point:

the trouble with literary criticism is that it tends to turn into a self-serving ideology, constantly concerned to purify itself. Leavis' notion that the novel is a moral criticism of life being complete bunk - the imagination, thank God, transcends morality' [23].

Ballard reminds us that one of the purposes of reading is to stimulate and celebrate the imagination. The writer does not always have a moral or political aim.

Armitt discusses the creative pastime of reading, and how writers of fantasy are 'game-playing'. If fantasy involves escapism, as Tolkien celebrates, then escape involves the imagination for both the author and the reader, and after all, being creative is one of the most important human activities. Percy Bysshe Shelley tells us that 'Poetry enlarges the circumference of the imagination' [24], and the word poetry could be replaced with the term fantasy, or more radically, perhaps fantasy has replaced poetry in this function. Psychoanalyst Bruno Bettelheim states that 'the minds of both creative and average children can be open to an appreciation of all the higher things in life by fairy tales' [25], and once again, the last two words could be replaced with 'fantasy'. This brings up the
important question regarding why many adults dismiss fantasy as children's literature. Perhaps some people have lost their imaginations and the ability to dream.

Armitt's conclusion is that fantasy is an elusive and intangible paradox 'beyond our grasp and beyond articulation, but it continues to proffer glimpses of an enticing and forbidding unknown of which we could otherwise only dream' (p185). If fantasy is a literature of chaos, then the mistake we make is in attempting to impose our own order upon it, thus rewriting the text. As readers, we could take the less comfortable option of peering into the inchoate darkness to discover something far richer than our impotent material existence.

The Literature of Chaos

My interrogation of fantasy is not definitive because fantasy is elusive and will not be tamed. However, my greater aim is to bring Michael Moorcock's work out into the open and to begin a discussion about some of the most important texts from the end of this millennium which have, more or less, been ignored by academics. Patrick Parrinder proposes that our postmodern age be called 'The Age of Fantasy' [26] and whilst he decries the lack of contemporary British novelists in the international canon, he recognises that many of them 'are, however, in the forefront of twentieth-century fantasy' [27]. Moorcock certainly is at the forefront of fantasy and deserves to be taken seriously as a British writer of international renown before America claim him as one of their own.

Each chapter of the thesis is a hermeneutical commentary on specific Moorcock texts, and each discussion is an interpretative exploration meant as a platform for debate. I have found behavioural and philosophical criticism to be more fruitful than formalism, when applied to fantasy.

Chapter Two evaluates Moorcock's influence on science fiction as the leading figure in the 'New Wave' through his position as editor of the flagship magazine of speculative fiction in the 1960s.
and 70s. His policy encouraged avant-garde writing, which included experiments in surrealism and
the use of Jungian symbolism, for what was later called 'inner space' fantasy.

Moorcock is most famous for his Eternal Champion sequences that developed from *New Worlds*
and *Science Fantasy* magazines. Chapter Three attempts to identify a constantly evolving
Moorcockian system of images. Many of these early stories were very personal. Moorcock explains
that

Elric was me (the me of 1960-1, anyway) and the mingled qualities of betrayer
and betrayed, the bewilderment about life in general, the search for some solution
to it all, the expression of this bewilderment in terms of violence, cynicism and
the need for revenge, were all mine [28].

These heroic fantasies contain a strong sense of mysticism, with a deliberate use of metaphysical
language to create a clear cosmology based on the 'cosmic balance' between law and chaos, battled
out on the realms of men, and gods. His later fantasies reflect a growing subtlety and sustain more
focused and simplified ideas. A good example of this is the later Elric novel *The Revenge of the
Rose* (1991) which depends more on haunting moods and lietmotifs than on non-stop action.

The Jerry Cornelius mythos will probably be Moorcock's most popular and original legacy, even
though it does not necessarily represent his best work. The tetralogy reflects the psychedelic
zeitgeist of 'swinging London', and contains fragmented texts written in the language of pop music
and street culture. Chapter Four deals with Jerry Cornelius and outlines Moorcock's other career as
a rock musician and how that feeds into his fantasy. Michel Delville wrote in Foundation magazine
that "Moorcock is undoubtedly the most rock'n'roll of all sf writers"[29].

Chapter Five analyses fantasy in relation to comedy and romanticism. 'The Dancers At The End
of Time' series represents Moorcock's celebration of fin-de-siècle decadence. The series which
begins with *An Alien Heat* is both far-removed from naturalism whilst being steeped in realistic
detail and mimetic characterisation, commenting upon human nature and emotions from a new
perspective. Fantasy includes mimetic techniques, but mimesis excludes fantasy. This is the nature of fantastic realism.

Moorcock's *Gloriana* possibly out-peakes Peake, and is certainly a homage to his boy-hood hero with its marvellous landscapes and grotesque characters. Chapter Six argues why *Gloriana* should be regarded as an important twentieth century text. This also leads into a detailed discussion of Bakhtin's notion of 'carnival'.

Chapter Seven concentrates on *Mother London*, which fuses autobiography, history and fantasy in a non-linear narrative and is concerned with myth, masque and madness. It is an excellent example of fantastic realism and Bakhtin's 'polyphonic novel'.

The Pyat sequence (unfinished at time of writing) are Moorcock's most ambitious novels and in chapter Eight I attempt to show how Moorcock's interest in anarchism gives a postmodern twist to his concepts of chaos and law.

Chaos is an important concept within philosophical, cultural, psychological and scientific studies, and in literary theory the idea of entropy is inextricably linked with chaos. Moorcock has used and refined this idea more than any other author and in a more complex manner than Pynchon's more obvious usage. Chapter Nine displays how Moorcock has brought his imagery up to date via chaos theory, before returning to where he started - with the comic strip.

Moorcock is, in one sense of the word, a modernist as is shown most clearly in his obsession with reappraising mythology. In his editorial of *New Worlds*, Moorcock encouraged new writers to develop their own avant-garde forms of literature, rejecting traditional styles and conventions. Moorcock's later work displays a skill in fusing and employing traditions such as romanticism, satire and allegory to create postmodern pastiches, which recognise the absurd in our world. The Cornelius books are fragmented and have become part of the popular culture which they intended
to parody. Unlike postmodern writers, however, Moorcock continues to believe in a hidden truth, which involves 'good old-fashioned love'.

As a 'literary' writer Moorcock shows artistic ability in his myth-making and story-telling; in his creation of intriguing, psychological characters; in his subtle language and exotic vocabulary; with exploitation of metaphor and allegory; and in his presentation of imaginary landscapes, emotional relationships and application of philosophy and psychology.

The main body of the thesis closely relates fantasy theory to Moorcock's extensive oeuvre. He is a protean writer who has had a major influence on modern literature and to establish this I discuss the multifarious fields within which he works such as romance, heroic fantasy, science fiction, fabulation, surrealism, popular fiction, rock fiction, satire, allegory, fantastic realism, post-modernism, non-fiction, comics, rock music and even cinema. Most importantly, Moorcock's writing stems from both fantastic and realist traditions. More than any other writer he seems to appreciate that fantasy is an essential component of reality: therefore if you want true realism then you must have fantasy.

Not only should Moorcock be considered a major author of the late twentieth century and new millennium but also his writing demonstrates that fantasy continues to be one of literature's sharpest tools.
Notes

[8] Erich Auerbach Mimesis, New Jersey 1968, p23
[9] C.G. Jung Modern Man In Search of a Soul, p180
[10] Jung p183
[14] Tolkien p50
[17] Clute and Grant The Encyclopedia of Fantasy, Orbit 1997 p618
[20] Private letter see appendix
[21] Private interview see appendix
[22] Private letter
[23] Private letter
[27] Parrinder p113
Chapter 2  

BRAVE NEW WORLDS

In modern technological living the spiritual cosmic self has been so estranged that the wonderment faculty was near-completely numbed ... It was, then, necessary to re-establish that contact with the cosmic self, to revive one's faculty of wonder. It was necessary to turn to 'inner space'

Jeff Nuttall Bomb Culture, MacGibbon & Kee, 1968, p252

Biography

Michael Moorcock is not a science fiction writer. He is a protean writer whose literature, ranging from epic realism to supernatural fantasy, defies classification. Like Kurt Vonnegut, Moorcock is a fabulist, experimenting with literary and unorthodox styles. Although some of his juvenilia is sf in terms of the alien settings and technological imagery, Moorcock's main impact in the science fiction field has been as editor of New Worlds magazine, which became the flagship for the so-called 'New Wave of Science Fiction' in the 1960s. He took over from Ted Carnell when he was only twenty-five, but was already, by that time, an experienced writer and editor. Moorcock's sf is less 'science fiction' than 'speculative fiction', a term introduced by Robert Heinlein in the 1950s and one preferred in the 1990s by the magazine Back Brain Recluse, which has published Moorcock's writing.

Born in Mitcham, South London in 1939, Moorcock was a child of the War, and his earliest memories include exploring bombed buildings, watching dog fights in the sky, and feeling terror at the destruction of the blitz [1]. Elements of Moorcock's early life sound vaguely Dickensian. His father left when he was six and he was sent away to school. A number of formative years were spent at the Michael Hall Steiner Waldorf School in Forest Row, Sussex. Steiner schools emphasise the spiritual, physiological and artistic aspects of education and prefer to think of learning as a mystical journey: "The arabesques and serendipity of infancy, the Golden Fleece of the heart of childhood, the often painful transformation of childhood into youth and the rewarding and fulfilling
discovery of self-conquest at the moment of stepping into life are all part of this journey' [2]. Moorcock states that 'my school did actually shape my life' [3] and the Steiner philosophy not only encouraged his wild imagination, but inspired many of his ideas for the 'multiverse', discussed in the next chapter. It is likely that Steiner's 'cosmic Christianity', as Moorcock calls it, also influenced his political allegiance to anarchism. Rudolf Steiner preferred heuristic to authoritarian teaching. 'I am free only when I myself produce these (moral mental) pictures, not when all I can do is carry out the motives someone else has implanted in me' [4]

The young Michael was expelled for his attempted escapes and lying which were a result of his young exuberance and over-active imagination. He was reading classics and popular literature from an early age and would entertain his dormitory at night with fantastic tales. Whilst at school he was already typing his own fanzines. The first was 'Outlaw's Own' in 1949, and the better ones included 'Book Collector's News' and eighteen issues of 'Burroughsania' on Edgar Rice Burroughs and related authors. Before he left school at fifteen he was already a serious book collector with useful contacts in publishing and bookselling, and had written his first novel - a self-indulgent piece of adolescent erotica which was eaten by rats before he could send it to a publisher.

His first jobs in the city included being a messenger for a shipping company and then an office boy, a job which allowed him to continue printing fanzines. At sixteen he was asked to write a story for the magazine Tarzan Adventures, and his Sojan stories were accepted. A year later he became the full-time editor of that same magazine. By the age of twenty Moorcock joined the Sexton Blake Library, and at least one book, *Caribbean Crisis*, is written fully by him, but attributed to the house pseudonym, Desmond Reid. He sold a story to *New Worlds* magazine in 1959, which caused Carnell to commision a fantasy series for a sister magazine. This was the first Elric story.
Still in his early twenties, he left his employers to become a full-time writer and journalist, and at this time he travelled, and he has admitted in public appearances that he drank extensively. He also claims to have had visions when he was ill seeing images of Christ or buildings shimmering, which he insists were not aided by hallucinogenics. He has almost certainly used LSD and cannabis and shows a familiarity with the use of casual drugs in the Jerry Cornelius books and early stories such as 'The Deep Fix'. He was a prolific writer, sometimes writing a hundred pages a day if necessary, although he found scripting comic strips more financially lucrative than novel writing. One of his more unusual jobs was copyediting Jo Grimond's Liberal Party tracts.

Another source of income was from his music. He played semi-professionally with The Greenhorns, and sang and played guitar for various other bands, enough to get a taste of the music scene as it began erupting in the early sixties. This important element in his career is chronicled in more detail in Chapter Four.

In April 1963, Moorcock was asked to contribute a guest editorial to New Worlds, and this was the beginning of his big opportunity. In 1964 he was invited to succeed Carnell as editor of New Worlds, a job which not only helped him work out his own poetics, but which allowed him to be critical of the existing literary establishment, and experiment with forms and styles in his own writing. As editor of an sf magazine, Moorcock was surprisingly condemnatory towards conventional sf with its cliched formulas and outmoded icons. In an early editorial he wrote that 'too many of today's stories are using the terms of the thirties, forties and fifties, terms which are becoming increasingly unrelated to present-day society' (NW 148). The main part of this chapter assesses the importance of the radical editorial policy of Moorcock's New Worlds and its legacy.

During this fertile period two notable experimental Moorcock novels came to prominence, The Final Programme (1968), which subsequently became a film (Goodtime Films, directed by R.
Fuest), and *Behold The Man* (1969) which won the Nebula Award. He continued producing Fantasy novels, mainly for financial security, finding a more profitable market in America. *New Worlds* was successful and it achieved its aims of discovering new talent and establishing innovative writing, but its publication became an exhausting task for Moorcock who was paying for it from his own pocket, unfortunately it also drained him emotionally and physically. In 1974 he handed over the editorship, although he still owns the name, and *New Worlds* still exists as an occasional anthology of new short stories.

The 1970s saw Moorcock involved with the Ladbroke Grove psychedelic scene and he joined the cult band Hawkwind (see chapter four) and rock music seemed to give him a fresh impetus for his writing. He is now a world-renowned author, whose entry in *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* states, 'He is the most important UK fantasy author of the 1960s and 1970s' [5]. This is slightly misleading as some of his best writing has appeared since then, and in 1991 Angela Carter recognised his genius by calling him the 'master story-teller of our time' [6].

He met his third wife in America where he has lived since 1994, and the 1990s have seen a revival of Moorcock's extensive canon with most of his novels and short stories enjoying revision and republication in omnibus form by Millenium, Orion. He is interested in exploring interactive fiction and has completed a cd-Rom and book entitled *Silverheart*. Projected titles include *The Vengeance of Rome*, *King of the City*, and some new *Elric* novels.

I shall show how *New Worlds* accurately manifested and influenced popular culture and subcultures and how Michael Moorcock became a visionary fabulist who captured the spirit of the age.

The New Wave of SF

Michael Moorcock has radical beliefs and he shows socialist-anarchistic ideals in his political thinking, which began to take shape in his earlier editorial policy of *New Worlds*. In *The Retreat*
From Liberty (1983), he expresses his rebellious nature with the argument that 'One does not always have to swim with the tide and sometimes a determination to swim against it produces a surprisingly good result' [7]. Moorcock, as an editor, certainly helped change the definitions of sf, and his influence on the history of the genre is well-known within sf fandom. Robert Scholes and Eric Rabkin argue that 'If anything, Moorcock's break with the past was more complete and radical than any of the others we have considered' [8].

The rise of the 'New Wave' became focused around the magazine which attracted writers from Britain and the US. The phenomenon affected both countries. Darrell Schweitzer stressed the important role the editor played; 'Moorcock became editor of ... New Worlds, and had a tremendously liberating influence on the entire science fiction field' [9]. Moorcock had had enough of formula sf with its sexist obsessions and preponderance of war against bug-eyed monsters. He chose an sf magazine for his vision because that seemed the field most open to new ideas. Kingsley Amis, for one, in his New Maps of Hell (1961), whilst fatuously 'grateful' to sf, considered it as substandard and lacking 'a growing concern for style' [10]. Hoping sf writers could 'rise' to the level of William Golding or John Updike, he made the following plea:

What one really wants to see, of course, is not merely a process of self-reform on the part of existing science-fiction authors, but an irruption into the field of a new sort of talent: young writers equally at home in this and in ordinary fiction [11].

Moorcock did not so much hope sf would raise its level, but 'that a different kind of fiction . . . could come out of a marriage between experimental forms and old-style genre sf' [12]. Bored with the pessimistic mainstream novels of the fifties and sixties, Moorcock was more ambitious than most and with the help of J.G. Ballard began an experiment in form, narrative and language. New Worlds did more than revolutionise sf, it encouraged and nurtured a completely new direction in contemporary fiction.

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Through his courageous editorial policy and his ambitious and risky support of new talent, Moorcock single-handedly created a new form of speculative fiction which became more concerned with man's alienation from the world, expressed through imagery rooted in the modern world and relevant to popular culture. Moorcock wrote in one of his editorials:

Through their fiction *New Worlds* writers are ... pioneers to the new, strange countries of the mind which will exist tomorrow. They have not lost their sense of wonder ... They are providing us with information, a language, a code, a new mythology. [13]

The inspiration for this new mode of fiction came from Salvador Dali, William Burroughs, Carl Jung and Jimi Hendrix. The new territory to be explored became known as 'inner-space', a concept earlier pushed by up-and-coming writer J.G. Ballard in *New Worlds* 118. Inner space implies an existentialist condition as exhibited by Sartre in *The Age of Reason*, with its focus on 'self', and Camus' sense of the absurd as portrayed in *The Outsider*. This new fiction interrogated real life experiences such as alienation, sexuality, drug trips and psychosis. Moorcock was obsessed with the ambition to celebrate inventive, radical and relevant writing, which would go beyond the limited genre of science fiction and cross over into literary and, more importantly, popular culture.

In his profile of sf writers, Charles Platt, himself an early *New Worlds* contributor, describes the mood of the 'new wave'.

Moorcock sustained much of the momentum: he was iconoclastic and flamboyant... He became the editorial focus for new writing talent ... There was a sense of Significance and Destiny about the whole thing. [14]

Moorcock's aim was to blur the distinctions between mainstream literature and science fiction or fantasy, and indeed he has succeeded in his own canon of works such as the Cornelius mythos; other renowned authors have aimed to do likewise, such as Kurt Vonnegut, Doris Lessing and Anthony Burgess. Isaac Asimov, a defender of the 'Golden Age' of sf, is more sceptical about the achievements in his generalised survey of sf, in which he dismisses the New Wave as relying on
'stylistic experimentation, a heavy infusion of sex and violence, and, most of all, a mood of deep pessimism' [15]. Contrary to this, anyone reading *New Worlds* from issue 142 onwards will identify a feeling of excitement and irony, and in retrospect, Moorcock remembers the 'optimism and idealism' [16]. Certainly, some opinions were angry, but revolutions demand pragmatism and passion.

J.G. Ballard's subsequent world-renowned success is mostly due to Moorcock's tenacity and faith in his early experiments. It was Ballard who championed William Burroughs, Salvador Dali and Alfred Jarry, whilst the editor exhibited enthusiasm for Mervyn Peake, Jorge Luis Borges, Herman Hesse and Bertolt Brecht. Ballard has only positive comments to make about his friend - 'Mike was a great editor and *New Worlds* under his editorship was the most important literary magazine of the sixties' [17]. Another contributor and critic, John Clute, told me in conversation that whilst Moorcock was full of 'elated youthfulness', that, nevertheless, *New Worlds* was an important 'nutrient tank' adding a rich texture to a confused sixties culture.

To attempt to show the impact Moorcock had upon the sf and British literary worlds, it is necessary to sketch a brief commentary on science fiction as it existed before *New Worlds* [18].

**Science Fiction**

Science fiction is often thought of as a modern mode of writing, but it is really a mode used by all generations through history as a way of imagining and predicting the future. Sf can warn us through its cynical exploration of human dystopia, as in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; or it can inspire cultures towards greater technology and communications, such as space travel or Arthur C Clarke's satellite designs. Writers like Kim Stanley Robinson are predicting the terraforming of Mars, whilst William Gibson has developed a near future where obsession with Virtual-Reality, communication technology and prosthetics has created a nightmarish reality. Science fiction itself has become
fragmented into sub-genres such as 'Hard sf', which demands adherence to the scientific method; the 'cyberpunk' of Gibson and others; and there are arguments over the definitions of such terms as 'science fantasy', 'speculative fiction', 'slipstream'. For the most succinct definitions see Clute's definitive Encyclopedia of Science Fiction. Robert Scholes, an sf scholar, offered the rather awkward 'structural fabulation' which also encompasses the writings of Jorge Luis Borges, Thomas Pynchon and William Golding. Featherstone and Burrows believe the influences on cyberpunk include 'the literary avant-garde represented by William S. Burroughs ... the science fiction of Philip K. Dick, Michael Moorcock and J.G. Ballard' [19].

In ancient Greece stories of gods and heroes held the same position that sf and fantasy hold today, in terms of expressing the myths and dreams of that civilisation or generation. Plato's Timaeus (5th century BC) recounts a history of Atlantis, but the history of science fiction properly begins with the Greek romancer, Lucian of Somosata whose True History (AD 150) is a comic interplanetary voyage to the moon and beyond encountering monsters and giants.

Travel tales were popular in medieval times and were among some of the first successes of Caxton's printing machines. The Man in the Moone by Bishop Francis Goodwin was first published in 1638, but written before, describing travel through space, being towed by swans. Other scientific romances followed, including The Comical History of the States and Empires of the World of the Moon (1656) by Cyrano de Bergerac, in which the hero straps vials of liquid to his belt and rises towards the moon due to evaporation. The text anticipates various inventions such as the light bulb and the phonograph when the protagonist 'winds up that Machine ... and straight, as from the Mouth of a Man, or a Musical instrument, proceed all the distinct and different sounds' [20].

The most celebrated of the voyage novels is Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels which fuses elements of fantasy and science fiction, as does the writing of Voltaire, especially Micromegas
(1750), which chronicles the arrival of two aliens from Saturn bringing a book of knowledge promising to explain life, universe and everything, but which contains blank pages. A similar use of bathos has been used by Moorcock in the Elric story 'The Dreaming City'.

Aldiss claims that 'SF began with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818)' [21], a seminal text which has been written about exhaustively. Then a new genius of the adventure story appeared, Jules Verne, whom Asimov names 'The first science fiction writer' [22]. His international success with *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* in 1864, began a line of now classic novels, spawning countless copies, most notably *The Battle of Dorking* (1871) by G.T. Chesney (later edited and anthologised by Moorcock) until the arrival of the seminal modern sf text by the founding father of modern science fiction, *The Time Machine* by H.G. Wells (1895). Moorcock frequently cites Wells as a hero.

*We*, by the Russian Yevgeny Zamyatin (1920), presents us with a stark totalitarian dystopia which probably influenced George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, which are both accepted as mainstream novels. *We* presents the dualism of order and control opposed to liberty and artistic expression, where characters are only numbers and any creative rhetoric is punishable by lobotomy. This dualism preludes Moorcock's obsession with Chaos and Law. Orwell and Huxley are also excellent examples of writers who are protean in their scope.

The American Hugo Gernsback, through his editorship of 'scientifiction' magazine *Amazing Stories* from 1926 single-handedly forged the pulp, stereotypical science fiction so easily parodied with its bug-eyed-monsters (BEM), impossible inventions, inherent sexism, and gigantic spaceships. The magazine dominated the market, genre, readership and fandom for more than a decade. Most notable among its popular and enduring stories were E.E. Smith's 'Skylark' and the
'Buck Rogers' adventures, all early 'space operas' and Western-style shootouts set in space. This was the formulaic sf, which Moorcock would later criticise.

In 1937, John Campbell took over the influential *Astounding* magazine which heralded what is called 'The Golden Age of sf', dominated by Isaac Asimov and Robert Heinlein. The magazine promoted L. Ron Hubbard's pseudo science of Dianetics, which became the profitable cult of Scientology. Hosts of copycat magazines followed and science fiction became a genre instantly recognisable and easily stereotyped. Even now friends of Campbell discuss whether he created or destroyed sf. The template was set.

Then the New Wave occurred in London in the early sixties with Moorcock encouraging the popularity of arts like rock music, comics and fine art, aligning *New Worlds* with the likes of James Joyce. Moorcock printed the writing and artwork of Mervyn Peake; the poetry of George Macbeth; and published *Entropy* by Thomas Pynchon for the first time in England. It was also *New Worlds* that first introduced the art of M.C. Escher to Britain in 1967. Regular contributors included authors now respected in their own right: Ballard, Aldiss, D.M. Thomas, Thomas Disch and Samuel R Delany. In its changing fortunes over a decade, it received an Arts Council grant, but it was also banned by W.H. Smiths and mentioned in parliament for the salacious content of one story. For the most comprehensive history and critical assessment of the magazine see Colin Greenland's scholarly *The Entropy Exhibition* (1983).

Science fiction continued to flourish in the cinema and comics became graphic novels. Sf even inspired rock stars, particularly Hawkwind, David Bowie and Pink Floyd. Moorcock and US sf writer, Robert Calvert, have written for and sung with Hawkwind. Moorcock has his own band, The Deep Fix, and has written stories about Jimi Hendrix, The Sex Pistols and Hawkwind. Sf is intimately bound with popular culture and music.
An aim of New Worlds writing was to defy generic categorisation, something also true of Moorcock's own fiction. The generic boundaries are now fading and overlapping thanks to writers like Moorcock and today sf is a more acceptable part of contemporary literature, now frequently studied at universities. C.N. Manlowe interpreted the new wave in the following way.

New Worlds under the editorship of Michael Moorcock aimed to break down the 'genre' fence of science fiction, and, while still retaining its imaginative and technical licence with 'reality', make it capable of effects which would give it authority as literature in its own right [23].

In this relativistic world the existence of 'objective truth' is less certain and human hesitation can be explored more successfully through abstract concepts and structures. Moorcock understood this and believed that science fiction and fantasy help our culture to regain a long lost sense of wonder and idealism.

Moorcock's appraisal of the importance of sf is generous:

... in its concern for discovering new techniques, new subject matter and so on, sf may well have made the greatest contribution to the development of the novel in the 20th century, just as the Gothic contributed in the 19th century [24].

It seems that the development of sf itself owes much to what Aldiss calls 'the Moorcockian revolution' [25], which has proved that, in literature, it is necessary to recognise the tremendous power of that abstract idea of sf as an attempt, however crude, to build some sort of philosophical and metaphysical framework round the immense changes of our time ... a development which has largely obliterated the ramshackle old frameworks of medieval thought and organised religion. [26]

Fantasy and science fiction are two of the few modes that can satisfy us in these grand and ambitious terms. What is required is new criticism and a new language.
A New Metaphor

Whether sf can be recognised by its style or settings, by its characters or props, by a particular author or use of language and jargon, or by its recognisably sf cover and artwork, seems to be becoming less important. Most bookshops still separate sf (and include fantasy with it), whilst critics such as Malcolm Bradbury recognise its increasing literary importance.

In the hands of such expert "new wave" practitioners as J.G. Ballard... and the prolific Michael Moorcock, SF was becoming an ever more self-conscious instrument for exploring the unease, the sadness, the anomie, the mechanical massing... [27].

More importantly, Bradbury saw that sf was not just a separate sub-genre of literature but that 'Science fiction ... now exercised a growing influence on the literary novel' [28].

Colin Greenland recognised the fact that the true worth and legacy of Moorcock's *New Worlds* has had little academic recognition and his book, adapted from his doctorate, redresses that balance. He identifies sexuality and psychology as two topics that sf had avoided but which for *NW* writers became major motifs. Greenland contextualises the milieu as one where artistic expression found its most potent force within youth counterculture, where it was 'claimed that [mind-altering] drugs offered philosophical and moral benefits, in the liberation of the senses and imagination from physical and habitual restraints' [29]. Timothy Leary and RD Laing attempted to legitimise cannabis and LSD and their psychological effects and mind-bending qualities seemed an ideal starting point. Brian Aldiss' 'Acid Head War' stories became the novel *Barefoot In the Head*, a psychedelic disaster novel, fragmented and obtuse, in the experimental style of Burroughs, by evoking a drug-induced consciousness. Kathryn Hume places it alongside one of the major works of the twentieth century. 'An author can reach a new kind of reality by manipulating language. Joyce does it in *Finnegan's Wake*. Aldiss does it in *Barefoot in the Head* [30]. The *NW* writers would continue to play with language and narrative forms in an attempt to explore inner space.
Greenland discusses the allegorical imagery of the surrealist painters which tends to be 'distorted in proportion and perspective' [31] and shows how Ballard uses distortion, fragmentation and perspective in his 'condensed novels'. Many of his stories exhibit style over content, for example, *The Crystal World*, first serialised in *NW*, where description and disintegration clutter up the text preventing the plot from gaining any momentum. The text becomes a texture of paranoia, strangeness and dislocated symbolism for which the sub-text takes precedence over literal interpretation.

If *NW* new-wave sf was 'a new Gothicke' as Greenland suggests, then the phantasms and demons are part of the unconscious and the dreaming mind. The richest example of Jungian fiction in *NW* can be found in *The Golden Barge* by Moorcock, which was written in 1957, condensed as a short story in 1965, and finally published as a novel in 1979. The narrative has an elusive dream-like quality, which owes something to Peake, which presents Jephraim Tallow, ephemerally distracted from his destiny to follow the mysterious barge. He is tempted away by a love which seems perfect until it degenerates into a group orgy, 'a pulsating pyramid of flesh' [32], which disgusts him enough to drown the woman he loves. The story uses rich language and dense symbolism and Greenland acknowledges that 'Moorcock was already demonstrating a larger vocabulary than others' [33]. It is this idiosyncrasy which made his work stand out.

Disintegration and fragmentation were best served by a new metaphor - namely, entropy. Greenland points out that Freud had already discussed psychological entropy, but for the *NW* writers it became a metaphor for the breaking down of conventions and structures. Science writer James Gleick defines the concept, which comes from the second law of thermodynamics, as 'the inexorable tendency of the universe, and any isolated system in it to slide toward a state of
increasing disorder' [34]. Associated ideas include 'mixing' and 'randomness', and the link with Moorcock's non-linear and anarchic fiction is clear.

The literary employment of entropy is documented in City of Words by Tony Tanner, in which he describes the trope as 'the increasing disorder of energy moving at random within a closed system, finally arriving at total inertia' [35]. He argues that this describes a strong literary tradition, including, most notably, Bleak House by Charles Dickens with fog and darkness leading to perpetual stoppage. One writer who explicitly uses the images of homeostasis and dissipation is Thomas Pynchon. In his story, Entropy, anthologised in NW, communication deteriorates, music and noise become a discordant confusion, the temperature remains constant and people seal themselves from the outside world. Moorcock uses similar ideas, particularly in the Jerry Cornelius mythos (see Chapter Four).

Entropic fiction tends to emphasise madness, cruelty and death, whilst fragmenting character, plot, time and space. Moorcock's literature tends to disrupt convention and formula and in doing so is subversive. He also takes the dualism between chaos and order as his main theme, as detailed in the next chapter. Greenland recognises entropy as an idea in communication theory and links these two concepts.

Disruption is not really enough without the suggestion of some kind of order, lost or not quite achieved. It is the tension between the dialects, between order and chaos, communication and confusion, which is the highest power of a dissociated style [36].

NW managed to communicate relevant ideas with an anarchic use of language. The chaotic content and style was carefully planned and structured.

Moorcock is not a cynic but a romantic and idealist, and he told me in an interview in November 1993 that 'We use up a lot of energy, collapse and grow cold... I believe in a sense that human love conquers entropy and that you'll find running through a lot of my books.'
Moorcock with his radical *New Worlds* editorial policy subverted traditional sf expectations, believing instead that

SF is simply imaginative fiction. It is speculative about science, religion, art, anything treated in a fresh and imaginative way... The emphasis can be psychological, sociological, metaphysical, the treatment can be surrealistic, realistic or deliberately extravagant. (*NW* 151)

Moorcock was keen to break down boundaries by not claiming to publish sf, but imaginative and challenging literature.

*Behold the Man*

If the two main themes of the *New Worlds* writers were psychology and sexuality, then nowhere was this more powerfully explored than in Moorcock's own story, 'Behold the Man', which was later developed into a novel, to which I shall be referring. The story rewrites Jesus' passion in Jungian-psychological terms. Jung has used the concept of entropy to identify a state of equilibrium in an individual's psychic energy, concluding that 'schizophrenia may well be understood as a phenomenon of entropy' [37].

*Behold the Man* attempts to recast the Christ myth into an individualistic perspective and examine its wider, psychological meaning for a human in the twentieth century. Moorcock shows a continuing fascination with the messiah archetype in much of his writing, using ancient mythological patterns to inform a modern audience. Anthropologist James Frazer, in his classic study of magic and religion *The Golden Bough* (1890), identifies the messianic archetype as one which is celebrated in most times and places.

Thus the old magical theory of the seasons was displaced or rather supplemented, by a religious theory ... And as they now explained the fluctuations of growth and decay, of reproduction and dissolution, by ... the death and the rebirth or revival of the gods, their religious or rather magical dramas turned in great measure on these themes [38].
James Frazer traces the symbol of the messiah and divine sacrifice to early heathen magic and concludes that the myths of resurrection probably originate from the human desire to understand the annual cycle in nature - from the fertility of spring to the sterility of winter - as told in the tale of Persephone and the Arthurian legends. Frazer compares the Egyptian worship of Osiris, the Babylonian Adonis (Tammuz) who represented decay and revival, and the ritual of Attis, and suggests how they influenced Christian traditions and interpretations of Christ's resurrection; certainly the rites and symbolism of each bear a striking resemblance [39].

*Behold the Man* explores the modern idea that religious mythology has been replaced by psychology and scientific interpretations of understanding. It is a disturbing and shocking reworking of the story of Jesus Christ, questioning the meaning and reality of being a messiah. This challenging text deserves detailed analysis.

The protagonist of *Behold the Man* is Karl Glogauer, a twentieth century Jew and psychologist-manqué who is filled with adolescent sexual obsessions in which religious icons become confused with perverted fantasies. Masturbation is his only retreat from loneliness; Glogauer is abused by a curate and therefore betrayed by his religion, and then his interest in Jungian psychology leads him into an internal struggle between mysticism and rationalism.

After discovering that 'time is nothing to do with space - it is to do with the psyche' (p64), he chooses to go back in time to meet Jesus Christ. Glogauer is at first forced to reject his own identity and take on the mantle of the Messiah himself, after being shocked at discovering that Jesus of Nazareth is merely a gibbering, dribbling imbecile. As he acts out the role he begins to enjoy the self-importance of becoming Saviour of Mankind. In a schizophrenic passion 'Karl Glogauer entered Christ and Christ entered Jerusalem' (p132).
The text is made up of dual narratives, jumping from earlier memories of sexual and intellectual frustrations to his arrival in Jerusalem. The irony becomes more complex and involved as we hear Glogauer in the twentieth century debating the existence of Christ and stating 'I'm not a martyr.' (p57) Yet it seems to be his destiny. As he takes on the messiahship, he remembers back to the twentieth century when his girlfriend, Monica, had left him a note with the words, 'Christianity is just a new name for a conglomeration of old myths and philosophies. All the Gospels do is retell the sun myth and garble some ideas from the Greeks and Romans' (p62).

The ensuing complication now leaves us with a confusion of philosophies and some paradoxes. If Karl Glogauer is Christ then the unsuspecting Glogauer, when reading the Gospels in his own time, was inadvertently reading of his own doings. The other paradox involves the familiar sf problem of changing the past and how that affects the future; the pragmatic dilemma of all time-travellers.

Moorcock shows an intelligent understanding of the ideas of Carl Jung and the powerful 'reality' of the archetype. In a discussion with Monica, Glogauer states, "Jung knew that the myth can also create the reality" (p71). The question is - does it matter if the death and resurrection of Christ are true or is it the symbolism that is relevant? In this respect, Karl Glogauer has both created the myth and been drawn into it, because he believed that humanity needed it to be true. When he saw that Jesus was incapable of saving people's souls he took the responsibility, or, at least, indulged in the power it would bring, believing that an ersatz Christ was better than no Christ at all. At least the myth would be there for people to put their faith in and perhaps faith in a myth is preferable to having no faith or hope. The remaining irony is that it takes a neurotic pervert whose life had been a complete mess to become the Messiah. Moorcock demysticises many of the sacred beliefs of
Christianity, and yet he does not deny the truth of the crucifixion; but rather admits its necessity for mankind, whether genuine or not. The symbolism of the cross transcends its historical reality.

Glogauer is an exponent of psychoanalysis and he realises that he can cure hysterical symptoms and neuroses, showing how the twentieth century understanding of medicine and illness has lead to different conclusions and understandings of what once were explained as miracles. Psychology, it seems, has become the new religion, or at least, the theology, of post-modern society. 'Many he could do nothing for, but others, obviously with remediable psychosomatic conditions, he could help. They believed in his power more strongly than they believed in their sickness. So he cured them' (p115). Moorcock offers a psychological interpretation of spiritual healing.

Jung argued for a privatised or individual religion where 'God' is a projection of the psyche. Many liberal theologians have used his and other ideas to make the Christian faith more applicable to a modern culture. Bishop John Robinson in Honest to God (1963) wrote convincingly of a change in symbolism from 'God out there' to 'God in the depths', and also suggests that Jesus cannot be a true human if he is miraculously born. This paradox calls us to believe in a humanity and a divinity. He further questions whether this traditional (he calls it 'supranatural') belief is relevant to modern people and asks if the belief will survive, concluding,

Yes, indeed, it can survive - as myth. For myth has its perfectly legitimate, and indeed profoundly important place. The myth is there to indicate the significance of the events, the divine depth of the history [40].

So even if Christ's death and resurrection are a myth, they still retains their importance and validity because they are real for any individual who believes in them. Glogauer has acted this out.

For Robinson, there is a need for a reinterpretation of Christology. The myth, or truth, needs to be reinterpreted and his radical psychological framework is an exploration and realisation of the existential beliefs that Don Cupitt calls modern Western Christians to:
This task of working out a vision of God takes the more human and concrete form of framing a personal vision of Christ, who is our own ideal alter ego, our true Self that we are to become, our religious ideal actualised in human form [41].

Glogauer in *Behold the Man* portrays this self-realisation and offers the extreme example. The author forces the reader to rethink and re-evaluate Christian dogma and sentimentality, challenging Christians to look beyond the sacred taboo of fearing to question. Moorcock asks what a messiah is and concludes that subjective belief in a myth is more important than the objective proof of 'reality'. Jung's claims seem more relevant than ever when he wrote in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* that

> The modern man, moreover, is not eager to know in what way he can imitate Christ, but in what way he can live his own individual life, however meagre and uninteresting it may be [42].

Freud criticised faith as an emotional crutch; Marx called it the drug of the masses by which people are easily fooled, and Moorcock asks likewise, 'Why did it matter?' (BTM, p.118) and suggests that the symbolism of the cross is more important than its reality. Glogauer's motives are not entirely pure - the ideal of martyrdom could be one of two things: a Romantic and ascetic folly or some perverted form of masochistic self-importance. In one sense he is driven by a public demand for salvation and is the creation of a rapturous crowd hungry for salvation. Just as the Eternal Champion becomes the pawn for the Lord of Chaos and Law, messiahs in Moorcock's writing are seen as symbols exploited for the greater need of a group or as a means of creating power for an individual.

Many Fantasy writers have shown interest in God, religion and redemption through human sacrifice, including H.G. Wells, M.P. Shiel and Philip K. Dick, but Moorcock's *Behold the Man* remains one of the most contentious critiques on the figure of Christ, daring to explore regions often considered taboo.
Mainstream authors have, at various times, written about Jesus, offering alternative interpretations. In Gore Vidal's black comedy *Live from Golgotha* (1992) Jesus has time-travelled to the twentieth century where he becomes a 'lardass' computer hacker called Marvin, just part of a wildly innovative trashy, cyberpunk plot. A more sympathetic critique can be found in George Moore's *The Brook Kerith* which describes Jesus from the viewpoint of Joseph of Arimathaea who had joined the Essenes, a charismatic cult. In the book Jesus does not die; a theory also explored by D.H. Lawrence in *The Man Who Died* where Jesus wakes up in the tomb and wanders off, losing his virginity to a nymphomaniac priestess. *The Last Temptation of Christ* by Kazantzakis (also a film by Martin Scorsese) attempts to display the true humanity of Christ who is tempted by the sexual fantasy and passionate instinct to marry Mary Magdalene and raise a family, rather than to die in excruciating pain. The temptation is only a dream and a wish that is never fulfilled.

Renowned Fantasists George McDonald, Charles Williams, C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkein created allegorical tales and landscapes where good wins over evil and much of the imagery relates to specifically Christian traditions and helps define the Christian (Victorian) morality. Landscapes and characters explicitly symbolise this spiritual struggle; for example the land of Bulika in *Lilith* by MacDonald, or in Narnia where Aslan is Christ, sacrificed and raised to life by Deeper Magic from before the Dawn of Time' [43].

For Professor Tolkein, the essence of the Fairy Tale is the happy ending, which he renames 'the eucatastrophe' and he compares Fantasy to the 'reality' of God and religious faith.

(The Gospels) contain many marvels - peculiarly artistic, beautiful and moving; 'mythical' in their perfect, self-contained significance ... The Birth of Christ is the eucatastrophe of Man's history. The resurrection is the eucatastrophe of the story of the Incarnation [44].

In his guide to Fantasy literature, *Wizardry and Wild Romance* Moorcock decries the sentimental 'nursery room sobriety' of Tolkein's fairyland where religious faith is used to create guilt and
prejudice against anything which is unsettling or threatens conservative values. Moorcock states in political terms,

_The Lord of the Rings_ is a pernicious confirmation of the values of a morally bankrupt middle class. Their cowardly Home Counties habits are primarily responsible for the problems England now faces [45].

Moorcock dislikes the paternalism that upholds autocratic authoritarian values. His writing instead tackles the taboos, anxieties and fears of the post-modern culture, using language and concepts familiar to his readers, and preferring not to sentimentalise or moralise with the evangelistic zeal of Lewis and MacDonald.

The stark ending of _Behold the Man_ offers no answers or solutions, and although the novel avoids didacticism preferring to ask questions, Moorcock did have a challenging aim, which, he explained, was to

suggest to the reader that we all share some responsibility for the world's ills ... Glogauer is something of a victim and product of his society, but it doesn't excuse anything he does [46].

This does suggest that we create our own gods, demons and heroes; our own hopes and despairs; our own law and chaos. Moorcock remains optimistic and hopeful with his agnostic belief that love conquers death. However much he criticises the likes of Lewis and Tolkein, he, too, believes that good wins over evil, because for Moorcock, love is the balance.
Notes

[1] Sources include private letters and 'An evening with MM' at The Young Vic, London -6/12/93
[2] Information Leaflet from the Steiner Schools Fellowship
[7] Retreat From Liberty, p7
[16] New Worlds Anthology, Fontana. Introduction p26
[18] See Brian Aldiss in Trillion Year Spree or Edward James Science Fiction in the 20th Century.
[21] Brian Aldiss, Trillion Year Spree, Gollancz, 1986 p18
[22] Issac Asimov, Asimov on Science Fiction, Granada, 1983 p205
[25] Brian Aldiss and Harry Harrison, Hells Cartographers, Orbit 1975, p200
[26] Brian Aldiss and Harry Harrison, Hells Cartographers, Orbit 1975, p203
[30] Kathryn Hume Fantasy and Mimesis, p166-7
[31] Colin Greenland - The Entropy Exhibition, p106
[32] New Worlds 155 p49
[33] Colin Greenland - The Entropy Exhibition, p122
[34] James Gleick Chaos, p257
[35] Tony Tanner City of Words, p142
[36] Colin Greenland - The Entropy Exhibition, p179
[37] CG Jung On the Nature of the Psyche, Ark, p26
[40] J Robinson Honest To God, SCM, 1963, p67-8
[41] D Cupitt The Sea of Faith, BBC, 1984, p271
[42] CS Lewis The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, Puffin, 1959, 142
[43] JRR Tolkein Tree and Leaf, Unwin, 1964, p62
[45] Greenland Death Is No Obstacle, p63
Any interrogation of fantasy must acknowledge the origins of imagination, where folklore and religions express the feelings and spirituality of humanity. Sir James Frazer's study of magic and ritual, *The Golden Bough*, makes invaluable connections between cultures, traditions and ages, showing how similar patterns emerge in responses to the natural world. Fantasy begins in the primeval depths and darkness of man's mind, which has always been obsessed with fear and superstition regarding the world and divine power. Ancient myths and religious belief systems have created pantheons of gods, demons, heroes and monsters to symbolise the origins of creation and explain the workings of the universe; to personify good and evil; to help moralise and legitimise law and order, and therefore power and punishment, which can become political tools. We can see how myth and religious dogma or sacred writings have created a potent source of fantasy and imagery whose influence is easily detectable in much literature and art. This begins a circular argument about whether fantasy has created religion or vice versa. It therefore seems ironic that in Britain, the Protestant Christian tradition has arguably rejected fantasy. Frazer reminds us of the importance of mythology and rituals, warning us not to dismiss them as 'primitive'. 'To stigmatise these premises as ridiculous because we can easily detect their falseness, would be ungrateful as well as unphilosophical' [1]. The same warning would be pertinent to anyone who rejects fantasy literature.
C.G. Jung’s work on archetypes of the collective unconscious applies psychological models to fairy tales and fantastic texts. Much modern fantasy fits into the patterns of dream-analysis and the theory of types developed by him, and many of these ideas are explained in *Modern Man In Search of a Soul* (1933). In Moorcock’s *The Quest For Tanelorn*, the creature called 'The Four Become One' experiences a moment akin to enlightenment or Jung's 'individuation' when he confronts the entire multiverse and knows no fear.

For the mind of man alone is free to explore the lofty vastness of the cosmic infinite, to transcend ordinary consciousness, or roam the subterranean corridors of the human brain with its boundless dimensions. And the universe and individual are linked, the one mirrored in the other, and each contains the other .. [2].

The process Jung called 'individuation', of becoming whole or enlightened, demands a symbolism of transcendence, and symbolism of the archetypes serves an essential function in our understanding of ourselves. We need to reclaim the primordial or archaic mythologies as represented by the ancient poets and modern fantasists, in order to gain a greater personal and spiritual hold on our own realities. We have the right to dream, for the future is unpredictable and dark, and who can deny any individual the dream of escaping a mundane life or becoming the god-like hero as John Daker discovers: 'I was Ereksone - the Eternal Champion. a legend myself - come to life' [3]. The hero-warrior is an archetype which exists in all cultures and referred to by Nietzsche when he spoke of his 'Übermensch' [4]. Jung developed the idea further by suggesting that 'the God-image does not coincide with the unconscious as such, but with a special content of it, namely the archetype of the self' [5].

A good example of the archetype mythology apposite to much fantasy, including Moorcock's early sword and sorcery novels, is that of the Hero myth. Legends about Hercules, Gilgamesh, Cuchulainn, Beowulf are often about gods and can also be tragic, like that of Prometheus, or even erotic, such as the Egyptian legend of Isis and Osiris. Myths frequently moralise and identify good
and evil. In Iran, 500 BC, Zarathustra taught people to choose the god Ahura Mazda who was good and true, and to reject Angra Mainu who was evil. Moorcock, it shall be shown, re-evaluates this simplistic dualism of good and evil into the more complex and helpful Nietzschean model of Chaos and Law.

The scholarly guide on ancient European sacred wisdom by psychologist Brian Bates, called *The Wisdom of Wyrd* (1996), outlines a premise, which coincidentally parallels some of the themes of Moorcock's fantasy, showing its wider application. Bates describes Wyrd as

>a way of being which transcends our conventional notions of free will and determinism. All aspects of the world were seen as being in constant flux and motion between the psychological and spiritual polarities of fire and ice; creative organic vision paralleling the classical Eastern concepts of yin and yang, and echoed by recent developments in theoretical physics in which the world is conceived of as relationships and patterns [6].

Moorcock's fantasies explore all these ideas: the Eternal Champion is caught up in the destiny of the Balance; each world in the multiverse is caught in entropy or patterns of flux; chaos and law give us a complex dualism akin to yin and yang. Moorcock's use of chaos theory is outlined in Chapter Nine.

Fears, hopes and dreams are often best expressed through poetic myth and symbolism, and fantasy to this day follows mythical patterns. Sword and sorcery novels follow a medieval romantic template such as the legend of St. Brendan from the tenth century and the chivalric romance poems of the 16th century, such as *Palmerin of England*. Whereas the heroic epic represents tribal warfare, the romance is concerned with quest and the mystery of the supernatural. Moorcock in his science fantasy borrows elements from romanticism, particularly visionary themes, metaphysical imagery and neo-classical baroque language.

Carl Malmgren proposes that science fantasy 'tends to broach ultimate philosophical questions having to do with metaphysics, theology, cosmology, metatheory and mythopoeia' [7] and these
grand statements certainly apply to Moorcock's fantasy. Fantasy depicts the delicate balance between mysticism and empiricism or magic and science, a tension which feeds into both plot and theme.

Moorcock's early novels are 'science fantasy' in the sense that many of the themes are related to those tackled by sf, but they involve a stronger notion of heroism and magic, set in pseudo-medieval landscapes. In 1960 author Fritz Leiber is credited with coining the term 'sword and sorcery' [8] which aptly describes Moorcock's early fantasy sequences and which also embraces authors such as Alexandre Dumas, Lord Dunsany and E.R. Eddison.

Moorcock's original Elric stories were some of the first modern British sword and sorcery novels and certainly the most influential in their field, opening up a market for other writers. The Elric books have inspired comics, rock bands including Hawkwind, Deep Purple and The Tygers of Pan Tang, computer games, cd rom simulations and role playing games. This shows Moorcock's influence on contemporary culture and the rising popularity of fantasy. Fantasy continues to achieve cult status in cinema, television and literature, but it always remains in the sub-cultures and sectarian fandom, and perhaps this is to its benefit. Romantic fantasy is a major form of literature, becoming increasingly popular and Michael Moorcock is the obvious focus for establishing 'literary' fantasy in Britain. Waterstones place Moorcock as a 'literary' writer in their 1998 Guide to Science Fiction Writers.

The Multiverse

Moorcock's major contribution to fantasy is his concept of the multiverse [9] with its balance of chaos and law. All his books become interconnected through the various avatars of the Eternal Champion, and the characters, themes, places and plots overlap, connected through internal-referencing and intertextuality within the entire cycle. The term 'the multiverse' was introduced in
The Blood Red Game (originally serialised in 1962 as 'Sundered Worlds') to describe multiple universes and planes of existence which run concurrently, and where alternative realities co-exist and occasionally interact. This is a device employed in 'alternative world' sf novels such as Philip K. Dick's The Man In The High Castle which imagines an America having been conquered by the Nazi-like Axis, or Robert Harris' Fatherland. Similarly, in Moorcock's novel, The Dragon In the Sword (1987), Erekose witnesses Hitler, Goebbels and Goering in his own romantic landscape, involved in pagan, hermetic ritual and dressed in cloaks like those of the Knights Templar who worship Baphomet, the ancient horned god. The Nazis are described as chaos lords. 'Adolf Hitler, Chancellor of the Third Reich, his eyes dark mirrors, his pale face full of an unwholesome luminosity ... as, no doubt he sought to will the rest of the world into acceptance of his hideous insanity' [10]. This allegory in which a familiar figure invades the alien world of Erekose, provides a helpful link for the reader between two worlds within the multiverse; the fantasy world of the Eternal Champion and the reader's own reality.

Moorcock defined his multiverse as a 'near-infinite nest of universes, each only marginally different from the next ... where “rogue” universes can take sideways orbits, crashing through the dimensions and creating all kinds of disruptions in the delicate fabric of multiversal space-time' [11]. Sometimes the planes and times intersect, and various characters, such as Edwardian traveller Oswald Bastable (one of Edith Nesbit's 'Treasure Seekers' grown up), join the temporal league called the Nomads of the Time Streams who have learnt to travel across time and space.

Scientist Hugh Everett III proposed a theory of quantum possibilities which echoes the folklore and sf creations of alternate worlds and futures. David Wilkinson explains that 'in every act of measurement, each possibility available is realised and at that point the universe splits into separate universes corresponding to the realised possibilities' [12].
Eternal Champion

The Eternal Champion is the generic name for all the incarnations of the one hero who appears in different novels, in different times and places, in various guises throughout the multiverse. Moorcock's main influences in creating his extensive mythology are clear. Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* provided a template for a kind of anti-hero who journeys for eternity seeking truths and vengeance in his various lives and guises. Melmoth is a victim, cursed like the Wandering Jew, punished for his faustian dealings, made to suffer as an outcast, incapable of attaining peace. Moorcock shows a great preference for tragic hero-victims, such as Elric the woman-slayer. An albino emperor, Elric is an agent of chaos and a Byronic protagonist. He is a victim who is dependent at first upon drugs and herbs for strength, then later upon a sinister chaos sword, Stormbringer, which being both sentient and vampiric, thirsts for blood and for the souls of any living creature. He is a tortured and neurotic character struggling with pain, anxiety and tragedy like Oedipus. Erekose is conscious of his powerlessness over the destiny that controls him, like Romeo, whose famous cry 'O, I am Fortune's fool' could be the cry of the Eternal Champion.

Another influence is H. Rider Haggard. Moorcock explains how Quartermain was resurrected for further adventures and then 'reincarnated under other names by subsequent authors, just as Ayesha herself became the quintessential heroine - villainness of a thousand lost land adventures' (*Wizardry and Wild Romance* p76). These subsequent authors included E.R. Burroughs and Robert Howard who were probably the first to make the savage the hero of the novel.

Each individual who plays the role of 'champion eternal' is cast by destiny to struggle and battle for the balance of chaos and law. He, or she, is heroic like Erekose or anti-heroic, like Elric, each representing different aspects of our own psychological struggle. The Eternal Champion, as a projection of mankind, is alienated, stigmatised and constantly developing: as Greenland observes,
'Moorcock's characters are not facile juggernauts of self-gratification. They are complex, harassed and neurotic' [13].

Elric learns his purpose and destiny in a vivid dream,

    And the cycles turn and spin and intersect at unpredictable points in an eternity of possibilities, paradoxes and conjunctions ... Thus we influence past, present and future and all their possibilities. Thus are we all responsible for one another... [14].

In this complex web of realities, Erekose is the most unfortunate as he is the one who can see his own destiny and feel the pain of every incarnation. The concept of the cycle of reincarnation is an ancient one from Hinduism. On the wheel of time each individual soul takes part in action leading to pleasure and pain (karma) within the order (dharma) of the universal spirit (brahman). Erekose discovers that he has no control over his destiny, but is pulled through time and space to fight and never know peace and enter an eternal cycle. Introduced in The Eternal Champion (1957) he begins as John Daker in the twentieth century, but has to learn a new identity as Erekose, a demi-god. His maturation occurs in the book as he learns to take on his mantle of champion after coping with betrayal. He is cursed to always be aware that he is more than one person and in visions sees his other avatars. In the revised version of The Eternal Champion the names of other champions will be familiar to Moorcock readers.

    Was I John Daker or Erekose? Was I either of these? Many other names - Corum Jhaelen Irsei, Aubec, Sexton Begg, Elric, Rackhir, Ilian, Oona, Simon, Bastable, Cornelius, The Rose, von Bek, Asquinol, Hawkmoon - fled away down the ghostly rivers of my memory (p6).

The author has developed a metaphysical cosmology building into a gigantic interconnected mythology, which revises ancient ideas, creates new heroes and landscapes and interprets these into something meaningful for our post-modern society. The interconnectedness gives the series a feeling of the roman à fleuve. The conscious self- and cross-referencing of the author is often only a code for the initiated and devoted reader. The same characters appear in different contexts, so
Wheldrake the poet can accompany Elric as well as exist in the court of Gloriana. Moorcock wants to see how the same character responds in contrasting situations and ages. The name Corum Jhaelen Irsei is an anagram of Jeremiah Cornelius, from which is also derived Jherek Carmelian and Jhary-a-Conel. He contrives to use many names with the initials J.C., which perhaps links his heroes with the ultimate Everyman, Jesus Christ.

Chaos v Law

For Moorcock, 'law' is a representation of Reason, the rational, logical side of human nature with its preference for order, facts and organisation. Chaos, on the other hand, is a symbol for human emotion, something akin to Romance, which can be associated with mythology, the imagination, or in psychological terms, with the unconscious.

The balance of chaos and law was also taken from a model used in Poul Anderson's fantasy *Three Hearts and Three Lions* (1953), in which the protagonist, Holger, attempts to piece together information about the strange world that he has entered. 'Holger got the idea that a perpetual struggle went on between the primeval forces of Law and Chaos. No, not forces exactly. Modes of existence? A terrestrial reflection of the spiritual conflict between heaven and hell?' [15]. In a 1963 essay [16] Moorcock explains his cosmology with the 'Cosmic Hand' at the top of the chain above gods, elementals, sorcerers, men and beasts. It is up to people to fight to maintain a balance.

The dualism of good and evil is derived from Zoroastrianism, which visualises our world as the battleground between good and evil, where Ohrmazd is the eternal god of goodness, fighting against the evil and suffering brought by the malevolent Ahriman. This same dualism influenced other religions and is a recognisable part of our Judaeo-Christian culture and something we assume in our modern Western thinking. The fantasies of Tolkien and C.S. Lewis follow this simple pattern, but Moorcock attempts to show a more complicated metaphysical understanding of the
world and nature. The imagery of good against evil is too simplistic. Some actions, it can be argued, are too complex to be merely condemned as 'evil'.

Traditionally, chaos is linked with disorder and shapelessness before creation, or more specifically, it has become synonymous with evil. In *The World's Religions*, John Hinnells, in his chapter on Zoroastrianism, writes, 'The essential characteristics of evil are violence, chaos and the will to destroy' [17]. Ahriman brings chaos into an ordered world and each individual has the freewill to follow the good or evil inherent within them. This theology has continued into Christianity whose tradition has been influenced by writers and thinkers since Christ. Milton managed to rewrite much of the mythology about the creation of the world and man's fall. In the opening books of *Paradise Lost* he locates Lucifer and his fallen angels in 'Chaos', which is both a formless place and a personified 'power'.

... a dark Illimitable ocean, without bound, Without dimension, where length, breadth and height, And time, and place, are lost; where eldest Night And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold Eternal anarchy [18]

In this 'wild abyss' which lies between heaven and hell, Chaos and Chance sit as 'adjudicators', and from this anarchy, form and order will be shaped from the very atoms and humans will be created. The implication is that chaos is a necessary part of the cycle of creation.

Ovid described how chaos was transformed into the ordered universe.

Before there was any earth or sea, before the canopy of heaven stretched overhead, Nature presented the same aspect the world over, that to which men have given the name of Chaos. This was a shapeless uncoordinated mass, nothing but a weight of lifeless matter [19].
Likewise, the Bible speaks of 'formlessness' before the creation. Moorcock's use of chaos is very different and he elucidates upon his more complex concept in an interview:

Law and Chaos are both attractive, both dangerous, and both become worthless if you push them too far. In one way or another they're not what you'd want, so the idea of the balance is the main thing there [20].

In the justice system, chaos and law depend upon each other as expressed at the end of The Fortress and the Pearl in the neat aphorism, 'The cactus tears our flesh so that we shall be shown where water is' [21]. In the earlier story 'While the Gods Laugh' (1961), Elric expresses the following paradox: 'The upholders of Chaos state that in such a world as they rule, all things are possible. Opponents of Chaos ... say that without Law nothing material is possible' [22]. Before he dies in the final novel of the sequence, Stormbringer, Elric sees that the world ruled by Law is no different to that ruled by Chaos and on asking his companion the meaning of the cosmic balance an ambiguous answer is returned:

Who can know why the Cosmic Balance exists, why Fate exists and the Lords of the Higher Worlds? There seems to be an infinity of space and time and possibilities ... Perhaps all is cyclic and this same event will occur again and again until the universe is run down and fades away ... Meaning, Elric? Do not seek that, for madness lies in such a course [23].

The Eternal Champion finally discovers a purpose for living and a reason for his frailty, for it is only in our weakness and sense of the finite that we can have true freedom. Erekose expresses this truth when he claims the right to be 'free to be the flawed, finite, mortal creatures which from the first was all we ever wished to be' [24], echoing the words of Aldous Huxley's Savage in Brave New World. The cycle turns and keeps turning. It is up to the Eternal Champion to make sure the balance is kept in equilibrium lest the world should suffer the legalistic, stifling tyranny of law, or the anarchic insanity of chaos.
Herman Hesse also provides a valuable manifesto for chaos and order in his novel *Narziss and Goldmund*. *Narziss* lives life as an ascetic monk involved in ritual and holy orders. When Goldmund leaves cloisters for a life of passion and adventure *Narziss* begins to regret his predictable life of temperance. The more he hears about his friend's exciting life the more jealous and scornful he becomes. He finally acknowledges that

> Goldmund at least has shown him this - that a man born to a noble life can plunge very deep indeed into the sea of blood and lust which men call living, spatter himself over with mire and gore, and yet never become deformed or dwarfish, never kill the God in his mind [25].

Nietzsche wrote, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, about the tension in Greek tragedy between the wild, chaotic Dionysian urge which is tempered by the restraint and reason of Apollo, and how both are required to create art or poetry. Nietzsche considers Apollo as 'the soothsaying god' [26] of the Delphic oracle, the deity of light who inspires aesthetic beauty or classical art typical of the Doric world. Dionysus is the spirit of ecstasy and 'intoxication', an impulse close to Moorcock's idea of chaos which is both a creative and a destructive force which allows true expression of human passion in an unrestrained dance or orgy. Nietzsche relates his own response closely to that of the Dionysiac which, he argues, 'proves to be the eternal and original artistic force, calling the whole phenomenal world into existence' [27].

It becomes clear that chaos and law, whether as religious imagery, philosophical concept, literary metaphor or even personal spirituality, are states to keep in balance. Both are necessary components of a dualism, which implies not so much that they are opposites, but complementary halves to a whole, like the combination of the masculine and feminine in us all as described by Jung. 'I came to see that this inner feminine figure plays a typical or archetypal role in the unconsciousness of a man, and I called her the "anima". The corresponding figure in the unconsciousness of the woman I called the "animus" [28]. This echoes the symbol of the
hermaphrodite, which reappears in Moorcock's novels (*The Final Programme*, *The City In the Autumn Stars* or the androgyne in *The Dragon In the Sword*). This implies that a balance is the necessary ideal.

The complex Chinese principles of yin and yang work similarly to chaos and law and Raymond van Over tells us in his introduction to *I Ching*, 'They are like the seasons, opposite poles that alternate and in alternating depend upon each other for their existence' [29]. Whilst being part of an undivided whole, yin represents that which is passive (cold, shade) and yang is active (heat, hardness). Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching* adds meaning to this idea of harmony when he writes

Presence and absence.
Before and after.
They can only exist together [30].

This Eastern principle is similar to the Buddha's 'Middle Path' between self-gratification and self-mortification. Balance between the two ideals is the only answer; law is required for communal living, but stifles creativity and chaos inspires art, but brings violence and loss of security. Humans need to be emotional and artistic, but if they are to be communal animals then it demands conforming to some agreed consensus.

Perhaps the attraction of chaos is its Rousseau-esque celebration of natural wilderness and harsh criticism of the Enlightenment. In contrast, the principles of law are close to those of Hobbes who demanded an absolute submission to a dominant power. Moorcock succinctly identified the psychological and philosophical dualism inherent in human minds and politics.

**Balance**

In Moorcock's sword and sorcery novels spiritual warfare is shown in terms of worldly battles between creatures and men (most incarnations of the champion are men, except Ilian of Garathorm and later, the Rose) where, typically, the hordes of chaos are massing for a final confrontation
against law. The Eternal Champion fights on which ever side needs help to counteract the flux or entropy and to create equilibrium, for the Cosmic Balance is the overarching power which controls fate and the Balance is the closest Moorcock gets to explaining the role or existence of God. It is the cause for which the Eternal Champion is doomed to fight against his will, and this Balance is often represented at the end of a novel by a pair of scales projected upon the heavens, such as Corum sees. 'And over all this hung a huge balance in perfect equilibrium' [31].

Corum comes from the old world of magic and poetry, an elfin aesthete who desires peace and contentment, but learns anger and revenge from the humans who disrupt his life with their hatred and malice. Corum learns that his destiny is to fight for equilibrium, and his companion explains that 'The Lords of Chaos are the enemies of logic, the jugglers of Truth, the moulders of beauty' [32]. At the end of the first Corum trilogy in The King of the Swords, all the gods of chaos and law are killed and banished leaving an existential utopia where individuals create their own destinies - a state of 'deus abscondis'.

Hawkmoon is a suffering victim like Elric and Corum, being a prisoner of war, initially controlled by the enemy but eventually awakening to individuality. The balance is known in this world as the mysterious Runestaff and is served by the enigmatic Warrior in Jet and Gold, a character whose motives and status are ambiguous and who also appears in the Corum novels. He works for the balance, of which the identity is never clarified. This ambiguity shrouds the novels in mystery. The truth is always elusive, like Tanelorn.

Tanelorn is Moorcock's equivalent to Elysium, where even the Eternal Champion might find peace, and in the final chapter of the Eternal Champion cycle, in the novel, The Quest for Tanelorn (1975), there occurs a conjunction in which all the champions meet in the city, guided by a child called Jehamiah Cohnahlias (another derived name). A final apocalyptic vision helps explain much
of the fantastical symbolism as it becomes clear what the chaos sword of Elric and the black jewel of Hawkmoon represent, as both transform into one dark figure.

John ap-Rhyss said calmly, "In Yel, in the villages, they have a legend of such a creature. Say-tunn, is that his name?"
The child shrugged. "Give him any name and he grows in power. Refuse him a name and his power weakens. I call him Fear. Mankind's greatest enemy" [33].

Gods, it seems, are merely human metaphors, and the Runestaff, or Balance, is multiversal justice. Yet who controls justice if there are no gods? The reader is left with this ambivalence.

When Elric opens The Dead God's Book, which contains the truth about the cryptic balance and multiverse, it tragically crumbles to dust in his hands. He concludes, 'There is no Truth but that of eternal struggle' [34]. This same theme is explored in The Warhound and World's Pain discussed below.

Moorcock, here, interrogates the concept of determinism for which there are two main perspectives. Calvinists believe in predestination, that God chooses an elect. Existentialists tell us that God is dead, which leaves us with complete freedom to choose our own destiny.

Psychiatrists are aware that our behaviour and choices are affected by our early experiences and anxieties, whilst sociologists look at our socialised programming from institutions which control our freedom of choice. However, Moorcock pictures fatalistic teleology as romantic and mythical symbolism and the reader sympathises with the eternal champion in the discovery of meaning and personal identity.

Each champion is hurled into a destiny from which he is unable to escape, like the protagonists in the Greek tragedies and epics; Sophocles' Oedipus cannot escape his horrific fate as warned by the oracle. The philosophical argument about predestination begins with the dilemma that within this fixed destiny the individual still retains a certain amount of freewill.
Elric is the alienated individual, the confused adolescent, inexperienced and selfish, thus making terrible mistakes and therefore representing the fool within us all. Moorcock explains his aims in writing the Elric stories.

There is ... no Holy Grail which will transform a man overnight from bewildered ignorance to complete knowledge - the answer is already within him, if he cares to train himself to find it. A rather overemphasised fact, throughout history, but one generally ignored all the same [35].

Whilst the Hobbesian view is that humanity is more prone to gravitate naturally towards chaos than law, Moorcock offers a more optimistic and Rousseau-esque view that love is the recurring cycle which will end the disorder and the inevitable entropy. Rousseau described his ideal state of happiness, in the fifth walk of his Reveries, as having 'Nothing external to us, nothing apart from ourselves and our own existence; as long as this state lasts we are self sufficient like God' [36] and this is what Erekoise hopes to experience in Tanelorn.

Moorcock suggests a solution: love is the balance. John Daker, summoned from our own world and age, holds great hope in the natural goodness in mankind and scorns the moral Puritanism which is still prevalent in our enlightened society.

That is the odd assumption the twentieth century makes - that if the laws man makes concerning 'morality' - particularly 'sexual morality' - are done away with, then one huge orgy will begin. It forgets that people are, generally speaking, only attracted to a few other people and only fall in love with one or two in their whole lives [37].

Moorcock suggests that humans are not necessarily fallen or sinful, but are individuals, who are essentially self-responsible, who need rules and routine as well as the chaos of freedom to lead a sane, balanced existence. Humans, he may argue, are born with innate goodness. Moorcock has formulated a mythology for the late twentieth century, encouraging us as we near the third millennium to express more of our personal chaos and become reunited with the collective consciousness and thus with our own soul. Here is an alternative philosophy to our impotent, post-
industrial, ordered society in which Moorcock is reclaiming the mysticism and romance of our sacred heritage and traditions; a renaissance of 'pre-modernist' harmony. As Yeats claimed the Celtic Twilight for Ireland so Moorcock urges us to see truths in our own prehistory. This attitude began in the sacred-seeking culture of the 1960s. 1990s interest in 'New Age' and studies such as Brian Bates' *Wisdom of Wyrd* suggest this search is still prevalent.

**Surrealism**

*New Worlds* writers also found inspiration for the new wave in surrealism and Moorcock's fantasy novels frequently move into abstract and marvellous modes. Jackson explains that 'surrealism has so much in common with fantasy, especially in its use of similar themes, such as the disintegration of objects and the fluidity of discrete forms' [38]. Using language and imagination, Moorcock paints enormous and surreal landscapes. The climax of *Stormbringer* (1965) gives a good example of this surreal-apocalyptic mode of writing, when Elric and his two companions ride dragons above the world which has become a molten ocean of emotion transformed into material substance:

> it was a fluid comprised of materials both natural and supernatural, real and abstract. Pain, longing, misery and laughter could be seen as tangible fragments of the tossing tide, passions and frustrations lay in it also, as well as stuff made of living flesh [39].

In terms of style the Eternal Champion novels employ baroque language and apocalyptic visions, becoming the literary equivalent of a Hieronymous Bosch painting. The gruesome images reflect both terror and beauty creating the awe of the sublime. This nightmarish description of the god, Arioch, is of a giant with human parasites: 'Like lice, they scampered and crawled over the god's huge bulk, picking at his skin, feeding off his flesh and blood' [40].
The Warhound and the World's Pain

The Gothic novel is described by Fred Botting as subversive literature which celebrates 'excess' and 'transgression', and he discusses related themes, including decadence, desire and alienation. Botting also makes a reductive definition of the sublime which is useful for creating mood and atmosphere related to awe, terror and beauty, or what he calls 'the aesthetics of emotion' [41]. Botting identifies inherent contrasts or contradictions, namely images of duality: darkness and light, death and life, agony and ecstasy, which for Moorcock is chaos and law.

Moorcock's science fantasy, like Gothic, is ostensibly linked with the sublime and it is worth returning to the words of Longinus, who in On the Sublime outlined five sources of sublimity which will be familiar to all fantasy authors. He identifies, 'the ability to form grand conceptions ... choice of words, the use of imagery and the elaboration of style. The fifth source of grandeur ... is the total effect [42]. In his 1853 essay, 'The Stones of Venice', John Ruskin analyses six characteristics of Gothic architecture, specified as 'savageness', 'changefulness', 'naturalism', 'grotesqueness', 'rigidity' and 'redundance' [43].

Moorcock creates romantic cities often as exercises of a sublime imagination, such as Elric's Melniboné; the pseudo-Celtic Lwym-an-Esh of Corum; the Gothic city of Mirenburg; Gloriana's castle city of Albion. A typical example of Moorcock's love for architecture appears in his description of Castle Brass.

The castle ... had windows of thick glass (much of it painted fancifully) and ornate towers and battlements of delicate workmanship. From its highest turrets it was possible to see most of the territory it protected, and it was so designed that when the mistral came an arrangement of vents, pulleys, and little doors could be operated and the castle would sing so that its music, like that of an organ, could be heard for miles on the wind [44].

In The Romantic Agony Mario Praz surveys the romantic perspective of Satan, from Milton whose 'Evil one definitely assumes an aspect of fallen beauty, of splendour shadowed by sadness
and death' [45]. Praz deals with Gothic aspects of Satan, such as Lewis' odious monk Ambrosio, and the romantic portrait of Byron and the closely linked figure of the vampire. Moorcock frequently utilises the structures and themes of Romantic literature and does so most notably in *The Warhound and the World's Pain*. This literary fantasy, which was runner up for the Science Fantasy Award in 1982 borrows from Gothic fiction with its interrogation of evil. The themes of horror and eternal salvation pervade Romantic literature. The novel offers a postmodern subversion of one of the main Christian metanarratives.

Moorcock's fantasies are not comforting fables, but iconoclastic re-readings of our myths and culture, questioning authority and order in the subversive way prescribed by Jackson. Moorcock's fantasy novels subvert our Western assumptions and expectations and this subversion is best shown in the novel *The Warhound and the World's Pain*, which is an apocalyptic vision of the completion and realisation of the cycle of creation. The myth of the fall of Lucifer is balanced by his attempted ascendency back to virtue and redemption. Satan becomes the most sympathetic character in the book, full of remorse having grown weary of his struggle to fulfil his duty as enemy of the world. He hopes that his genuine penitence will lead him to his eventual atonement and return him to his former position at the right hand of God.

He is a tragic figure - a victim of hubris - fatigued by his role as tempter, now a figure of noble pathos. Creation has come full circle and the world will once more be complete. The fall is repaid in the absence of Christ.

This description of Lucifer, Prince of Darkness, by Moorcock begins a medieval and metaphysical quest for Eternal Champion, Ulrich von Bek. 'He bore an aura about His person which I had never associated with the Devil: perhaps it was a kind of dignified humility combined with an almost limitless power' (*Von Bek* p44). For Milton, this fallen angel, being non-human,
possesses heroic prowess and admirable physical attributes; he is 'the infernal Serpent' described as 'Waiting revenge; cruel his eye' [46]. For Moorcock, Lucifer is now more human-like in his frailty, filled with guilt and sorrow: he looks through 'melancholy, terrible eyes' and speaks with 'exquisite sadness' telling the protagonist, von Bek, how he yearns to be freed to return to Heaven and be reconciled with God. Instead of a palace of Pandemonium, Lucifer's throne room is a library. This is a romantic view much like Byron's depiction of Manfred who seeks solace only in death and 'oblivion'.

Lucifer takes von Bek on a guided tour of Hell with locations such as 'the City of Humbled Princes', where Martin Luther resides, and 'the Lake of the False Penitents', which echo Dante's Nine Circles of Hell in *The Inferno*. Surprisingly, however, Hell is a cold and hopeless place where Satan roams about, bored but worried that he may have misunderstood God's original commission. The deal they made between man and devil is an inversion of the Faustian myth, where von Bek can gain life and rescue his soul from damnation if he fulfilled a quest to seek the Cure for the World's Pain which is the Holy Grail: the panacea for original sin.

The grail is traditionally the symbol of harmony and fertility, sought after by the knights of King Arthur. According to the anonymous and allegorical chivalric romance *The Quest for the Holy Grail* (13th century) a vision of the Lord tells Galahad, "'It is the platter in which Jesus Christ partook of paschal lamb with his disciples'" [47]. The symbolic nature of the Grail is clear; it represents God's grace through the blood of Jesus, which means all men are saved despite having "'lapsed into dissolute and worldly ways'". Moorcock employs the symbol but rejects the symbolic link with Christ, preferring existential ideology.

In Tennyson's 'The Coming of Arthur' the omniscient poet cries out with sincere, intrusive passion about the coming of the Lord's cup:
But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it would come,  
And heal the world of all their wickedness! [48].

Moorcock is not so interested in the Christian, moralistic symbolism, but he uses the grail to portray a romantic notion of love. Von Bek, like Elric for Cymoril and Jerry for Catherine, is spurred on by his love for Sabrina. Love is a frequent source of energy in Moorcock's work and is the only cure for entropy. In Moorcock's work, the grail can also be a person or a place, and is usually the key to manipulating the timestreams of the multiverse.

The reader is forced to revise set assumptions regarding good and evil, now in the guise of law and chaos. The most evil character in the novel is not Lucifer but Klosterheim, ironically a knight of Christ. Klosterheim symbolises the corruption and bloodlust of the early church, most apparent in the Holy Inquisition, another Gothic context. Moorcock is presenting the church as an institution of order and control.

Eventually, von Bek stumbles upon the Grail, a simple clay cup and is told that 'the cure is within every one of us' (VB p211), for each individual is responsible for his own balance and harmony, particularly the balance between reason and sensibility. Von Bek's quest was really to discover freedom from divine powers and fate and this inevitably leads to a cosmic irony and bathos. Rather than rely on religion, von Bek's quest is to discover his own humanity. He learns that 'one must not seek to become a saint or sinner, God or Devil. One must seek to become human and to love the fact of one's humanity' (VB p209).

Moorcock explained how *The Warhound and the World's Pain* dealt with 'the transition from the Age of Religion to the Age of Reason' [49]. Like *Behold the Man*, Moorcock offers a modern reinvention of a myth or faith. Lucifer is not accepted into heaven, but is instead given a commission "to bring Reason and Humanity into the world ... Man, whether he be Christian or pagan, must learn to rule himself, to understand himself, to take responsibility for himself" (VB
Herman Hesse expressed the following aphorism, 'Like art and poetry, the religions and myths are an attempt on the part of mankind to express in images the ineffable' [50]. Moorcock has created a myth that brings man's fall full circle, whilst attempting to provide images to express the ineffable meaning of our own existence. Some writers choose to show a microcosm, but Moorcock prefers the larger canvas of eternal time and space: not just this universe but the infinite continuum of the multiverse.

Moorcock does not want to destroy any existing sense of law and order, which to some extent is an essential element of the balance, but his fantasy reintroduces a 'pre-modernist' harmony or renaissance combination of ancient and modern. This harmony lies at the heart of the literature of chaos. For Moorcock, it is a matter of redressing the balance.
Notes

[9] Moorcock developed the concept of the multiverse but the term is probably derived from John Cowper Powys. See *Encyclopedia of Fantasy*
[10] *The Eternal Champion* p593
[11] *Tales From the Texas Woods* p49
[14] Stormbringer p261
[16] *Sojan* p141
[18] Milton *Paradise Lost* II 890-897
[20] *Vector*, April 1990 Interview with MM
[21] *Elric of Melniboné* p392
[22] p633
[23] Stormbringer p800
[24] *Eternal Champion* p659
[27] *The Birth of Tragedy*, p117
[29] *I Ching* translated by R van Over, New York, 1871, p19
[31] *Corum* p172
[32] p143
[33] *The Quest for Tanelorn* p110
[34] *Elric of Melniboné* p644
[35] Sojan p127
[37] *The Eternal Champion* p40
[38] R Jackson *Fantasy* p36
[39] Stormbringer p779
[40] *Corum* p159

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[44] *The Jewel in the Skull* p16
[45] Mario Praz *The Romantic Agony* p76
[46] *Paradise Lost* Book I 1667
[48] Tennyson 'The Holy Grail' from *The Idylls of the King* London 1870 p39
[49] Greenland *Death Is No Obstacle* p110
Chapter 4  THE ENTROPY TANGO

For a while at least it's all right
We're safe from Chaos and Old Night
The cold of space won't chill our veins
- We have danced the Entropy Tango.
(The Deep Fix, 1977)

Jerry Cornelius first appeared in *New Worlds* in 1965, after which the four main novels were published between the years 1969 and 1977, and then anthologised as *The Cornelius Quartet* in 1993, from which I shall be quoting. Moorcock managed to capture the zeitgeist of the sixties and seventies through his invocation of street-talk, popular fashion, music, promiscuity and the pop-culture. Moorcock is also a rock musician, and writes about music. Just as Jazz inspired the beat generation, so pop music inspired young British writers like Moorcock. He identified with the hipsters, beatniks and more specifically with the psychedelic hippie movement. Later, his anarchist idealism lead to support of the punk movement, and to his writing a Jerry Cornelius novel which tied in with the Sex Pistol film, *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle* (1980).

Mikhail Bakhtin writes about popular festive forms when he explains how 'For thousands of years the people have used these festive comic images to express their criticism, their deep distrust of official truth, and their highest hopes and aspirations' [1]. In sixties and seventies, England pop culture became the modern form of carnival and an important form of expression for individual freedom.

The entire Cornelius sequence includes seven novels and innumerable stories, not all by Moorcock [2]. The figure of Jerry Cornelius became an iconic cartoon-strip character in the famous underground magazine *IT*. Jerry Cornelius reappeared in the 1998 DC comic series 'Michael

In his analysis of underground movements, entitled Subculture, Dick Hebdige notes that the avant-garde subversions of art and culture, which included 'IT' and 'New Worlds', was developing a particular focus.

By the early 70s, these tendencies had begun to cohere into a fully-fledged nihilistic aesthetic and the emergence of this aesthetic together with its characteristic focal concerns (polymorphous, often wilfully perverse sexuality, obsessive individualism, fragmented sense of self, etc.) generated a good deal of controversy amongst those interested in rock culture [3].

The style and content of the Jerry Cornelius novels fit precisely into this template and counterculture.

Pop Culture

Jeff Nuttall, jazz musician and underground poet, offers one reading of sixties culture in Bomb Culture (1968). He sketches a line from what he calls 'the Romantic/Symbolist/Dada/Surrealist quest' [4] to the experimental literary forms of the beat generation and the underground press, such as IT. It would be perfectly justified to add New Worlds to that continuing heritage. According to Nuttall the art world was influenced by 'finds' and 'happenings', whilst young people listened avidly to the anarchic Goon show, copied the aggression of The Who and experienced zen enlightenment. The 1960s mood was encapsulated by the two cries of 'Ban the Bomb' and Leary's 'Turn on, tune in and drop out', which led to the subversive and disengaged attitude of being 'cool'. Nuttall's description of 'cool' exactly describes Jerry Cornelius. 'The cool element prefers the casual fuck ... [and] exchanges passion for movement; ... the cool element is the element that responds to James Bond; the cool element wears dark glasses, is faceless' [5].

Nuttall also describes the changing emphases in the mid sixties in terms of fashion.
'Kinky' was a word very much in the air. Everywhere there were zippers, leathers, boots, pvc, see-through plastics, male make-up, a thousand overtones of sexual deviation, particularly sadism, and everywhere, mixed in with amphetamines, was the birth pill [6].

The emphasis on sex in the Cornelius books was noted by Greenland;

*A Cure For Cancer* is a book of extravagant perversity. The complexities and obscurities of the plot are deliberately unclarified; changes of colour and sex, transvestism and incest abound. Moorcock, satirising what he has called 'the general kinkiness of present day thinking and imagery' resorts to extreme techniques [7].

The whole world invaded by Jerry, his family, friends and foes is one drenched in the pop culture of rock, drugs, promiscuity and wild parties. The language is street talk of the sixties and seventies, and people are judged by their sexuality and outward appearance. In the background is a constant soundtrack of jazz, blues and rock music. Jerry listens to Zoot Money, The Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, Hawkwind and is lead guitarist of The Deep Fix, which is the name of Moorcock's own band.

It is here that reality and fantasy merge. Moorcock's involvement in rock music is well documented by Brian Tawn in *Dude's Dreams*. Moorcock was a member of Hawkwind, the champions of hippie space rock, having met Robert Calvert, their lead singer through the underground magazine, *Frendz*. Moorcock performs on a number of albums, including *Warrior On the Edge of Time* (1975) and *Live Chronicles* (1994) and wrote lyrics on others, such as *Choose Your Masques* (1980). Hawkwind have a huge cult following and the band still play Moorcock songs, such as 'Sonic Attack', 'Kings of Speed' or 'Sleep of a Thousand Tears'. Hawkwind's 1985 album was *The Chronicle of the Black Sword* based on the Elric cycle, and included the song 'Needle Gun' about Jerry Cornelius' weapon.

Feel my pin prick tattoo your spine
Give it a minute, your life's entwined with mine...
It's gonna make you run
Needle gun... [8]
Hawkwind epitomise the psychedelic movement, celebrating as they do the use of hallucinatory drugs and space age fantasy. Song titles include, 'Children Of the Sun' (1971), 'Reefer Madness' (1976), Levitation' (1980) and more recently, 'Phetamine Street' (1997).

Moorcock also wrote lyrics for heavy rock band Blue Oyster Cult and according to an interview with Moorcock in the self-published *The Collector's Guide to Hawkwind* by Robert Godwin, the novel *The Winds of Limbo* inspired Pink Floyd's 'Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun' and Moorcock spent an afternoon with Sid Barrett working on some lyrics.

Moorcock's own band The Deep Fix, mentioned in the Jerry Cornelius books, cut the *album New World's Fair* in 1975, which was reissued on cd in 1995, and released a cassette, *The Brothel in Rosenstrasse* (1992) to go with his novel. One song written by Moorcock for *New World's Fair* but which was eventually recorded by Hawkwind is the rock'n'roll stomping 'Kings Of Speed' which mentions characters from the Jerry Cornelius books.

> Between you and me Mr.C.  
> I think we have what these boys need ...  
> You're gonna get a tasty trip  
> On Frank and Beesley's rocket ship [9].

Moorcock even has his own entry in *The International Encyclopedia of Hard Rock and Heavy Metal* by Tony Jasper. Michael Foucault comments on the important role rock music plays, claiming it 'is a cultural initiator: to like rock ... is also a way of life, a manner of reacting; it is a whole set of tastes and attitudes' [10]. To appreciate the Jerry Cornelius books the reader should be well-versed in pop culture. The Jerry Cornelius books, like many of Moorcock's novels are postmodern texts which like many rock songs, satirise culture, express chaos and fragmentation in an increasingly pluralistic world, through pastiche, collage and parody. Moorcock attacks the metanarratives of religion, politics, war and morality and replaces them with pop culture and
eclectic art forms. His novels have a greater meaning for those readers familiar with the
subcultures of pop music and urban street life.

Jerry Cornelius acts like a rock idol, and as a messiah he is ‘sacrificed’ when he goes out of
fashion. George Melly in Revolt Into Style (1970) noticed how decadence and rebellion become
accepted into mainstream culture when revolt becomes a style or a fashion, and this seems to be the
fate or demise of Jerry. He begins life as a hip rebel; suave, deadly and sexy but by the end of the
sequence, he is unfashionable and mocked.

Perhaps it had something to do with his losing faith in rock music. The best
performers had either died, decayed or fractured, leaving behind them a
vocabulary of musical ideas, lyrical techniques, and subject matter, styles and
body languages which had never been given the opportunity to mature, but had
instead been aped by the very world of Showbiz against which they had originally
revolted (CM p704).

The downfall of a rockstar is commonly drug or drink addiction.

The Jerry Cornelius books remain misunderstood, perhaps because they cannot be easily
categorised generically and Melly notices a similar problem for the culture from which the books
are generated. He recognises that 'The mistake most critics make is to persist in trying to evaluate
pop culture as if it were something else' [11]. Pop culture, with its music and literature, now needs
to be recognised as a genuine and important movement and art form, and as such, a new language
of analysis and enquiry must be developed to aid its purpose. Melly realised that pop is an ersatz
culture which
could be said to offer a comic strip which compresses and caricatures the social
and economic forces at work within our society. It draws no conclusions. It makes
no comments. It proposes no solutions [12].

The Cornelius books use surreal devices such as collage, juxtaposition, dreams, internal logic.
Interestingly, Hebdige describes the dynamic of a subculture in which 'The chaos coheres as a
meaningful whole' [13] and these novels perhaps make more sense as an overall sequence than as
individual novels. Within the discipline of Semiotics the concept of 'polysemy' expresses the ambiguity which is often consciously inherent in a text, and Hebdige adds that 'art represents the triumph of process over fixity, disruption over unity' [14]. Now 'contradiction' and 'transformation' have become the subjects or tools of enquiry within a text, and the Cornelius novels will be better understood with these assumptions.

The tetralogy is carefully structured in four parts with its exposition, development, recapitulation and coda. The three unities of time, place and action are fractured, as is the mimetic notion of character development. The plot for each novel is non-linear and characters frequently change role or personality. Each novel is episodic, and more concerned with mood, shape and colour like music or an expressionist painting. Moorcock describes the structure of the second novel *A Cure For Cancer* in the following way. 'It starts with the diagnosis of the problem: here is a society in decay ... The chapters get shorter, the rhythm gets more staccato' [15]. Like a tune, the plot has different shapes, climaxing in the middle and then fading, after a sequence of riffs and melodies. The underlying motif is one of entropy and its effect on plot and character. Tragically, there is no cure.

The reader begins to doubt the reality of Jerry's adventures, which are sometimes expressed in language evoking a drug trip. In chapter five of *The Final Programme* Jerry's adventure has been straightforward until reality begins to warp unexpectedly - 'Jerry, now unaware of who or where he was, felt himself being dragged from the sea. Someone slapped his face. What, he wondered, was the nature of reality after all?' (p51). The reader wonders if the action in the previous chapters occurred, or if Jerry has been hallucinating and fantasising at a 'fun fair'. This is the first of many alienation devices used in the Cornelius novels, which disturb the narrative and create a
nightmarish quality. Time disintegrates as do the text, characters and setting, because all are subject to the laws of entropy.

*The Final Programme* begins like a detective narrative with its mystery, chases and MacGuffins, but it suddenly, and seemingly randomly, shifts in emphasis and atmosphere, becoming a mythological study of the twentieth century with its inventions and the cynicism caused by moral decay. When it was first published critic Judith Merril called the book 'evil' [16], which surprised Moorcock who had written it as satire and irony. His aim had been to produce a narrative with 'a character who accepted the moral questions without discussing them', and for this reason, the book was considered daring or even shocking. Moorcock wanted his audience to be active and questioning.

Part of my original intention with the Jerry Cornelius stories was to 'liberate' the narrative; to leave it open to the reader's interpretation as much as possible - to involve the reader in such a way as to bring his own imagination into play [17].

Although the books are unorthodox in their formulation the structure is not random, but carefully planned. Greenland explains, 'Moorcock's subject is uncertainty, ambiguity, the drift of time and identity' [18]. The tetralogy creates an illusion of surrealism and randomness, but has a carefully devised overall scheme using internal referencing and the use of regular motifs and repetitions. Like traditional fantasy and science fiction, the world of the novel has its own internal logic. Moorcock writes,

All this ... should give the effect, among others, of time in a state of flux, men in a state of introverted confusion, close to fugue, and so on. But its internal logic is straightforward ... To 'explain' all this, to editorialise, would be to break the mood, break the dramatic tensions, and ruin the effect I was trying to achieve. The apparent obscurity should not confuse the reader because the narrative should be moving so rapidly that he shouldn't care if he doesn't understand every reference [19].
Moorcock is using a popular and unorthodox style to challenge his readers, using episodic
narrative, alienation devices and, like Bertolt Brecht, another artificer, by making 'the human being
the object of enquiry' [20]. Brecht's political Epic Theatre challenged existing conventions of
theatrical and artistic representation by subverting the conventions of naturalistic drama and
prompting the audience to ask questions about themselves and their own life style. Moorcock
aimed to achieve something similar in a different medium.

The Eternal Champion

The first Jerry Cornelius novel, *The Final Programme*, is a conscious rewrite of two early Elric
stories called 'The Dreaming City' and 'While the Gods Laugh' [both 1961]. Moorcock himself
explains that

in late 1964, I was casting around for a means of dealing with what I regarded as
the 'hot' subject matter of my own time - stuff associated with scientific advance,
social change, the mythology of the mid-twentieth century. Since Elric was a
'myth' character I decided to try to write his [Jerry Cornelius] first stories in
twentieth century terms [21].

This translation works effectively and the parallel is explicit. A direct comparison of both openings
reveals a group waiting for each eternal champion. A band of mercenary warriors wait for Elric to
lead them to raze his old kingdom-city of Imrryr, whilst some scientists await Jerry Cornelius to
lead them to his father's post-modern chateau to find a secret microfilm.

The descriptions of the two incarnations of the eternal champion present clear similarities. Elric
is the albino wizard-Emperor whose 'bizarre dress was tasteless and gaudy and did not match his
sensitive face and long-fingered, almost delicate hands' [22]. In comparison, Jerry Cornelius is
graceful and mysterious - 'He was very tall and the pale face framed by the hair, resembled the
young Swinburne's (p15). The choice of Swinburne is interesting as he, like Moorcock, is an
artificer and a dandy; and there is no doubt that Elric and Jerry are shadows of the author. Also of
interest here, is the expectation he has of his audience. Instead of being a magician, like Elric, who

can conjure elementals Jerry is an ex-Jesuit who has lost his faith. Drugs have replaced magic in
terms of altering perception and casting fantastical spells upon the mind. Music and sex have also
replaced magic and superstition as ways of transforming the self, and for overcoming entropy.

Other comparisons are clear: Yrkoon the evil sorcerer has become Jerry's brother Frank;
Cymoril, Elric's only love is now Catherine, the sister with whom Jerry has an incestuous
relationship; even Elric's faithful old retainer, Tanglebones has been anagrammatized into John
Gnatbeelson, the butler. Elric fights with his chaos sword, which sucks the souls and life force from
its victims giving strength and energy to its wielder. Similarly, Jerry kills opponents with his
unique and mysterious needle gun, a powerful hypodermic full of deadly narcotics, and we discover
that he strangely feeds off others in a vampiric sense never fully explained. 'He found that he didn't
need to eat much because he could live off other people's energy just as well' (p28).

A study of the language shows the change in style from romance to post-modern parody. Elric's
confrontation with his adversary has him using archaic magic to open a door - 'I command thee -
open!' [23], which for Jerry has become the sardonic challenge, 'Throw in your needle and come in
with your veins clear' (p23). Next, the albino prince summons Arioch, duke of chaos to protect
him, but Jerry makes do with a 'nerve gas grenade' that has much the same effect. Gods and
demons have been replaced by weapons, such as LSD gas or conventional guns.

The crowds in the city have become faceless and anonymous, like the many-headed creatures
described in fantasy novels which in The Final Programme are 'snake-like' or 'a tired pyramid of
flesh' (p109). Similarly, the whole of Europe becomes 'a boiling sea of chaos' made of 'fragments
of dreams and memories' (p126) - reminiscent of landscapes confronted by Elric or Corum. Chaos
and random flux create a maelstrom of disorder as time begins to run out in a world that cries out
for a messiah. Elric flies off on the back of a mighty dragon: Jerry poses in a Duesenberg limousine, dressed like a pimp.

**Messiah of the Machine Age**

Jerry is an icon of pop culture: a comic book secret agent as well as a 'cool' rock musician. But he is a reluctant messiah who seeks only the solace of a womb-like enclave where he is protected from each catastrophe. He rejects his status as popular hero for the preferred life of drugs and decadence. He lives in a very real London of the 1960s where the myth of happiness is dominant.

London was alive with flowers ... their scent hung like vapour in the beautiful air. And people were wearing such pretty clothes, listening to such jolly music; the first ecstatic flush of a culture about to swoon, at last, into magnificent decadence, an orgy of mutual understanding, kindness, tolerance ... *(CM p635)*

John Clute evaluates the character of Jerry Cornelius as 'an instant myth of the pop sixties whose taste in music, clothes, cars, drugs ... and apotheosis all seemed to make him an authentic emblem of Swinging London' [24]. Jerry himself, becomes a symbol of this disposable age. He is a victim of fashion and technology, dressed in the costume to suit his role or mood. His identity is signified by his change in fashionable attire, just as the Beatles changed their image in the late 1960's from suits to beads.

Jerry is an assassin in an age of famous assassins, such as Lee Harvey Oswald, James Earl Ray and Charles Manson. Jerry dresses like a 'dude', listens to pop music and jazz and as the incarnation of the eternal champion in the modern era, Jerry represents chaos with his liberated and ambiguous sexuality and his youthful rebelliousness. 'It was a world ruled by the gun, the guitar and the needle, sexier than sex, where the good right hand had become the male's primary sex organ (p56).
The Final Programme questions identity and sexuality through the motif of the hermaphrodite. Moorcock seems to be interested in exploring gender roles and questioning cultural models and assumptions. An enduring image of the sixties is that of the androgyne or transexual, most explicit in pop icons such as David Bowie. Commentary on sexual ambiguity and changing ethics is particularly emphasised. For example, Jerry conjectures about seventies London and predicts,

that the true aristocracy who would rule the seventies were out in force: the queers and the lesbians and the bisexuals, already half-aware of their great destiny which would be realised when the central ambivalence of sex would be totally recognised and the terms male and female would become all but meaningless. (FP p57)

In the later novel, The City In The Autumn Stars (1986), Manfred and Libussa are to be merged into a similar hermaphrodite, an alchemical and mystical experiment re-enacting the classical myth of the melding of Hermaphroditos and Salmacis. That particular experiment fails, but the plan to create a messiah in The Final Programme succeeds: 'he had breasts and two sets of genitals, and it seemed very real and very natural that this should be so' (p137). The irony intended is made explicit when the hermaphrodite emerges from the computerised womb and its first words are the absurd greeting, 'Hi, fans!' Rather than being god-like, the hermaphrodite becomes a parody of the androgynous figure of 'camp' pop.

The novel ends with bathos as the 'messiah' drowns all its followers and considers this to be 'A very tasty world' (p142). This becomes a comment on society's need for messiahs and heroes and presents the dangers and futility of hero-worship or the self-destructive element inherent in much fundamental religion. The cults of scientology, EST, Divine Light and The Moonies all found such success in Britain in the sixties and seventies.
The Multiverse

The second Jerry Cornelius novel, *A Cure for Cancer* [1971], is darker than the first, with its lengthy descriptions of war-torn cities leaving societies and individuals victims of anomie. Moorcock is interested in exploring how people and institutions confront the loss of order, and Jerry becomes a character exhibiting the same symptoms as Colin Wilson's 'Outsider', who is frustrated, paranoid and obsessed with sex. Wilson explains that 'The Outsider is a man who has awakened to chaos' [25] and similarly, Jerry is one who has transcended the constraints of morality and of physics, being free to time travel at will and resurrect himself. Although free, he questions and seeks his identity, playing a multitude of roles. His stories read like nightmares or bad trips, full of guilt and neurosis. Whilst Wilson's alienated anti-hero may end up a visionary or a saint, Jerry achieves only ephemeral messianic status, or a parody of it.

As the eternal champion, he is resurrected within the multiverse and has become a negative image of himself, with ebony black skin, black teeth and long, white hair. Jerry is still an individual with psychedelic style, wearing a panda fur coat and a turban with peacock feathers. Nobody questions his odd appearance or his dramatic change, and his own family accept his eccentricities. He has become more of a symbolic figure.

He is the dandy assassin inhabiting a technological playground, whose Rolls Royce Phantom transforms, Bond-like, into a submarine or a jet plane. Jerry's world has become a science fiction landscape

> The sweet music of a thousand hidden radio transmitters filled the countryside and brought heavenly sound to the pastoral landscape ... Was ever there such utopia? ...Overhead like birds of paradise, swarmed the flying machines ...[p166]

He now owns a device which is an experimental prototype; a machine which unlocks the megaflo of the multiverse allowing its operator to travel through the shift. When activated it
exposes 'all layers of existence at once' (p195) and seems to need pop music to energise it. The shifter creates webs that lead to all the alternative existences that are being played out concurrently. This is the 'megaflow' or the moonbeam roads, which weave a web between the alternate worlds. Jerry's black box diffuses and randomises, transporting individuals into another time or plane, where a similar life, with differences, can be acted out. This brings new hope and possibilities.

Jerry remains an agent of chaos, bringing anarchy with his sabotage and battles against conventionality. The word 'astatic' is used by Moorcock to describe the flux and disorder. His opponents represent order and institution, particularly the grotesque Bishop Beesley who slows down time and rides his 'utopia machine' in an attempt to relocate 'the virtues of the past' (p339). For Beesley, law and order can only come about through suffering. Likewise, Jerry's brother Frank suggests that "We must limit imagination" (p317) to regain organisation and stability.

In *A Cure For Cancer*, Moorcock parodies 'order' in his portrayal of the US army who have become Nazi-like dictators, whilst a character called Himmler is merely a seedy night-club owner. General Cumberland's speech about the marines leading Europe into war with their 'American strength, American Manhood, ... American bullets ... American virility' (p299) is a painfully satirical comment on the Vietnam War, a reality in the background when the novel was written. Moorcock distances himself and the reader from the true horror through his use of comedy, but makes a direct political point. Moorcock explains 'I was substituting England for Vietnam, to bring the war home; to say the same awful distortion of ideals could occur here and we could be its victims' [26]. Moorcock parodies a particular and stereotypical American attitude; a militant xenophobia against communism, homosexuality and liberalism, all of which are cancers which must be 'cured'. Moorcock is commenting on modern imperialism. The headings to chapters illuminate this point, and include a paragraph from Hitler and an advert for a toy Polaris submarine.
For Moorcock, order is the domain of the military, the church and science, whilst chaos finds its energy in music, parties and drugs.

Eventually, London is destroyed with napalm and through chemical warfare. In fact most of the world soon succumbs to disorder and war; London is burned as part of a pogrom, and the city is like a dying animal, giving out 'a strange wailing noise' (p254). London is personified, a metaphor extended in his novel, *Mother London*, discussed in Chapter Seven.

In the final quarter of the novel Jerry remembers his only reason for continuing - "There's some hope ... There's a chance of love." (p313) and he looks once more upon Catherine's body in the morgue, and manages to temporarily reanimate her with his own body heat. Then in the coda we are presented with Jerry and his sister whose lovemaking melts the snow in a romantic finale, before she dies once more. Love is the only thing left for Jerry, and the only activity or diversion which interests him.

Jerry's reality is disturbingly mutable, but his is the world we all experience, one of passions, chaos, fear, 'bad trips' and guilt. The dissipating world in *A Cure For Cancer*, echoes the frustrations and emotions in our own minds. The war-torn world is beyond Jerry's power to save, so he turns to individualism and the saving of Catherine. For every person the world is only what inhabits the individual mind.

*Entropy*

The third Jerry Cornelius novel, *The English Assassin* [1972], is subtitled 'A Romance of Entropy', and gives a detailed, if non-chronological account of the slow demise of an alternative Edwardian Britain where a technological utopia has fragmented into a dystopian pantomime. Within the novel itself, various alternatives are offered, often regressing into decay and destruction, or celebrating a fin-de-siècle decadence. Moorcock dismantles the logical sequence of the
narrative, so that it becomes episodic and multiplicitous. Here lies the essence of his 'multiverse': being able to see many possibilities at once. Moorcock has stated, 'I'm not confused by multiplicity - I'm delighted by it' [27]. Plurality and ambivalence is a strength not a weakness. Just as Moorcock is fascinated by how the same characters react in different situations, so is he obsessed by the concept of a multiverse of alternatives, tracing how a particular society confronts an alternative history. In *The English Assassin*, Britain is a failing Edwardian utopia which is gripped in the 1900-75 war where the air is filled with zeppelin airships whilst music-hall singers entertain at the end of every pier. This was the beginning of the steampunk novel, a style more fully developed in *The Nomad Of The Time Streams*.

Whilst the first two Cornelius books are dynamic and splintered, the last two books have a slower pace, representing the slow heat death of the universe. Moorcock quotes Rudolf Clausius' famous discovery in 1865 that 'the entropy of the universe tends to a maximum', and the Jerry Cornelius novels are an attempt to describe this dissemination with his fragmented prose, in an attempt to uncover 'the nature of the catastrophe'. For Moorcock, entropy equally applies to people, places and time. Entropy represents the inevitability of death and decay, but many of his novels, particularly the Cornelius mythos, explore how humans overcome death and attempt to create the best quality of life from what they have. When Jerry finds a wingless butterfly, Bishop Beesley, representing order, wants to destroy it, but Jerry, standing for Chaos, identifies with it and saves it. The wingless butterfly is a perfect image for the enigmatic Jerry Cornelius. Moorcock has written, 'life should be enjoyed to the full and its responsibilities taken seriously' [28]. Jerry escapes death by not dying, but continually reincarnating within the multiverse.

Jerry Cornelius is strangely absent in this third book, suffering from catatonia and hydrophilia, he has spent a year or more in a box under the sea. He is found as a smelly bundle washed up on
the seashore, still alive and conscious, screeching and looking like 'a mad gull' (p383). The book seems content to follow more closely the other characters of the melodrama as they ship Jerry's body to Dubrovnik. His body becomes the grail this time, initiating the adventure. It was with this episode that Moorcock believes he correctly predicted the horrors of the Dubrovnik corpse boats in the Balkan civil war [29].

In a short interlude interrupting the narrative of The English Assassin, the following words are attributed to Prinz Lobkowitz -

> It would be pleasant, I think, if we could somehow produce a completely blank generation - a generation which has not acquired the habits of the previous generation and will pass no habits on to the next (p472).

The concept of 'the blank generation' was one that was later introduced into protest music by the prototype punk singer-songwriter, Richard Hell, who influenced Malcolm McLaren. Jon Savage recalls that the 'Blank Generation laid out the attractions of vacancy: not just being or looking bored, but the deeper vacancy of the subconscious' [30]. This notion stems from the idealism that each individual has the right to unlearn all that they have been socialised into. Whilst there may be some good to be learned from history and culture we do not want to repeat the horrors of the holocaust or Vietnam, and Moorcock writing in the sixties and seventies represented the utopian movement of anarchism.

Britain in The English Assassin is a victim of chaos, falling into entropy, disintegrating and slowly melting in the intense heat. The character who stands for order is the bumbling Major Nye, with his old school tie, English country garden and his inability to show affection or emotion. He represents the old-fashioned and paternalistic traditions of Empire, Oxbridge and the armed forces, and whose death near the end takes on a significance in terms of how Britain is crumbling and losing its heritage. Here is social observation of the kind found in Simon Raven's novels.
Jerry himself is the most ambiguous character, concurrently a sentient corpse in a box, 'a rotting creature which had lain amongst the debris and sheep-dung in the gloomy interior of a tower' (p470), or a skeleton of a twelve year old boy. Uncertain memories abound with Jerry as a guerrilla storming Wordsworth's cottage or as a child watching his grotesque mother have sex with a stranger, 'grunting in unison as orgasms shook their combined thirty eight stones of flesh' (p526). The most mysterious moments occur when the Cornelius family and friends are enjoying Sunday roast and it seems that Jerry is not present, but there is an unnamed boy who falls asleep and is ignored like the ghost of a dead child. Only Catherine refers to him and knows that he is having a nightmare. The reader is left to presume that this is Jerry himself, appearing like a phantom, the illegitimate child whose fantasies, nightmares, trips, time travelling adventures of espionage and messiahship fill the pages we are reading.

*The English Assassin* is a gloomy book filled with horror. One of the most disturbing passages describes Una being gang-raped and the reader is left with no doubt that this world is collapsing physically and morally, even though Jerry seems content singing to his ukulele before snoozing on the deck of his boat. The final image of the novel is the bombing and destruction of the seaside resort as Catherine waves, 'Goodbye England' (p588). Jerry, it seems, it not really interested in world affairs and the possibility of global destruction. Neither is he particularly concerned with his own messianic status. He really only wants a peaceful quiet life away from power struggles and to be alone with Catherine. Jerry, and perhaps Moorcock, has given up hope for England.

*Harlequinade*

*The Condition of Muzak* presents Jerry's finest performance, and indeed, the novel won the 1977 Guardian Fiction Prize. We are led through another series of episodic personal mythologies including Arthurian allusions, the underworld of Notting Dale, world politics and show business
encapsulated under the all-encompassing metaphor of the harlequinade. Jerry, once again is many things and many people: an anarchist, a lover, a king, and mainly, 'the bravest dandy of them all' (p627). John Clute suggests that 'Jerry's life is a constant series of auditions' [31].

During one fancy dress party Jerry is 'feeling the loneliness most painful when one is among friends' when he complains to a passer-by, "I used to believe I was Captain of my own Fate. Instead, I'm just a character in a bloody pantomime" (p792). The characters begin to take on the identities of stock-types from Commedia dell'Arte, the Italian and later French theatrical form which has inspired Moliere, Shakespeare, Pantomime, Punch and Judy, the clown and mime artist. Jerry is always hoping to be Harlequin who is quick witted and wily with a huge sexual appetite. This aptly describes one aspect of Jerry but the suggestion that he is only an adolescent dreaming up masturbatory fantasies is implied more strongly. He is, in fact, only Pierrot, the frustrated dolt. John Rudlin's notes on Pierrot in his handbook *Commedia dell'Arte* could be a character study on Jerry Cornelius.

Gives vent to feelings only when alone... A loner, an observer of the follies of others, but unhesitatingly faithful to... Columbina for whom he suffers eternally unrequited love. Childlike... At times, however, the best he can scheme for is to escape the punishment others have in store for him. [32]

It turns out that Una is the real Harlequin and is Catherine's chosen lover. Catherine is Columbine, the rational and self-sufficient woman who is the object of most people's desire. Jerry's sister Catherine remains an enigmatic character in the novels, later becoming the main character in her own novel along with Una Persson, whom John Clute acknowledges as literature's most significant 'temporal adventuresses' from a significant line begun by Woolf's *Orlando* and Haggard's *She* (33). Catherine becomes Jerry's only purpose or hope; she provides a genuine love for him to respond to. She is always the catalyst who provokes and sustains the action. Their
interdependency is highlighted near the end of the novel when her reflection in a pool shows his face rather than hers.

Bishop Beesley is an amalgam of Pantalone and Captain Fracasse, aggressive and authoritarian. Frank is Scaramouch, the stirrer. All the city folk are playing their roles in the scenario, improvising, acting out set-pieces, rehearsing and performing behind their social masks and one of the most colourful set-pieces is in chapter ten which describes Christmas and lists an extensive dramatis personae from myth and pantomime (p785). Characters in the novel become the stock-types from mummers’ plays, mystery cycles, pantomime, fairy tales and mythology. Miss Brunner, the school Ma’am becomes Britannia, a character he later identified as a prototype Mrs Thatcher [34]; Major Nye, the Imperialist is Saint George: Mrs Cornelius is Widow Twanky.

Mrs Cornelius is one of Moorcock's most bizarre and enduring creations. She appears in other novels, most notably the Col Pyat novels, himself a character in the Cornelius books. Mrs C is a foul-mouthed, libidinous grotesque straight from Dickens or Peake. Jerry appears to be very dependent upon his mother with whom he has an oedipal relationship. She drinks gin, belches and uses expletives unthinkingly, and yet she is always attractive to men. Her reactions are ludicrous and show her to be indomitable. For example during a picnic with her family, her lover is shot before her eyes, but she turns to Frank and comments, "Still, yer've got ter larf, incha?" (CM p833). She is most cynical about Jerry, who is in stasis in his vampiric box. She does not understand his achievements or his aims, and yet she is incredibly perceptive, and the reader understands her attitude when she states, "Iber-bleedin'-natin' 'e corls it! master-fuckin'-batin' I corl it!" (EA P555). This evaluation of Jerry could well be accurate, and the ambiguity of his character allows this to be a distinct possibility. Perhaps Jerry is no more the messiah of the age of
science, as much as he is some adolescent grubby wanker. Moorcock has intimated as much. In a private letter answering this very question he replied that 'Jerry is everything. Everyone.'

Jonathan Raban in his anthropological study of city life, *Soft City* understands the fluctuating reality of city life, describing the city as a theatrical mirage where lives are scenarios, and strangers are an audience. Raban praises the ambiguity and shallow veneer of London. 'London was pure make-believe, a city I could belong to because I could invent it' [35]. Raban writes particularly about Notting Hill Gate and Ladbroke Grove where Moorcock lived for many years; Jerry's own home and preferred enclave. Raban refers to the mythology of Notting Hill Gate where folk-magic still exists in the guise of drugs, music, decadence, astrology, mysticism and art. Ladbroke Grove is famous for producing writers and musicians including Hawkwind and The Pink Fairies. It was also the home of *IT* and Jimi Hendrix. Raban recognises the importance of identifying the 'soft' city, which is ambiguous and in flux. Our material world comes alive when it interacts with our dreams and illusions, and surrealist art begins to communicate that reality. The city is soft like Dali's watches and like Jerry's concept of time, people and place.

Raban likens city fashions to theatrical costumes and compares life in the city to acting on a stage.

In the city, we can change our identities at will, as Dickens triumphantly proved over and over again in his fiction ... The gaudy theatrical nature of the city itself tends constantly to melodrama [36].

The city is a surreal cartoon or in Raban's words, 'a maniac's scrapbook', and Moorcock is that maniac pasting down the collage of his experiences and observations. Jerry is an indigenous city dweller. 'He was never really comfortable unless he had at least fifteen miles of built-up area on all sides' [FPp96]. The city is a venue for melodrama, an under-rated theatrical form which is both amoral and anarchistic, as Raban shows, and shares many features with an earlier age of magic and
barbarism. Cities contain tribes, rituals, superstition, territories, violence, magic and folklore.

Raban suggests that the city is a place rich in mythology and fantasy. He explains how 'we have created an environment in which it is exceedingly hard to be rational, in which people are turning to magic as a natural first resort' [37].

Moorcock's love for London is one that accepts all that is fake and chaotic about it, and is strangely romantic and honest. London becomes a character within the text, which itself is ambiguous and multi-faceted, with infinite names and roles.

And Jerry was filled with a sudden deep love for his noble birthplace, the City of the Apocalypse, this Earthly Paradise, the oldest and greatest city of its Age, virgin and whore, mother, sister, mistress, sustainer of life, creator of nightmare, destroyer of dreams, harbourer of twenty million chosen souls. [CM p641]

The city is always Jerry's security, his urban utopia, and in the Carnival Jerry is the King of London. He is only a symbol, no more, but what he does not appreciate is that Carnival is when a fool is king for a day. Bakhtin reminds us that in Carnival, convention is turned upside down and law and order are temporarily ignored. Like Fraser's account of Saturnalia with its mock king or Lord of Misrule sacrificed to death, so Jerry Cornelius is the sacrifice, the scapegoat for his generation, the clown who is mocked, criticised, blamed and punished as an example. Miss Brunner sneers at Jerry. "He wasn't his world's Messiah ... He was his world's Fool." But this adds up to the same thing. He is a messiah, in the same way as Dostoevsky's idiot is, except that Jerry will always return to play Pierrot once again.

Moorcock has created a literature that forms a critique of mainstream culture and the accepted forms of institutional convention. He uses folk or popular culture to satirise authority, much as Rabelais did in the sixteenth century. Jerry Cornelius becomes the everyman who experiences all our hopes, dreams, failures and pain.
Notes

[1] M Bakhtin Rabelais and His World p269
[5] Nuttall p141
[7] Colin Greenland The Entropy Exhibition p145
[13] Hebdige p113
[14] Hebdige p119
[16] New Worlds - Jerry Cornelius' 1972 in Sojan
[17] 'In Lighter Vein' 1976, in Sojan
[18] Entropy Exhibition p151
[19] Sojan p157
[21] Sojan p150
[22] 'Dreaming City' in Elric Of Melnibone p574
[23] 'Dreaming City' p595
[26] Death Is No Obstacle p90
[27] DINO p152
[28] Private letter
[29] Private letter
[31] Clute 'Repossession' p312
[33] John Clute The Encyclopedia of Fantasy
[34] The Retreat From Liberty p7
[36] Raban p8
[37] Raban p176
Chapter 5  SATIRE AND ROMANTICISM

And now our dreams are true
We don't know what to do
'Cause we don't like it here
There's nothing for us to fear
Bored mindless in utopia
('Arrival in Utopia' - Hawkwind 1982)

This chapter will explore the symbiotic relationship between fantasy and comedy and show how satire is an essential tool for the fantasist and for the social commentator. Moorcock was one of the early exponents of comic fantasy, before Douglas Adams and Terry Pratchett, and he is noted as one of the forefathers of 'gaslight romance' or steampunk, which is today gaining such academic credibility through authors such as William Gibson. John Clute coined the term 'gaslight romance' defining it as 'Nostalgic fantasy' set in the nineteenth century, inferring also the employment of 'alternate worlds' which are 'Different versions of reality substituted for our own' [1]. The form is similar to 'steampunk', a category used by John Clute in his *Encyclopedia of Fantasy* to describe science fiction written in a Dickensian manner using elements from Victoriana. The style is reminiscent of the wit of Meredith and can be read as a celebration of the fin de siècle age of artifice, and a scathing parody of the ethical hypocrisy of Protestant enlightenment. Clute categorises the novels as sf but concedes that they convey 'a sense that genre distinctions are themselves part of the fantastic play' [2]. Moorcock identifies them as 'the only good science fiction books I've written' [3].

*The Dancers At the End of Time* are novels for the twentieth century fin-de-siècle. The characters represent the beatniks of the seventies who are the modern equivalent of the nineteenth century romantics. I shall also be analysing the usage of Romanticism in these books. It is worth noting that a line can be traced from the writers of the Decadence through the beat generation to 1970s pop
culture by the fact that these writers of various counter-cultures have used romantic and utopian notions to subvert mainstream culture.

The three novels *An Alien Heat* (1972), *The Hollow Lands* (1974), and *The End of All Songs* (1976) are now anthologised under the title *The Dancers At the End of Time*. The sequels to Moorcock's trilogy include three stories collected as *Legends From the End of Time* (1976); a novel called *The Transformation of Miss Mavis Ming* (1977 and also a sequel to *The Winds of Limbo*, 1965); and the novella *Elric at the End of Time* (1981), which connects it more closely to his Eternal Champion cycle. The protagonist at the end of time is Jherek Carnelian whose name is similar to that other Moorcockian dandy, Jerry Cornelius implying an, albeit ambiguous, interconnectedness.

The trilogy presents a bizarre, satirical and lyrical vision of an anarchist utopian future to rival Morris' *News From Nowhere* (1890), in which an Edwardian, puritanical housewife meets a promiscuous aesthete; a relationship with immediate antagonism and conflicts. Here is the eternal struggle between law and chaos with its comic consequences and its large cast of grotesque characterisations; Moorcock's familiar roll call from the traditions of Commedia dell'Arte involved in witty dialogue and plots typical of black comedy. The style also owes something to the nonsense of Lewis Carrol and Mervyn Peake.

Although the series fulfils many of the characteristics of comic romance, Moorcock's End of Time novels also merge historical realism, surrealism, science fiction and comedy. As Jackson suggests, fantasy is symbiotic to the real, often being a comparison to reality or containing metonyms referring to reality.

The fantastic exists as the inside, or underside, of realism, opposing the novel's closed, monological forms with open, dialogical structures, as if the novel had given rise to its own opposite, its unrecognisable reflection. Hence their symbiotic relationship [4].
Fantasy frequently distorts or violates the real in order to give a different perspective. This works in a way similar to absurd comedy. Utopias, dystopias and future tales are often used as media for commentary on our society. *The Dancers At the End of Time* presents an outrageous and amoral alternative to our own existence, which is also a recognisable exaggeration of the Decadence and other transgressive counter-cultures. The novels work on many levels; pure escapist romance or satirical critique, creating a burlesque whose humour works because situations and characters are recognisable to a contemporary audience, drawing from real life and from urban mythology.

Moorcock's own arguments for comedy and their link with fantasy are clear. In an essay on humour in fantasy he argues, 'Comedy demands paradox - the juxtaposition of disparate images and elements - just as fantasy does' [5]. He furthers his case for the importance of humour and irony as an essential technique in good literature when he states that, 'Comedy - like fantasy - is often at its best when making the greatest possible exaggerations - whereas tragedy usually becomes bathetic when it exaggerates' [6].

Comedy is often a technique that redeems a text from becoming sentimental and melodramatic. The symbiotic relationship between humour and fantasy is clear and has been exploited by such writers as Mervyn Peake, James Branch Cabell and Fritz Lieber, as well as post-modern writers like Angela Carter and Italo Calvino. Moorcock cites George Meredith and Mark Twain as inspirations for his own comedy romances.

**Comic Forms**

Comedy is often didactic or allegorical and yet it can be treated as a form containing less profundity than tragedy: this is a grave error. It must be remembered that comedy has a social function. Not only is laughter cathartic as Aristotle observed, but comic forms such as black comedy and satire invert moral assumptions and cultural norms, challenging the reader. Humour is
an important form of expression, and moments of comic relief in tragedy can allay sentimentalism or melodrama. Just as comedy is an essential component of tragedy, so comedy is an essential part of fantasy.

*The Dancers At the End of Time* can properly be called a tragicomedy, a term often interchangeable with 'comical satire', which can be applied to Ben Jonson's masques or more specifically the anti-masque, or to black comedy which explores society's taboos. Satire is a concept that implies something harder than its gentler sister, comedy. Hard satire involves 'invective', but Moorcock's use of satire employs a more sardonic and ironic mode, which is closer to tragedy in its style and language. Comedy is a complex term and many of its related concepts overlap. In his definition of comedy, Moelwyn Merchant highlights the complications.

we have found on the one hand that comedy is profoundly difficult to define in the abstract and equally difficult to distinguish from other comic modes, the grotesque, the absurd, the ironic and the farcical [7].

Moorcock achieves an effective collage of forms, including black comedy, the absurd, burlesque and farce. Merchant reminds us that even farce has its analogies in sacred art and cites Hieronymous Bosch's grotesque imagery. Whilst comedy does follow mythical and metaphysical patterns, as we shall see below in the work of Northrop Frye, it is important to remember that comedy deals with ordinary people in a recognisable, if exaggerated world, whereas tragedy is often far removed. Therefore, comedy is more useful to the writer who wants to show the 'reality' of human existence, in which the struggles we pursue to the point of obsession are worth reassessing.

It is essential that we step back and change our perspective to one that is more humble and objective, and this is the usual aim of alienation techniques.

Satire involves deriding a particular subject, often making it look ridiculous, whilst comedy implies laughter for its own sake. Satire is a powerful political tool. Ben Jonson satirises types
recognisable within society, whilst Jonathan Swift satirised whole societies, indeed the entire human race. Moorcock uses indirect satire to comment on two societies; one that is conservative and prosaic, and the other which is epicurean and chaotic. The sequel *Legends From the End of Time* includes lengthy debates between characters, and an authorial voice which interrupts the action adding the subjective opinion of an auditor. These techniques are typical of the Menippean satire, best exemplified by Rabelais and Voltaire.

Irony is a more complex term, with a changing history of definitions and multiplicitous shades of meaning, remaining itself an ambiguous and contradictory impulse, which allies itself closely with fantasy for that very reason. Verbal and situational irony can include parody, sarcasm, paradox, juxtaposition and rhetorical devices. Cosmic irony is evident with Lord Jagged controlling the characters' destinies, manipulating their futures and performing experiments with his friends and family as test-subjects. This is reminiscent of the theme of God as the archetypal ironist laughing at our expense.

Moorcock's use of irony also includes the subtle and convoluted Romantic irony which accepts literature's ambivalent nature and admits into its own narrative structure a dialectic interplay between mimetic constructs and the paradox that any account of reality will be necessarily full of contradiction and fantasy.

D.C. Muecke identifies an irony of self-betrayal in which 'A satirist who wishes to condemn a particular vice or folly can do it very effectively by putting a self-contradictory argument into the mouth of a would-be wise or virtuous character' [8]. Jherek fulfils this function in the trilogy as the plot's victim. Muecke also comments on the interesting notion that irony is an aesthetic addition of witticism and ornate language. The additional connection between irony and dandyism (p45) seems particularly pertinent for Moorcock's novels, which follow themes and conventions from the
Decadence and are products of an era when popular culture and fashion fed into much of the literature being produced.

*The Dancers At the End of Time* acts as a suitable example of Northrop Frye's 'comic mythos' mode of romance as set out in *Anatomy of Criticism*. Frye's archetypal definition of comedy identifies two subgroups; 'old comedy', which is idyllic and often portraying a society of gods, whilst 'new comedy' tends to confound erotic intrigue in which the author, as auditor, manipulates the plot. Moorcock's novels range between both new and old comedy interrogating the theme of integration of two societies, how an epicurean survives in a strictly stoic culture and vice versa. Frye's structural and generic analyses inform us that 'comedy blends into satire at one extreme and into romance at the other; romance may be comic or tragic; tragic extends from high romance to bitter and ironic realism' [9]. This reminds us that comedy has an interdependent relationship with fantasy unlike tragedy, which is closer to melodrama or mimesis. The very nature of comedy suggests fantastical devices and techniques, or at the very least, symbolism in the style of Baudelaire or Rimbaud.

Frye's analysis of the comic mythos correlates with the important work of Bakhtin, discussed in the next chapter, depicting carnival or 'Saturnalia' where society's standards are reversed in the form of 'anti-masque'. Moorcock's comic novels fit even more snugly into Frye's ironic mythos and conclusion that 'Satire demands at least a token fantasy' [10]. It is most pertinent to *The Dancers At the End of Time* when he writes, 'the comic struggle of two societies, one normal and the other absurd, is reflected in its double focus of morality and fantasy' [11]. Using this model, we can compare the two cultures being presented to us: future utopia and Edwardian London. However, Moorcock wants us to think that the society at the end of time is 'normal' or at least an ironic utopia. Moorcock avoids obsessive allegory here, preferring the satirical techniques of wit, the absurd and
critique. Jherek Carnelian is the naive hero and victim, in the tradition of Jonson's 'gulls' whose absurd evaluations create a structural irony.

Carol McGuirk in her essay 'The 'New' Romancers' writes of Moorcock's use of parody and satire and claims he fulfils the requirements set down by Bakhtin: "Bakhtin argues that pastiche, parody, burlesque, and ironic inversions of genre conventions are the hallmarks of good fiction [12]. Indeed, Moorcock's visionary novels work on many levels, satirising Victorian morality and comparing it to utopian libertarianism; questioning conventional gender roles (Jherek is the more 'feminine' character); and pushing the boundaries of spatial, temporal and personal identity.

Further to Frye's exegesis of the comic archetype, it is important to note that Moorcock's aim was to explore and extend the very 'rules' Frye lays down. Moorcock's comedies explicitly interrogate the themes suggested in Anatomy of Criticism and are a more pragmatic rendering of the objections raised by both Todorov and Hume. The former treads warily suggesting that generic criticism is only useful to a limited extent and can never be an exact science and warns against the mere identification of categories and theoretical genres. 'Which comes down to saying that no observation of works can strictly confirm or invalidate a theory of genres' [13]. Hume uses Frye's method to emphasise that 'fantasy is not a superficial frill added to a mimetic framework' [14] but is a complete structure in its own right. Narratives, however, are rarely single genres, but in a post-modern world are a complement of many styles, structures and languages.

Closer analysis of the trilogy will highlight the comic techniques Moorcock employs and their link with fantasy as well as stylistic and generic tricks used to create such a visual cornucopia.

The Dancers At the End of Time

The title of the series probably owes something to Anthony Powell's twelve novel sequence, 'A Dance to the Music of Time' (1951-75), a humorous chronicle of the decline of the aristocracy from
the Victorian era and through the modernist and post-modern periods of British history. Powell traces the fragmentation of society through the use of polymorphous narratives and the perspectives of absurd characters.

The first novel of the trilogy, *An Alien Heat* is a comedy of misunderstanding and human error using techniques of condensing and exaggeration. It begins at the end time of our universe where 'the human race had at last ceased to take itself seriously' (p7). We are presented with an entropic world where decadence, sensuality and aesthetics dominate the mainstream philosophy giving an immediate parallel to the British fin-de-siecle with its decadent subculture and subversion. Moorcock has created a culture with new psychological dynamics. There is a question as to whether this society is a utopia or dystopia, but it is a presentation of exaggerated anarchism. On the positive side this is a society with no problems regarding greed or jealousy, because possessions are unimportant, all desires are freely catered for, and each individual has powers to create any material thing or fulfil any dream. The end of time is an amoral culture in which incest and promiscuity are dull, everyday activities. Jherek regularly consummates his physical love for his mother, The Iron Orchid, and the act is described as a perfectly ordinary oedipal expression. Time-travellers from other eras and worlds are predictably horrified.

Jherek Carnelian and his mother enjoy a picnic on the beach eating sumptuous foods discussing the alien ideas of 'virtue' and 'self-denial' of which Jherek has read but is uncertain of their meaning. The reader quickly learns that the inhabitants of the end of time are obsessed with abstract experiences and show disinterest and naivety towards concepts like old age, time and death. They all have the power to resurrect anyone who is unfortunate enough to die; otherwise they are immortal, so death has lost its sting and truth or reality is constantly questioned and ambiguous. Jherek asks his mother rhetorically, "...but what is particularly interesting about the truth?" (p35).
Like the literature of the Decadence artifice and aesthetics are more important than verisimilitude and life has become a vulgar game. A time traveller comments upon their lifestyle - "You play mindless games without purpose or meaning" (p58). The grotesque characters and chaotic events are Carnivalesque in the style of Rabelais with its themes of misrule and alienation.

Like a comedy of manners, *An Alien Heat* involves courting, love, jealousy and witty dialogue. The style is most often romantic and philosophical and the romance includes misunderstanding and farcical techniques to sustain and develop plot lines. The narrative revolves around the unlikely relationship between the innocent, idealistic Jherek and the Edwardian puritanical housewife Mrs Amelia Underwood who is transported forward in time. Jherek decides to fall in love with her as an amusing experiment and his lovemaking involves insincere games, and he fails to appreciate her different socialised assumptions. ‘If she fell in love with him tomorrow (which was pretty inevitable, really) there were all sorts of games they could play - separations, suicides, melancholy walks, bitter-sweet partings and so on’ (p73). The comic ordering of these games shows his ignorance of true sacrifice for suicide is just another silly pastime. However, Mrs. Underwood’s idea of love is also insincere. She speaks proudly of her steadfast commitment to her distant husband and their ‘institute of Christian marriage’ which is lawful even if there is no love involved.

Once again the extremes of chaos and law are distinguished here with a romantic stalemate between a hedonist and an ascetic. Jherek remains the bohemian with magic powers and his artistry lacks taste and subtlety. Mrs Underwood remains virtuous and is sensible to her 'duty' and dignity. She finds him depraved and corrupt, whilst he is continually confused and frustrated. The question raised is whether sin can exist where there is no conception of sin, and Mrs Underwood sees it as her mission to convert Jherek to her standards. Mrs. Underwood could be free of her repressed and
sheltered upbringing and fulfil all her fantasies, and yet she chooses to reject all enjoyment and lead a dull temperate life. She chooses order and stability; safety and routine.

The tone is set for tragedy or at least, an idyll, until Jherek travels back in time, and his warped perspective of Edwardian London creates comic effect, and completes a tragicomedy. Jherek begins to take himself seriously, and mourns his loss of irony with a cry of, "'It is no longer a game!'" In an uncharacteristic moment of anagnorisis he realises his love is genuine and literally follows her across a million years.

Moorcock's London is the grimy, foggy, entropic fairground of Ben Jonson and Dickens, filled with corrupt stock-types, for example Snoozer Vine, and settings such as Jones' Kitchen, also known as 'The Devil's Arsehole'. Jherek's evaluation is summed up in his cry of disbelief - "many of their pastimes are not pursued from choice at all" (p142). Jherek becomes an allegorical figure caught up in crime, and it is only when he is hanged that Mrs Underwood declares her love for him. The convention of tragedy is subverted when the reader remembers that death is no obstacle. Virtue is continually linked with corruption, as advantage is always taken of the virtuous.

The second book in the series, *The Hollow Lands*, makes use of farce particularly in the episode with the senile robot nurse who appears again at the end of the third book as a deus-ex-machina. The ridiculous sex-crazed aliens and the stupid policemen who chase them create a manic slapstick style in the tradition of the Keystone Kops and Victorian pantomime. The residents at the end of time become quickly bored with their lives of total freedom, like spoilt children. They create different realities depending upon their whims and moods, fashioning houses, and even whole worlds with intricate detail by the use of their simple energy rings. These ambiguous characters, with unlikely names such as Bishop Castle and Gaf the Horse in Tears, act out many roles as children, players, artists and gods.
There is much aesthetic debate in the novel about the difference between reality, realism and the artistic product. Their fake realities are more detailed and preferable to actual reality, although they lack the authenticity of smell and texture. However, Jherek begins to crave a more passionate and chaotic form of expression. The Iron Orchid asks, "are we not in danger of taking Realism too far?" (p160), and even Robot Nurse laments the loss of romance. In her sketchy history of the world she tells Jherek how "someone suffers, every time, during a Realism period" (p209). In a moment of intertextuality, she quotes from an earlier Moorcock fantasy, The Knight of the Swords, which describes a primeval world of magic and mythology filled with 'phantasms, unstable nature, impossible events, insane paradoxes, dreams come true, dreams gone awry, nightmares assuming reality...' (p206). This aptly describes many of the themes of Fantasy and pre-empts the more recent debate of theorists such as Hume who compare the theories of fantasy and mimesis.

When Jherek returns to Edwardian England he reaches Bromley where he is introduced to H. G. Wells who bemoans the fact that his scientific fantasies have been criticised for being too imaginative and sensational: a typical cry from those prejudiced against fantasy. Wells recognises Jherek as an Eloi and takes an immediate liking to him. "'It's a shame you aren't doing my translations M. Carnelian ... You could even improve on the existing books!'" (p219).

Wells is a significant character, not only as the first modern sf writer, but as one who wrote about time, the heat-death of the universe, and the political imbalance between an upper 'aesthetic' class and a repressed working class in his classic, The Time Machine, labelled a 'Scientific Romance'. He is a writer who can be paralleled closely with Moorcock, not only in terms of themes and style, but as both are responsible for the innovation and popularisation of speculative and fantastic fiction whilst both have also written mainstream novels. Moorcock has added to the debate on time travel and the temporal problems that can occur. The scientist after whom it is named explains the
'Morphail Effect'. "If one goes back to an age where one does not belong, then so many paradoxes are created that the age merely spits out the intruder as a man might spit out a pomegranate pip which has lodged in his throat" (p141). Jherek manages temporary shifts, but cannot achieve the travelling between time and space of a fully-fledged 'Nomad of the Time Streams'. This select and mysterious band move freely about the multiverse proving that time and space are not linear and include Jerry and Catherine Cornelius, Una Persson and Oswald Bastable. The last two characters, who have their own books, also appear in *The End of All Songs* adding to the interconnectedness of Moorcock's novels.

The rest of *The Hollow Lands* relies on techniques from the comedy of manners with which Moorcock creates overt social commentary. Mrs Underwood's pious husband, Harold, represents the hypocrisy of paternalism and Protestant ethics. Inspector Springer is the 'thick copper' who is racist and suspects everyone of being an anarchist. The aliens are immediately accused of being vulgar hooligans because their behaviour is very different, whilst gentlemen criminals are allowed to go free because of their membership of the appropriate club.

The book ends with a discussion regarding self-denial, and Jherek still fails to grasp such a pointless concept. The reader still suspects that any love confessed is still shallow and insincere. A minor character, Donna Isabella (a name from Commedia dell'Arte) had earlier made the helpful suggestion that "Being in love is so much preferable to loving someone" (p272). With Jherek's final words we see that he still has much to learn. The reader is reminded that love is a game in which the chase is more fun than the apprehension.

*The End of All Songs* continues the courtly dance and, of the trilogy, is the most subtle and graceful with its baroque Edwardian language, and its descriptions of elaborate social conventions and leisurely lifestyles. The cycle is concluded with a family outing to the seaside. It is only in this
third novel that Jherek learns to be unhappy and experiences jealousy for the first time. He realises that his world is artificial and rediscovers his own humanity. The structure is unusual beginning with catharsis, followed by denouement and resolution and then ending with tension and further development.

The conflict and struggle is continually one between the ordered discipline of Mrs Underwood who follows the Protestant work ethic that "'If one leads a moral life, a useful life, one is happier'"(p380), and the libertarian world of freedom and innocence. Moorcock is emphatic in his preference for the latter, and even has Mrs Underwood wondering about her own beliefs, questioning whether she really brought salvation to these noble savages 'or was it merely guilt?' (p343). The culture of Edwardian England is parodied for its ridiculous constraints upon natural behaviour, and for the repressed anguish and pain caused by these constraints. Jherek and Mrs Underwood begin to understand each other, she becoming more sensitive where at first she had been abrupt and cold.

'I love you,' he said. 'I am a fool. I am unworthy of you.'
'No, no, my dear. I am a slave to my upbringing and I know that upbringing to be narrow, unimaginative, even brutalising ... And now I see that I am on the verge of teaching you my own habits — cynicism, hypocrisy, fear of emotional involvement disguised as self-denial - ah, there is a monstrous range ...'
'I asked you to teach me these things.'
'You did not know what you asked.' (p489).

Where chaos implies enjoyment, order demands suffering. Mrs Underwood continues to criticise her own world, which we recognise as our own. '"You do not know my world, Jherek. It is capable of distorting the noblest intentions, of misinterpreting the finest emotions.'"

As a competent satire The Dancers At the End of Time successfully ridicules philosophical and moral doctrines of the Edwardian age, and suggests that life in post-war Britain has not greatly changed. To the end, Jherek remains the sympathetic character. If he and Mrs. Underwood are the
new Adam and Eve, then Jherek has not sinned because even when he undresses he is not aware of his nakedness; Mrs Underwood is aroused but guilt-ridden and frightened. "You are quite naked my dear." She reached for the door and sped through. "I love you, Jherek. I love you. I will see you in the morning. Goodnight."

Just as the comedy of manners traditionally ridicules those with some status in society, as in Jonson's masquerades, and depends on verbal banter and repartee, in the style of Moliere or the Restoration playwrights, so these novels sparkle with wit and social commentary. The end of time suffers from endless violations of decorum contrived by rivalry and petty jealousies. This reflects our own world, which at times seems like a playground with its constricting dominant culture within which various groups and factions rebel, subvert and play out their lives, inventing games, role-plays and experiments in order to pass the time.

The society depicted at the End of Time is an ambivalent culture of transgression, metamorphosis and desire, with Romantic types such as the morbid Werther de Goethe, who suffers alienation, dissolution and what Lucie Armitt identifies as 'lack'. The concept of 'lack' implies dissatisfaction and desire, which can be displaced by the distraction of 'play'. Armitt's use of 'play' as a trope for existence includes notions of arousal and taboo. Sexual amorality typifies the lifestyle of Jherek Carnelian, Lord Jagged, Mistress Christia The Everlasting Concubine and the others, and by our contemporary and cultural standards many of their normal activities would be considered taboo. The idea of 'play' is closely linked with Bakhtin's theory of carnival, which Armitt takes one step further when she suggests that fantasy writers play games with their readers: the tricks they play are 'the narrative equivalent of flirtation, masquerade and sleight of hand' [15].

Lord Jagged is the character who best typifies this idea of 'play'. As Jherek's true father, he acts as the catalyst for the entire narrative bringing together the two protagonists and manipulating their
actions like a puppet master conceiving jests and fabulations in the way Moorcock controls the reader. He is identified as Mephistopheles and Machiavelli and then acts a role of judge in the nineteenth century with the ironic name of Jagger, linking him with one of the most subversive pop stars of our own times. Setting the novel millions of years in the future helps put our own culture and era into a far wider perspective and context. There existed much tension between popular and mainstream cultures in the 1970s.

Romanticism

In 1976 Moorcock wrote in the introduction of his short story anthology *Moorcock's Book of Martyrs*,

It could be argued that one of the main themes of nineteenth-century fiction had to do with the attempt of the individual to find personal freedom in what we should today call a repressive society, whereas in the Western democracies the problem of many contemporary people, the heirs to the great radical and libertarian movements of the early years of this century, is how we should use our freedom. Like writers who invent alternative repressions in order to continue writing in a traditional mode, some will give up that freedom rather than face the problem [16].

Interestingly, Moorcock compares the personal struggle of the individual fitting into mainstream culture with the writer of formula fiction or mimetic forms. Fantasy writers who create fabulation or speculative fiction are often considered the beatniks or the outcasts of the literary world.

In his preface, Moorcock acknowledges his debt to the 'inspired dandyism of our fin-de-siècle'. The Decadence with its doctrines of aestheticism - as espoused by such as Baudelaire - produced literature of "high refinements and subtle beauties of a culture and art which have passed their vigorous prime, but manifest a special, sweet savour of incipient decay" [17]. A clear link with the image of Entropy is apparent, with an emphasis on ennui and lassitude. The celebration of artifice in style and the frequently bizarre subject matters give the movement and its texts an immediate link.
with fantasy. The writing on themes such as madness and hallucination and the usual inversion of moral norms and sexual deviance make the writers and literature of the fin-de-siècle the precursors to the Beat writers and post-modern fantasists.

The Decadent movement was a development of Romantic literature, which put simplistically, employed sexuality as a major literary inspiration, and whose exponents preferred a more epicurean lifestyle. Much of the writing was Byzantine, gothic and eclectic, terms that can be equally applied to Moorcock. Mario Praz in his thorough study of Romantic literature suggests "the terms 'classic' and 'romantic' come finally to denote, respectively, 'equilibrium' and 'interruption of equilibrium'"[18], which is reminiscent of Moorcock's dualism between order and chaos. However, romanticism involves its own balance, Praz highlights, a balance of beauty and horror best exemplified by the image of Medusa's head. Beauty and death are seen as mythological sisters and as metaphors feed heavily into much fantasy and horror literature. The Dancers At the End of Time explores the juxtaposition of two cultures which also represent the notions of classicism, satirised by a hypocritical materialism, and romanticism, satirised as an absurd group of decadents. Once again, order has a repressive and stifling effect upon its inhabitants, whilst chaos gives room for creativity and artistic endeavour with the added danger of passion and pain, which can also be destructive.

The stories collected in Legends From the End of Time are further examples of ironic tragicomedy written in a mandarin and whimsical language, engaging in more tragic themes and modes- such as the more classical evocations of hubris and catharsis, particularly in the tragic tale 'Ancient Shadows'. A time-traveller finds the society of indulgence too abominable to tolerate, exclaiming, "'Everywhere is waste and decay - the last stages of the Romantic disease whose symptoms are a wild, mindless seeking after sensation for its own sake'" (p129), which reminds us
that chaos alone leads only to death. Jagged is sympathetic, but reminds her that her socialisation is equally entropic and that balance is needed. "...you are without any sort of real passion ... Our world sings and shimmers. Its light can blind with a thousand shapes and colours ... Explore all attitudes ... "'(p130-1). The Transformation of Miss Mavis Ming is a moral fable exploring Messianic themes of power and corruption, with a reconsideration of the dialogue between intellect and heart, or as Moorcock prefers, order and chaos.

I would wish to take issue with Scholes and Rabkin whose short critique of The Dancers at the End of Time in their brief literary history of sf shows a misreading. 'Moorcock's end of the world . . . is amusing, fantastic, and wildly escapist. Social consciousness intrudes not here' [19]. Whilst remembering that escapism is a worthy exercise and that some of the most scathing critiques of society have been in the form of satire, the final sentence cannot be justified as I have argued above.

Greg Neale reviewed the first collected reprint of The Dancers At the End of Time in The Times [20] commenting lightly that 'Moorcock's time-trippers are as delightful - and dated - as the dandified indulgences of the psychedelic high summers that inspired them.' Moorcock would be proud to be identified as one who expressed the zeitgeist of the popular culture of his time. These novels have also been considered 'slight', by a few reviewers, which could be questioned. Ironic fantasy is a significant mode of expression, and to dismiss Moorcock would be to dismiss Meredith, Peake or Peacock. Humour can often be overlooked or marginalised, like fantasy, but its importance cannot be overstated. Moorcock's advice serves as a warning to many mimetic writers, 'if one does want to touch on matters about which one feels deeply, then it is often better to use a comic context. One feels no less seriously about something, but one is able to face the implications
with a steadier eye' [21]. To justify this one need look no further than Heller's *Catch 22* or Voltaire's *Candide*.

Moorcock laughs at London at the turn of the previous century and suggests that little has actually changed. He readily uses such techniques, so that time, character, identity, death and love all become unpredictable and unstable, no longer the constants or 'three unities' so demanded by classical critics. The style and technique are related to the writing of the fin-de-siècle and to tragicomedy; many of the characters are grotesque or absurd.

Mario Praz reminds us that terms like romantic and decadent are only approximate terms and adds the challenging argument against generic criticism, 'The case is similar to that of literary genres. Let them be abolished' [22].

I fully endorse Hume's frustration with genre criticism when she suggests that the 'exclusive definitions' so prized by critics who favour mimetic texts are to be treated with caution.

I suggest that any major improvement in our ability to handle fantasy critically . . . will not come from any sort of exclusive definition, nor from trying to isolate fantasy as a genre or form ... We need not try to claim a work as fantasy any more than we identify a work as mimesis. Rather we have genres and forms, each with a characteristic blend or range of blends of the two impulses' [23].

Moorcock's novels are a perfect example of this blend or montage of various styles, using elements for his own benefit, collating, collaging with pastiches of conventions in a post-modern frenzy, creating moments of 'jouissance'. Moorcock's writing celebrates the magic and chaos of post-modern spirituality and imagination. His books are not simply 'comedy' or 'sf' but a fusion of styles, modes and genres.
Notes

[6] Moorcock, 'Wit and Humour in Fantasy' p6
[14] Kathryn Hume Fantasy and Mimesis p159
[15] Lucie Armitt Theorising the Fantastic p5
[21] Moorcock, 'Wit and Humour in Fantasy', Foundation, May 1979, #16
[22] Praz p21
[23] Hume p20
"Are we anything other than curious maggots, 
burrowing through the rotten cheese of History?"

(A Nomad of the Time Streams, p441)

Gloriana. or The Unfulfill'd Queen

Gloriana is, perhaps, Michael Moorcock's magnum opus. It was meant to be his last pure fantasy 

novel, in his words his 'swansong' [1]. His skills as a sophisticated and literary fantasist are most 

apparent in this novel which fuses history, allegory and carnival to create a romantic fantasy which 

deserves to be considered a masterpiece. It owes much to Mervyn Peake's Gormenghast trilogy, and 

it won the World Fantasy Award and the John W Cambell Memorial Award in1978. Peter 

Caracciolo described the novel as 'that apotheosis of heroic burlesque' [2]. It is related to The 

Faerie Queene and, like Spenser's poem, the setting and characters have parallels with the historical 

Elizabethan court, although Moorcock's novel is a humanist comment on Spenser's religious views. 

Gloriana is not merely a pastiche allegory, but is a dark, psychological exploration of human 

conflict in which the castle represents our own minds, riddled with repressed guilt and secret 

hypocrisy. Through its carnival and dystopian allegory it is a complex, and post-modern morality 

play with elements of gothic literature, burlesque and lyrical poetry. Gloriana is richly textured, 

including long passages of baroque language which create romantic voluptuousness and the 

structure forms a cycle of the seasons. It opens and closes with the same descriptive metaphor, 

'towers and minarets lifting like the masts and hulks of sinking ships'. Moorcock avoids archaic or 

mock-Shakespearian language, although the inclusion of poetry gives the author the opportunity to 

create a pastiche of the worst of romantic style. The language is, however, lyrical, with the plot 

owing most to Restoration scenarios.
It was first published in 1978 and was then revised in 1993 in response to feminist criticism from his friend Andrea Dworkin who argued that the climactic, penultimate chapter as it was originally written, could be seen as a justification for rape. This concerned Moorcock who considers himself a feminist sympathiser, so whereas Gloriana had been the victim, her role is switched to become the violator, overpowering the fearful Quire so as to create feminine aggression which tips the balance back.

The revision omits two pages [3] and adds five new pages [4]. In the original Fontana edition, Quire rapes his Queen and then illogically switches personality as if schizophrenic. 'Quire jumped back, careless of his own unfinished pleasure, and his face was suddenly quite innocent' (p376). However, in the revised edition Gloriana threatens Quire with a knife between his legs and discovers her own true identity whilst taming Quire, her evil alter ego.

She was no longer Albion. No longer justice, mercy and wisdom, no longer the personification of righteousness, the hope and ideal of her people. She was Glory. She was self... He stumbled back... The beast cowered for an instant in his eyes before fleeing entirely exorcised, and leaving him looking at her with the awe some ancient hermit might have lavished upon the face of a deity (p364).

This gives a better justification for Quire's peripety and strengthens Gloriana's character adding weight to the consummation of chaos and order and significance to the romantic ending where Quire becomes Arthur in an ideal kingdom of knights and chivalry. The Romantic and Classical traditions unite. Moorcock uses the metaphor of the balance to represent renaissance notions of harmony, furthering his motif of chaos and order.

Gloriana fits Bakhtin's template of the 'menippea' which involves the grotesque and the carnival; it employs a 'mystical-religious element' with an 'extraordinary philosophical universalism' and 'scandal scenes', along with 'The fact that the leading heroes of the menippea are historical and
legendary figures' [5]. The eponymous queen explicitly provides the Bakhtinian connection between the body and the body politic and the place of carnival in this novel is discussed below.

Gloriana is a symbol, she has become the state of Albion with 'personal decisions subservient to the needs of the state' (p11). Her identity with Albion is unchangeable and unquestionable. Gloriana is seen to hold the state in equilibrium and balance, all laws and values personified in this one godlike figure. She is deified, and yet the reader soon discovers her to be a flawed and sympathetic figure, frustrated sexually with an urge which it seems will never be gratified. 'Her Majesty's Curse' is that she cannot achieve release from her burdens through orgasm even through her private decadent and orgiastic experiences. This lack of fulfilment brings her continued torment. "'Am I doomed to my Quest as chivalry's knights were doomed to seek Bran's Cup and never find it, because they were not pure enough?'" (p135). Gloriana is neither virtuous nor a virgin, she regularly practices sexual deviance and masochism within her seraglio and has bastard children, yet she remains unfulfilled. "'In my pain and my fear I sought help from Eros - but Eros rewards only those who bring him virtue and good will'"(p336). Orgasm is merely an ephemeral consummation, succeeded by further frustration, a theme which haunts literature - see for example Martin Amis' Money. Sexual fantasy and adventure are only part of humanity's need for gratification and excitement; to escape a dull reality. This is also the task of Fantasy literature; to evoke emotion and aid us in our dreams of a more heroic and exciting existence. So, within one fantasy we are distracted by characters who likewise are seeking fantasy and entertainment. The elusive orgasm symbolises self-discovery, and this notion is explored further in Bataille's History of Sexuality, but Gloriana is an impotent figure - a fisher queen. The novel's subtitle is 'The Unfulfil'd Queen' and no manner of sexual deviance and fetish can satisfy her deeper needs.
Before the denouement in which Gloriana finally controls Quire sexually, she learns of her own shocking conception. Her mother was raped by Hern when only thirteen, and then Gloriana was raped at the same age by her own father, showing the brutalism of some men who seek only power within a relationship, and whose power is often realised sexually. This is the worst side of chaos. Moorcock aligns himself with feminism and has written various articles about hypocrisy and power, arguing that 'women are constantly and systematically silenced by men, by male-dominated society' [6]. The ideal for Moorcock is shown in the hermaphrodite, although the reality of it usually fails as an absurd ideal. In Gloriana fulfilment is found when the woman rediscovers her rightful power and the man learns to know fear.

Gloriana's femininity is essential to the plot and purpose, and is an important part of Moorcock's own philosophy. Whereas traditional masculinity celebrates violence and danger, the Queen rejects such male obsessions, 'But I fear war and all that attends it . . . Violence simplifies and distorts the Truth and brings the Brute to eminence' (p132). It is intriguing to compare this with later words of Quire's about the male spirit - "'Peace throws men into a kind of confusion few of them have the strength to bear for long . . . Oh, how the weak love to fight!'" (p292). Gloriana is a woman in a man's world, where all other leaders are men, and even her own state is run by men. She has learnt to play her part, but remains only a symbol and not an individual. 'She was like a splendid flagship ... cheered on by everyone who watched her glide across the water, and none to know that, below the waterline, she had no rudder and no anchor' (p247). Her constant dilemma remains her balancing her monarchy with her humanity. This struggle of Gloriana's which examines the chaos of personal fulfilment and the order of external responsibility and morality, or, in thematic terms, the conflict between 'self' and 'other', like the actor who wears a mask.
Gloriana explores gender, sexuality and power. The Queen herself is a strong symbol of the feminine ideal and her struggle for identity within a male world. Her reign embodies justice, mercy and love, which are traditional female qualities. According to The Chambers Dictionary the word 'glory' refers to honour, beauty, light and even 'the presence of God'. Her only 'normal' relationship is with Una, her private secretary, and they enjoy uncomplicated lesbian affection. Gloriana as monarch is Albion, and she feels the weight of her responsibilities; her priority must always be to the common weal and the body politic. Her own satisfaction and well being come second.

Captain Quire represents chaos as the amoral aesthete and libertine who murders, deceives or corrupts all he meets and cheats his way into Gloriana's affections. His name adds a hint of irony, linking him with religion and church, and the narrative use of 'chorus'. Or perhaps the name is adapted from Quirinus, the Roman god of war. The author describes him as 'a demon' (p127), a malevolent spirit who manipulates and recreates caricatures of people, such as Alys and Phil. He easily seduces Gloriana, for it is the monarch's raging lust for sexual gratification that allows chaos to disturb the order of Albion. The Platonic ideal of love and unity is corrupted by the selfish pursuit of desire and pleasure. A similar theme occurs in Marlowe's Edward the Second in which the king's love for Gaveston splits the court and initiates bloodshed. God's natural chain of being is broken.

Quire is guilty of hubris, taking such pride in his art too far, surrounding himself with sycophantic peasants and acting the gentleman. His art is espionage and terrorism, and even though he depends upon it, he resents patronage, preferring to be a profligate renegade. Eventually, Montfallcon wounds his pride, so he begins his revenge as a plot to destroy Albion and corrupt its fairy queen. Being who he is, Quire is eventually bored with his own success.
Thomas More's warning from Utopia spoken through the voice of the traveller Hythloday seems an apt description of such as Quire, whose greatest vice is 'the mother of all mischief, Pride ... This hellhound creepeth into men's hearts and plucketh them back from entering the right path of life, and is so deeply rooted in men's breasts, that it cannot be plucked out' [7].

The Queen's Lord Chancellor, Lord Montfallcon, provides the balance between order and chaos. Whilst Gloriana is the symbolic figurehead, the state's ship is truly steered by this devious politician. It is a familiar tale, but Montfallcon is genuine in his obsession with maintaining order and tradition, and is dedicated in his love for the queen, whom, we finally discover, is his own daughter. Even he admits that peace is a charade; only he knows and plots behind the facade of order, hiding all true corruption and conspiring with criminals in order to maintain the myth of glory and the golden age. Ironically, it is his servant, Quire who shatters the veneer of harmony. In shame, Montfallcon recedes into self-immolation and his relapse is part of Albion's downfall. Montfallcon plays a similar role to Lord Jagged and the Knight in Jet and Gold who control the balance.

It is quickly apparent that Albion as a utopia is fake; it is really inhabited by whores and blackguards, and the members of the Privy Council are mere fops. The myth of peace and justice is sustained by regular masques and festivals, which romanticise the reign of Gloriana and help the public to believe in perfect harmony, even though it is a facade. Montfallcon is the creator of the myth and is attempting to keep the balance. Montfallcon survives from the terrible reign of King Hern the tyrant, but now he relishes the chance to create a golden age by whatever means are required of him. Montfallcon is an idealist who wants order by hiding chaos, which in essence, means the so-called utopia of Gloriana's reign is little different to Hern's tyranny. During one
episode of unsolved murder, Sir Tancred is accused even though he has no motive, nor the
temperament, and yet Montfallcon is ruthless in his speculation.

He hoped that Tancred were not innocent. It was better to have a culprit, cut and dried,
than a court that simmered in speculation. Rumour, gossip, suspicion and fear. He could
sense them now, threatening his Golden Age, his Reign of Piety, his Age of Virtue (p189).

Montfallcon begins to panic and feel guilt for what he has created; namely the hypocrisy and the
thin veneer. The Chancellor's greatest servant is Quire the Trickster, an evil harlequin who turns out
to be the enemy of the Queen, and yet, ironically, is her saviour.

Moorcock explains that the palace 'represents not only the brain, the conscious and unconscious
minds but behaviour and motivation too' [8]. The dark inner passages and secret rooms symbolise
Gloriana's mind which fall victim to entropy; walls are crumbling, members of the court are bored,
entertaining themselves with traditional pursuits and masques. It is almost to relieve the torpor that
the Queen accepts the unpopular Quire as her lover, but he brings crime, lust and selfishness into
the peaceful 'utopia'. Moorcock suggests that the chaos brought by Quire was a necessary input into
a court full of hypocrisy and deception. It is only Quire who can bring the Queen and her courtiers
to life with his own energy, and at last makes them look at themselves and their lives with some
honesty. This idea is also successfully conveyed in J.G. Ballard's recent novel, Cocaine Nights, in
which the residents of the sleepy coastal resort of Estrella de Mar are woken up to themselves and
given energy through a conspiracy of crime and deviance led by Bobby Crawford.

"The formula works. He stumbled on the first and last truth about the leisure society, and
perhaps all societies. Crime and creativity go together, and always have done. The greater
the sense of crime, the greater the civic awareness and richer the civilisation. Nothing else
binds a community together. It's a strange paradox"[9].

In this sense, Quire is an essential part of all of us as individuals, and for society, represented
by Gloriana.
History

Although *Gloriana* is not an historical romance its links with history are clear and its parallels provide a great deal of interest. The allegorical figures and scenarios suggest that the novel works, to an extent, as a Roman a Clef. Elizabeth I was born a bastard of King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, and J.E. Neale in his definitive biography, suggests that 'the birth was a symbol of the most momentous revolution in the history of the country' [10]. Neale also intimates that Elizabeth was the issue of a rape, possibly violated as a child by the infamous Thomas Seymour. The question of her marriage predominated the Privy Council discussions and she was variously linked with Spain, Sweden and the Duc d'Alencon. Critics of Elizabeth included John Knox who believed that God's natural order precluded the leadership of women and it was generally assumed she would need a man to help her govern [11]. As a queen and as a woman she was regarded a successful monarch. It is often noted that her main priority in all her decisions and actions was 'the weal of the kingdom', and in a famous speech to parliament at the end of her life in 1601, she implored; 'my heart was never set upon any worldly goods, but only for my subjects' good' [12]. Whilst her famed virginity is questionable, that she was a strong female leader is undoubted. Neale imagines her as a 'very human and approachable goddess' [13].

Quire seems to be a paralleled amalgamation of two historical characters, namely the Earls of Leicester and Essex; two rogues who affected life in Elizabeth's court. Lord Robert Dudley was one of the Queen's favourites who became the Earl of Leicester and with whom, it was assumed, the queen continued a love affair. Sir William Cecil, Elizabeth's Principal Secretary and upon whom Montfallcon is loosely based, was suspicious of Dudley, calling him evil and losing favour at court. The Earl of Essex was unruly and flirtatious, initiating internal conflicts and threatening national peace.
As well as the extensive royal household of over 1500 people, Queen Elizabeth also had other favourites who visited her rooms, including the infamous alchemist John Dee who would cast her horoscope. The subject of other writers such as Peter Ackroyd, Doctor Dee was a sixteenth century mathematical philosopher who dabbled in theatrical illusions and magical practices such as astrology, in those days regarded as a common science. Geoffrey Lamb insists Dee was 'a kindly, worthy man' [14] who was keen to create the philosopher's stone and even believed he could summon spirits through a crystal. He was duped by his conniving partner, Edward Kelly, who unscrupulously cheated him of his money, home and wife. Elizabeth had been a generous patron to Dee, who remained proud of his role as an Elizabethan Merlin. In *Gloriana*, Dee is secretly and painfully in love with his queen, comically lusting after her as he talks politely. 'He bowed again, sucked in a breath or two. (Blood of Zeus! These pantaloons will make a eunuch of me yet!)' (p56).

Dee also becomes the mouthpiece explaining Moorcock's beloved multiverse with its intersecting spheres and parallel worlds, used as metaphysical explanations for certain phenomena.

"Our activities produce ripples and eddies throughout this pool. We are for the most part unaware of these movements, save when a fluke, a backwash, a momentary current, brings us evidence. This evidence was feared by our ancestors. Devils, angels, poltergeists, pixies, elves, gods and their works were held to be the cause of these disruptions in our ordered world (p55).

Here, Moorcock adds to his own mythology with a humanist explanation for traditionally superstitious events. One of the most emphatic features about this parallel life of Elizabeth is the complete absence of all Christianity or religion, as if Moorcock does not want to enter into theological debate, preferring to explore an atheistic understanding of the world around us. The debate is a moral one featuring chaos and law, but the final decisions are entirely individual.

The author's note at the front of *Gloriana* is elusively helpful, pointing out that, 'While it is neither an 'Elizabethan Fantasia' nor an historical novel, this romance does have some relation to
The Faerie Queene. In a later interview Moorcock argues the novel follows a Classical form, based on four seasons and four set-pieces: the ice banquet, May festival, a tournament and bacchanalia.

This seeming contradiction can be explained when the author's intention is understood to be to avoid Spenserian sentimentality and write in a fantasy form. As Moorcock elucidates,

\[Gl	extit{oriana}\] is about moving from one age into another: from the Age of Chivalry to the Age of Expediency. Quire represents the bourgeoisie... who were tired of romantic and aristocratic bullshit... whereas Gloriana herself is absolutely enmeshed in myth and deception [15]

The author is keen to mix traditions and styles and glean the best elements from each. This subtextual antagonism, which permeates all Moorcock's fiction, is a powerful motif for all ages, none less so than during the Renaissance. L.G. Salingar informs us that 'The underlying theme of a great part of Elizabethan literature is a conflict between this demonstrative individualism and the traditional sense of moral order' [16] and this conflict is symbolised by the unfulfilled queen.

Spenser's \textit{The Faerie Queene} is such a protean and visionary work, that Hazlitt described it as a glorious symphony. Spenser includes erotic and violent imagery, which becomes surreal in parts, presenting the reader with metamorphosis, sensuality and even astral projection. The allegorical meaning conveys the important moral message, a common technique from medieval Europe, and the Elizabethans had a tendency to add humanism to the morality, (for example, Marlowe's \textit{Doctor Faustus}). \textit{The Faerie Queene} also attempts to portray heroic virtue and make political comment upon court life.

The masque as an art form and as a literary trope celebrates mythology and pageantry and in the form refined by Ben Jonson included burlesque and pastoral drama. Theatre and poetry were thriving arts, and the revels and galas developed from folk-pastimes, whilst satire and allegorical poetry offered social commentary. The bacchanalia described in \textit{Gloriana} may be closer to the orgies of Dionysus, but also have something in common with the May-festivals and 'feasts of
‘misrule’ which resemble Bakhtin’s notion of the carnival. Likewise some of the darker passages of the novel echo the mysterious labyrinthine journeys or painful rituals which accompany initiation into Orphic cults which were in existence during the Renaissance, and which caused great curiosity. The modern equivalent of these themes is the present and popular obsession with conspiracy theories or spiritualism.

Allegory

Mythology and religion are the origins from which allegorical forms of narrative developed; allegory is closely linked to the fable and parable. *The Faerie Queene* is often cited as a good example of psychological allegory, or what John MacQueen calls ‘the otherworld journey’ [17], the object of the quest here being Christian salvation. In his ‘dark conceit’ (letter to Raleigh) Spenser was clear that Arthur represented Aristotle’s twelve moral virtues, and that Redcross symbolises holiness. Elizabeth, herself, takes on many forms including Belphoebe, powerful and beautiful, frequently compared to Diana, the chaste goddess of hunting. Spenser used such personification and sustained imagery to also make political and historical commentary.

*Gloriana* is in itself allegorical, especially in the light of MacQueen’s definition of the purpose of allegory. He writes that its function is

to explain those universal facts which most intimately affect the believer, facts such as times, seasons, crops, tribes, cities, nations, birth, marriage, death, moral laws, the sense of inadequacy and failure and the sense of potential, both of which characterise the greater part of mankind [18].

Here lies the power of fantasy, or myth, which makes more sense on a poetic and symbolic level than it does when taken literally. To an extent, *Gloriana* appears to be an example of both historical allegory and the allegory of ideas, with its somewhat abstract connection with Elizabeth’s court, and its underlying message of balancing chaos and order.
It is interesting to compare Spenser's Christian (and Hellenistic) view of chaos, as the original 'substance' from which comes all life, with that of Moorcock, who sees 'chaos' as our creative and essential energy. Spenser's reference is metaphysical -

For in the wide wombe of the world there lyes  
In hatefull darknes and in deepe horrore,  
An huge eternall Chaos, which supplyes  
The subsaunces of natures fruitfull progenyes [19].

Moorcock's, chaos is represented by his own mythological characters, 'Chaos and Old Night' or 'the Lords of Entropy'. It is also clear that the subversive Quire is pure chaos, turning over existing assumptions and conventions.

Todorov has argued that true Fantasy cannot rely upon allegory otherwise it is no longer Fantasy in the proper sense. He writes, 'If what we read describes a supernatural event, yet we take the words not in their literal meaning but in another sense which refers to nothing supernatural, there is no longer any space in which the fantastic can exist' [20]. If Fantasy relies upon 'hesitancy' and 'uncertainty', then these very components are weakened if an action or character is 'explained' as being allegorical.

This question of interpretation leads us into the complex area of hermeneutics and it is important to note here that mimetic texts require as much interpretation as do fantasy texts. Rosemary Jackson argues that Fantasy's subversive power is weakened by use of allegory or metaphor, and indicates how the technique of 'metonymy' where 'one object does not stand for another, but literally becomes that other' [21] is a more useful concept to the fantasist. Gloriana is the state; the castle is her psyche, and Quire is chaos. This now takes us to the level of myth which goes much further and deeper than simple allegory but which celebrates ambiguity.
Carnival

This decadent novel is certainly what Bakhtin would term 'carnivalized literature', which involves a cyclical depiction of 'the pathos of shifts and changes, of death and renewal' [22]; pageantry and ritual; eccentricity; and the strong sense of masquerade which leads to a final transformation. Chaos in Gloriana is close to Bakhtin's theory of the grotesque as expressed in his concept of carnival detailed in his book, Rabelais and His World. Chaos is found in sexuality and in freedom which is what carnival offers, or in Bakhtin's words - 'a reaction against the cold rationalism, against official, formalistic, and logical authoritarianism' [23]. In Moorcock's novel, the state represents authority, whilst Quire becomes a symbol for everyone's id, particularly the complex desires of the Queen herself. The climax of the novel, which is literally an orgasm, fulfils the ultimate aim of the carnival which Bakhtin explains is 'the destruction of the old and the birth of the new world' [24] and this occurs during the hedonistic festival of Saturnalia. Quire's coronation is the triumphant crowning of the carnival king.

Some of the strongest imagery in Gloriana is related to theatre, puppets and Commedia dell'Arte, which extends the carnivalisation. The description of the royal chambers, statues and stained glass windows provide the suitable backdrop and tableaux for this drama. The characters of the Privy Council read like the list of dramatis personae with their foppish names and glances aside. Some characters even speak soliloquy and the author's voice is sometimes that of a chorus. Theatrical imagery was used by Shakespeare, ("All the world's a stage...") and this extended metaphor creates philosophical debate about fate and freewill. There are many levels to be considered: whether we are slaves to our destiny; how much people are manipulated by others; the 'reality' of dreams and fantasy; the roles each individual has to play; 'play' as a distraction from routine; personal identity for the characters, and then how the reader is tricked by the author. The
inclusion of festivals and parties gives this text an obvious link with Bakhtin's theory of the carnival with its temporary chaos of misrule where taboos become the norm and society appears to disintegrate its usual structures. In the Carnival the individual experiences 'the disintegration of personal unity' [25]. Moorcock subverts conventions creating a surreal setting.

_Gloriana_ opens during the aftermath of the New Year Masque and the spoils of the celebration are strewn with drunken and sleeping bodies: an ideal place for pickpockets and scroungers. _Gloriana_ abounds in feasts and festivals and Bakhtin explains how 'through all the stages of historic development feasts were linked to moments of crisis, of breaking points in the cycle of nature or in the life of society and man' [26].

Four set pieces are woven into the narrative to give shape and structure, and Moorcock uses conventional masques as Queen Elizabeth used to continue her myth of a golden age. During the Twelfth Night Festival, Gloriana is presented as Freyja, a facet of the ancient European goddess, Frigg, who as a shamaness was considered a goddess of sexuality and an aspect of the Mother Earth. Sexual desire and the fertility of nature have long been associated and the allegorical value for Gloriana strengthens her claim as the female embodiment of life. Brian Bates further argues that the conflict between Odin and Freya is allegorical of the sexual battle in our society and within each of us. Bates follows the argument of archetypal psychology when he explains one particular myth. 'The warrior god, representing the masculine principle, wants more intimate knowledge of feminine magic, represented by Freya the fertility god, embodying the feminine principle' [27]. This is clearly a parallel of the relationship between Quire and Gloriana, and what they symbolise.

The poem written by Wheldrake invokes the gods of Asgard and knights re-enact the battle of Fire and Ice, another dualism, before Ragnarok, the last battle, from whose ashes is born the new world and Albion. Ragnarok, also known as the Twilight of the Gods, is both a beginning and an
end. It symbolises the birth of a utopia, but also signals the end of order and the coming of chaos. In *Gloriana* Quire is the equivalent of Loki who brings disorder.

During the Mayday Spring festival, things start to go wrong, but not until we are treated to Wheldrake's Spenserian pastiche called 'Atargatis, or the celestial virgin', adding a new character to the complex mythology. Gloriana is the may queen, another incarnation of mother earth and connected with fertility rituals. The Accession Day Tilt is the chance for a summer tourney with its affirmation of chivalry, where, Quire, as Palmerin from that ancient European epic poem, becomes the Queen's new champion. As the Court falls further into decadence and entropy, Autumn brings the annual Feast of Bacchus, an orgy to delight all the senses, particularly sexual and visual. The sexual games become more explicit and less tasteful, whilst Gloriana struggles to play her expected roles as Mother, Protector or most difficult, Goddess. Until her moment of individuation she is an automaton manipulated firstly by Montfallcon and then by Quire. Indeed the entire court is led a courtly dance by Quire until all the members of the privy council and the Queen herself are no better than Monsieur Tolcharde's clockwork harlekinade. Here Moorcock reminds us of the recurring symbolism of the Commedia dell 'Arte in his work, a motif which represents the cyclical lives, deaths and myths which invade the multiverse.

Further to this theme of theatre and illusion is the discovery of Doctor Dee's 'simulacrum' of Gloriana, as being not an automaton, as initially supposed, but Flana, the mother of Gloriana. In this disturbing denouement the boundaries between the original and its copy have been distorted. Lucie Armitt continues the dialogue begun by Baudrillard and his theories of the simulacrum. Baudrillard theorised about the hyperreal as a motif that has obvious links with virtual reality, in which truth is only simulated or counterfeit, and we live in a culture where we are surrounded by simulation, copies and ersatz reality. All fictions are subject to self-referential terms of meaning,
which can lead to transgression and taboo in our understanding of the 'real'. Moorcock connects the imagery of the body with that of the body politic most explicitly with Gloriana herself. He includes notions of grotesque and carnival to remind us of the relationship between 'high' art and the accepted literary canon, and what is known as 'low' or popular art. In this sense Moorcock is sharing ground being covered by the cyberpunk and other science fiction writers, producing a text that is both 'literary' and 'popular'. Bakhtin reminds us that the bowels and phallus 'play the leading role in the grotesque image' [28] and the novel is full of greed, lust and related imagery. Gloriana's own body is one that is public and represents everyone, and as such is the most closely related to the grotesque. This seems most apposite in reference to Bakhtin's conclusion that 'the grotesque body is cosmic and universal ... It can fill the entire universe' [29].

**Multiverse**

Even though *Gloriana* is a single volume, it cannot escape the boundaries of Moorcock's immeasurable multiverse, and a certain number of familiar names appear within the castle walls. Stock-types from the harlequinade are again placed into a new scenario. Jephraim Tallow is a minor figure skulking in the shadows, but, interestingly, is the protagonist of Moorcock's first novel, *The Golden Barge*, which follows a similarly baroque style and psychological themes. For committed Moorcock readers this creates an intriguing echo and recalls the atmosphere of sensuality and romance, which that novel inspired. The poet, Ernest Wheldrake reappeared in the 1991 Elric novel, *The Revenge of the Rose*, which is also the most 'literary' of his sword and sorcery novels. Wheldrake became Elric's companion on the quest for his father's soul, composing sonnets and odes on heroic and philosophical themes. In *The Dancers at the End of Time*, a poet called Wheldrake is quoted by Mrs. Underwood from Edwardian England, whose verses read like those of Swinburne. Moorcock explained to me that 'Swinburne attacked himself as Wheldrake' [30].
third familiar character in *Gloriana* is Una, who whilst also a character in *The Faerie Queene*, is undoubtedly related to the immutable temporal adventuress, Una Persson from the Jerry Cornelius and Oswald Bastable series. She certainly represents the most sensible and human side of the female. Other familiar names appear such as Pyat, Li Pao and Lobkowitz. Typically, the novel's plot is sustained through strong characterisation, with its structure being picaresque and episodic, and the lavishly painted court is strewn with grotesque and comic characters with expressive names such as Sir Tancred Belforest.

*Gloriana* was reviewed in *Foundation* magazine by Hilary Bailey and she compares it to Mervyn Peake's *Gormenghast* books, and aptly so, because there are striking similarities in style and theme. Bailey praises the author's psychological symbolism in which the castle represents the mind of the sovereign, as well as operating on a metaphysical level. She sees the struggle as one between idealism and cynicism, concluding

So in *Gloriana*, neither the view of cynicism, nor the view of groundless hope should, or even can prevail. The systems which have supported both views break down for different reasons. Now the puppets must come alive, the agents evaporate and each man act for himself [31].

Moorcock, in claiming his own purpose in writing the novel states something similar.

I was trying, if this doesn't sound too nuts, to reverse the idealising allegory of *The Fairy Queen* and give Gloriana back her humanity. I'm also very fond of Quire. I would say that love, in the form I most admired it, was respect for, and celebration of, the individuality of others [32].

Here is an existential philosophy which demands that life only has the meaning which each individual places upon it, and it is the responsibility for each of us to balance the external forces and pressures which bear upon us. Those forces are defined here as chaos and order; fire and ice; vice and virtue: but in literary terms the true struggle which continues to cause critical antagonism is the age old struggle between two forms, Romance and Classicism. In *Gloriana* these are finally united and the structure of one with the style and content of the other create a well-balanced whole.
Una, for one, resents the sterility and predictability of it.

She yawned. If the Lords of Entropy were to manifest themselves on Earth again as they had in the legendary past she felt she might welcome them as a relief, at least, to her boredom. Not of course that she believed in those terrible prehistoric fables, though sometimes she could not help wishing that they had really existed and that she had lived in them, for they must surely have been more colourful and stimulating than this present age, where dull Reason drove bright Romance away: granite scattering mercury (p91-2).

Una acts like a reader of fantasy, unfulfilled with the tedium of reality. *Gloriana* speaks to us of contemporary western culture. Life today in Britain, for many, has become sterile and predictable. We need myths, heroes and fantasy; colours and dreams. Chaos and excitement are required before order turns us into faceless automata. The literary canon is still dominated by mimesis, as television is by soap opera, and it is only slowly that people are recognising the essential functions of fantasy and how it fits into a post-modern paradigm.

Life in the court is tortuously dull, so the characters spend their energy and time amusing and diverting themselves with theatrical entertainments, sexual exploits and political intrigue, until they gradually dissipate, receding into brooding despair. The novel lays down some positive and challenging theses; not least that life is a precarious balance between virtue and vice or tradition and rebellion, and it is only when these opposites (order and chaos) are reconciled do we begin to experience the completeness of our own existence. The sexual union of Gloriana and Quire provides an allegory for the fulfilment of the male and female complement, which has found expression elsewhere in Moorcock's oeuvre in the symbol of the hermaphrodite. Life is a sensory experience where desire must be fulfilled and feelings must be expressed, but only in a society where there is some acknowledgement of responsibility and medium of control.

It seems a shame that the theatrical project never came to fruition for *Gloriana* was planned as a touring musical with lyrics and music having been written, but the project failed due to lack of
funding. The theatre seems the most appropriate venue for something so vast in scope and is further evidence of Moorcock's claim as a protean artist.
Notes

1. Death Is No Obstacle: note that it was not his last fantasy novel.
3. pp375-6, 1978 Fontana
4. pp362-6, 1993 Orion
5. M Bakhtin Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics p114
6. What Feminism Has Done For Me, Casablanca, p168
8. DINO p119
10. J.E. Neale, Queen Elizabeth 1, Pelican 1934, p9
11. Neale p73
12. " p389
13. " p208
14. G Lamb Magicians, Dobson 1968, p38
15. DINO pp117-8
16. The Age of Shakespeare, p53
17. John MacQueen Allegory, Methuen, 1970, p63
18. " p1
19. Spenser, The Faerie Queene, Book III, Canto VI, XXXVI
20. Todorov, p63-4
21. Jackson p42
22. M Bakhtin Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics p124
23. M Bakhtin Rabelais and His World p37
24. Bakhtin Rabelais and His World p410
25. Jackson p16
26. Bakhtin Rabelais and His World p9
28. Bakhtin Rabelais and His World p317
29. Bakhtin Rabelais and His World p318
30. Private letter
31. Foundation, January 1979, 15, p90
32. Private letter
Chapter 7  FANTASTIC REALISM

A capital city is civilisation's ultimate expression. What we do with it is the best test of our collective creativity and humanity. Disraeli said London is a nation not a city. While some smugly declare that she isn't the 'real' England, London, like Washington, Tokyo or Berlin, is the quintessence of her nation's history and aspirations. She's the best of our virtues, the worst of our vices – the truest measure of our morality. Despite continuing injustice and irritations, London - thanks in a large part to her writers – has always been the richest, most coherent, civilised, tolerant and inspiring cosmopolitan megapolitan in the world (Moorcock - [1]).

Moorcock's symphonic novel *Mother London* (1988) is a paean to his childhood home. It explores the history of the twentieth century and expresses the individual anxiety and struggle for identity within the modern city, but mostly, it is about London herself. As the author states, 'London is the hub around which all else revolves, the ordering, civilising, progressive force ... The golden age of cities has reached its absolute fulfilment' (ML p221). Moorcock writes as London's own champion following a great tradition of London literature. *Mother London* is an epic project, masterfully executed and John Clute celebrates the novel as Moorcock's 'most significant creation' [2] and the author himself claimed, 'It's my magnum opus' [3]. Angela Carter reviewed it with great enthusiasm, praising it as 'a vast, uncorseted, sentimental, comic, elegiac salmagundy of a novel' [4] whilst American reviewer Paul Witcover hailed it as 'an authentic work of genius' [5]. *Mother London* was shortlisted for the Whitbread Prize and John Clute, for one, showed surprise that Moorcock's fabulation did not receive a greater accolade. 'It is also a telling commentary on the desperate effeminacy of the English literary establishment that this deeply worked through - composed singing edifice of a book was not at least shortlisted for the Booker Prize' [6]. This is a comment supporting my thesis that fantasy is still marginalised.

*Mother London* is an excellent example of what Clute calls 'urban fantasy', a mode of fabulation in which 'fantasy and the mundane world intersect and interweave throughout a tale which is
significantly about a real city' [7]. The novel's style could also be termed romantic realism suggesting the individual struggle through adventure and exploration against a social background where the descriptions are specifically located in the real world. *Mother London* expresses the internal confrontations with various forms of chaos and in an almost encyclopedic form follows the development of archetypal characters in the style of the bildungsroman, tracing the self-realisation and salvation of particular individuals. Moorcock's novel contains elements from romantic and realist grotesque, particularly in its employment of the themes of madness and mask. In his theory of the grotesque, Bakhtin makes the point that 'madness makes men look at the world with different eyes, not dimmed by "normal", that is by commonplace ideas and judgements' [8]. *Mother London* is narrated from the perspective of three supposedly 'mad' individuals and the result is a surreal account of life in London. Yet the novel is realistic in its subject and character portrayal and is an excellent example of Fantastic Realism, in which fantasy and realism are interdependent.

**London**

Moorcock writes obsessively about his childhood home London: that sprawling mass of people, architecture and history. Notting Hill Dale and the Portabello Road area were exciting neighbourhoods in the sixties and seventies in terms of popular culture and ethnic influences. *Mother London* evaluates the contemporary culture and politics of these suburban communities. Moorcock's latest fiction presents variations of the von Bek family who are based around the imaginary Sporting Club Square, a realistic and fascinating microcosm of London itself and variously incarnated in different dimensions of the multiverse. Even though he now lives in Texas, Moorcock is constantly forced back to writing about London, as he does in the 1997 short stories, 'London Bone' [9] and 'The Further adventures of Sherlock Holmes' [10].

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Moorcock evokes 'place' in his novels with some eloquence. His fantasies are full of cities and ruins such as Elric's Immryr or the elusive utopia, Tanelorn. Gloriana's Albion remains his elegy to the historical London, but in *Mother London* he celebrates the modern city which has become a sentient, conscious mother. London has become Tanelorn. Just as Dublin is to Joyce or St. Petersburg is to Dostoevsky, so London for Moorcock becomes more than a place but contains instead a complete realm of mythology: a multiverse. Moorcock frequently aligns himself with Dickens and the popular European novelists [11] and this, along with his Pyat novels, confirm the scale of his projects. Moorcock's concept of the multiverse which connects all his works may owe something to Proust, whilst the aims of *Mother London* and the Pyat tetralogy are comparable to the ambitions of Tolstoy.

London has spawned and inspired many great writers, most notably Blake and Dickens, and has been the setting to novels as far ranging as Woolf's *Orlando* to *The Difference Engine* by Gibson and Stirling. London was the home of Sherlock Holmes, Dorian Gray, Jekyll and Hyde, and even Dracula. The ghost of Jack the Ripper walks with those of Shakespeare and Oliver Cromwell, for in London, history and fiction are interchangeable. London becomes a utopian community for William Morris in *News From Nowhere*; whereas Joseph Conrad in *Heart of Darkness* directly compares the atmosphere of horror in the Congo with the 'mournful gloom' [12] of the Thames, suggesting that all rivers unite 'to lead into the heart of an immense darkness' [13]. Many modern novelists invoke the spirits of London, particularly Peter Ackroyd and Angela Carter who are both enthusiastic about Victorian London. Martin Amis has successfully written about contemporary London with its pubs, gangs and petty criminals such as Keith Talent in *London Fields*, an unappetising and small-minded anti-hero who is grotesque enough to fit into any Dickens or Moorcock novel. Popular writers like Nick Hornby develop perspectives on London life with
commentaries on football and music, whilst Steampunk literature by such as Colin Greenland, describe alternative Victorian Londons: alternative realities within the multiverse. Neil Gaiman, inventor of the *Sandman* graphic novels, created a cult television series called *Neverwhere* that delved into the secret tunnels of London recreating much of its history. Thirty years before that, however, Moorcock had written his own fantasies based in a future post-holocaust Britain (Granbretan) including 'Londra, gloomy towered capital of the Dark Empire' [14]. This Londra is infested with hordes of bestial masked savages, whilst in *Mother London* the hordes are anonymous voices. Moorcock returns constantly to the metropolis, revising, revisiting and inventing its complex web of myth and history.

*Mother London* is a mythological exploration, which evokes legends, history, war, insanity and the author's personal suffering. The novel is not science fiction although it does employ the sf trope of telepathy, which in itself has been the subject of novels. Neither is it a purely mimetic text, but a polemic expression of post-war Britain. The autobiographical content is very important and the reader is presented with a series of personal icons and memories. The iconicity of the city is of particular interest and as an icon the city fulfils many functions, such as that of the labyrinth with its esotericism; as mother protecting her offspring; as a destructive asylum of anxiety and control; and finally, as a living creature. The people and the city are symbiotic. There is no city without inhabitants and those who live there are shaped by the place. Josef and his friend, Dandy, an Asian Londoner, eulogise their beloved home and see that they are two vital atoms which make up a larger organism. "Oh, London! London!" And Dandy, riding high on all these combined sensations, shakes his head, allowing the city to absorb him' (p52).
The Polyphonic Novel

The landscape and inhabitants of the city are explored through episodic narrative, a chorus of the city's collective consciousness and surreal devices. London is a complex, metaphysical entity made up of 'worn stone, new concrete ... frozen flesh' (p7). London is a mother, but not necessarily a benevolent one. Like Thebes as portrayed by Euripides and Sophocles, this is a city of tragedy and made up of 'millions of predestined individuals' (p7) forced to follow the will of their self-created gods, habits and routines. This is an echo of T.S. Eliot's 'Men and bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind' in the 'gloomy hills of London' described in 'Burnt Norton'. The anonymous voices heard by the telepathic characters are an echo of the 'spiritus mundi' of Yeats. Raymond Williams comes to the same conclusion as Moorcock when he argues, 'Social versions of community are seen as variants of the 'myth' - the encoded meaning - which in one or other of its forms is the only accessible collective consciousness' [15]. This seems to fulfil Bakhtin's definition of the polyphonic novel which can be identified by 'A plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses' [16]. Not only does Moorcock's novel have a complicated narrative structure but it includes this abstract chorus of the anonymous mass. In this polyphonic novel, Moorcock is presenting us with the ambiguities and contradictions of the real world. In Bakhtin's examination of Dostoevsky's polyphonic novels he describes a technique which closely parallels Moorcock's multiverse. Bakhtin argues that 'to get one's bearings on the world meant to conceive all its contents as simultaneous and to guess at their interrelationships in the cross-section of a single moment' [17]. For Moorcock, all times are simultaneous and characters are ambiguous, often meeting themselves or their doubles.

As in Joyce's Ulysses, Moorcock allows us three perspectives through a triumvirate of narrative voices, each of which is a facet of himself. The most clearly autobiographical chapters are those
pertaining to David Mummery, a carefully chosen name; the surname referring to the medieval folk mythology and implying a hypocritical or theatrical display. His first name has a religious significance and connection with Christ, often called the Son of David (he is taken to Bethlehem Mental Hospital) completing the trinity of Mary (a resurrected spirit) and Josef (a father figure). Mummery calls himself an urban anthropologist, a role also being undertaken by Moorcock in the writing of this novel. This interesting narrative complexity can be seen in Jungian terms whereby Moorcock's ego/self is divided into three main archetypes or masks: Mummery is the child which symbolises the whole self; Mary is the anima and Josef is the wise man. Each facet of the author also reflects an interest: Mummery's perspective is autobiographical and of a personal London; Josef Kiss stands for a nostalgic London and represents the life force of the indigenous Londoner; Mary Gasalee lives in the dream-world of a mythological London. All three Londons are real and they overlap. The concept of mask implies transformation and is linked with the theory of the shadow, and the character this is most closely connected to is the protagonist, London herself.

Mother London follows a non-chronological sequence reminiscent of Joyce or Burroughs. There is a clear and obvious structure, as in all of Moorcock's fiction, but it certainly defies Aristotle's preferred unities. The chronological pattern undulates like a tide to and fro, forwards and backwards, framed by vignettes of the main characters set in the present. Motifs are developed and themes are revisited whilst the climax occurs with the Blitz in the middle leaving a gradual and anti-climactic ending, perhaps as a pop-song will repeat to fade. But it does not have one tune, nor is it a rock album made up of unrelated songs, but an experimental symphony of moods, voices and happenings. Bradbury's description of Joyce's narrative play could be applied to Moorcock's technique when he writes about

The great and mythic triad of characters ... [who] are themselves both psychologically deep and multi-layered, fragmentary, floating on sensation and consciousness, fed by their
random thoughts and their half-conscious dream worlds. Collectively they form a psychic unity [19].

Mother London's non-linear chronology, almost modernist in its unorthodoxy, provides a cyclical structure to the novel, which follows traditional mythic patterns. Laurence Coupe reminds us that 'The fertility paradigm gives us the idea of human life as cyclical' [19]. The novel follows other mythic patterns, such as the creation myth, when Mary walks from the flames and London survives the chaos of war. Bakhtin reminds us that fire in the carnival 'simultaneously destroys and renews the world' [20]. Coupe also writes of the hero paradigm in which humans have superhuman power, and in the novel, the protagonists are capable of telepathy and prophecy, whilst Mummery is rescued by a flying man. Within Moorcock's multiverse apocalyptic events rerun in repeats of an eternal present moment. For Moorcock, 'time' and 'place' are one and the same.

Josef Kiss represents a more mature Moorcock, suave and romantic; a true gentleman well versed in the rules of chivalry, an ex-vaudeville star who revels in a nostalgic past and we are told ironically that, 'He was a stickler for every convention associated with the English eccentric' (p45). Like David Mummery and Mary he is a psychiatric patient who can hear voices, using his telepathic skill in the music hall as a mind reader and in the war to rescue trapped victims. He is a hero managing to seduce, save lives and converse with a demon, but we also witness him visiting a prostitute, making a drunken and naked spectacle of himself. He is a Falstaffian and grotesque mask. In an inspired moment of naive insanity he manages to miraculously defuse a bomb and save lives. The description is closer to Quixote than Achilles:

With a gasp, almost a sob, he rammed the shears into the works and snipped. He snipped twice more, trusting to whatever instincts he had ... then snipped again as the bile rose in his mouth and he felt he would drown in it ... It grumbled, whimpered and grew silent (p260).

Josef attempts to find his own personal balance, between the chaos of his psychic powers and his own order. For him 'His routine and his own particular medicine are his protection against a chaos'
Like Colin Wilson's "Romantic outsider" Josef realises that "Chaos must be faced. Real order must be preceded by a descent into chaos" [21]. Josef faces physical and mental chaos.

Autobiography

The most enigmatic character of the three is David Mummery who is the young Moorcock. Northrop Frye links autobiography with the 'confession form' [22] of St. Augustine and Rousseau, and similarly, Mother London is an introverted and personal novel containing streams of consciousness and mystic vision. It works as autobiography in a similar way to the writing of Kerouac and early Hesse. Other than Letters From Hollywood, Moorcock's attempts at autobiography have been fictionalised and unreliable. In the religious fantasy Behold the Man, Glogauer represents a tortured adolescent who is confused by religious and sexual imagery in his visions before confronting his most extreme fears and dreams as a reality. Moorcock admits that Glogauer, Elric and Jerry Cornelius represent aspects of himself, and like David Mummery and Moorcock himself in Letters From Hollywood, none of them is likeable. Glogauer is the most heroic and admirable, eventually dying to replace the lost Christ whereas Mummery is self-deprecating and infernally melancholic, brooding and self-indulgent, a familiar trait of both Elric and Cornelius. There is no doubting from accounts and from self-confession that the young Moorcock was precocious or perhaps arrogant, having found success so quickly. The author makes no attempt to reject the parallel between himself and David Mummery.

One of his earliest memories was watching the Blitz over South London just as described by David Mummery, and the war-torn ruins became a childhood playground. In an interview he described this epiphanic childhood experience. 'I grew up in a constantly altered landscape ... but it wasn't frightening to children of my age. There was an enormous amount of freedom involved' [23]. Moorcock was also expelled from an experimental school in East Sussex. Moorcock really did
have an uncle who was a civil servant, living at 10 Downing Street [24], which must have effected his later strong political beliefs. He worked for the Liberal Party copy editing Grimond's memoirs, but became increasingly disillusioned with British party politics and instead developed a strong allegiance to Kropotkin's idealistic theory of anarchy. David Mummery's Uncle Jim, the civil servant, airs a more paternalistic opinion. He gave up politics in 1965 distrusting new politicians such as Wilson, Eden and Home, and preferring the 'older' and more dignified characters like Churchill and Attlee. He fears the new world order. However, Josef sees a different picture and he speaks with the voice of the people when he insists, "It wasn't Churchill or the King of bloody England who kept up our morale. It was men and women whose homes and families were blown to bits discovering their own resources" (p386). Alan Sinfield expresses a similarly cynical view when he quotes Churchill's wife who admitted about her husband, "He knows nothing about the life of ordinary people" [25]. There is a balance of opinion here and David is drawn to both; the nostalgia of the old system has a romantic air, but Josef expresses a radical view, and David is seduced by the older man's ebullience. Further autobiographical reference occurs when Mummery sets up his skiffle band in 1957 and like the young Moorcock, played banjo and listened to Memphis blues.

A chapter that stands out for its social commentary and is linked directly to Moorcock's own experience is one narrated by Mummery which describes the police brutality and racism at the Notting Hill Carnival in 1977. The narrator witnesses riots and has inside information that the police and 'white residents' had formulated a plan to start a riot so that future carnivals would be banned. He and Mary witness the 'political manipulations' (p403).

Then I saw a young black man, his face covered in blood, run past my window with about ten policemen in pursuit. It seemed after all that the authorities were supplying the initiative for the trouble and I was witnessing my first police riot ... That night I was too frightened to leave my flat, but lay awake listening to the sounds of violence. In the morning I walked
through the debris to the newsagents in Elgin Crescent... The paper I bought had the front page pictures of "rioters" clashing with police, suggesting as usual that the police had been defending themselves against an insensate enemy (p404)

This frightening account concurs with Moorcock's detailed discussion of the erosion of civil rights in contemporary Britain, *The Retreat From Liberty* (1983), slightly outdated, but still poignant, even in a Britain with a more liberal government. In this polemical tract he describes another moment during the carnival which later became a scene in *Mother London*.

at one point a friend sat in a predominantly black cafe while a line of policemen banged their truncheons on their riot shields by way of challenge. Inside, he said, everyone kept their cool and ignored the police ... The blacks maintained their apparent insouciance while the natives outside tried to break their nerves with displays of aggression [26].

Dick Hebdige confidently states that 'The violence at the 1976 Carnival was triggered off by the conspicuous presence of large numbers of policemen' [27]. Colin MacInnes also describes fighting in Notting Hill between the Teds and 'Spades' in his London novel *Absolute Beginners* (1959).

This reference to carnivals returns us to Bakhtin who has reminded us that carnival is important because it celebrates folk-culture (as does *Mother London*) and therefore the riots become a metaphor for authority destroying popular culture. Bakhtin's thesis argues beyond doubt that carnival is 'linked to moments of crisis, of breaking points in the cycle of nature, or in the life of society and man' [28]. The author chooses to write about epoch making events and moments in cultural history when most change occurred.

Jonathan Raban in *Soft City* pinpoints Notting Hill Gate as an eclectic, decadent and mystical environment full of folklore and conflict. Yet paradoxically, he suggests that even in its 'untameable' nature there is a cosy and benign routine to life: a place of both chaos and order. There is no doubt that living there heavily affected Moorcock's personal and political outlook.
His beliefs are radical. In *The Retreat from Liberty*, Moorcock calls for the dismantling of paternalistic and authoritarian structures. Power should be decentralised with those in power to be disenfranchised, leaving a truer freedom. This freedom is something akin to chaos or anarchy, and demands the general public to be responsible and imaginative: only then is true democracy established. Moorcock's own experience in a multi-cultural London community has helped to shape his personal beliefs, which always conclude with self-responsibility. His warning conclusion in *The Retreat from Liberty* is one that is explored by much of his fiction:

> Whether we are destroyed by a process of social collapse or by the explosion of nuclear missiles the fault will lie ultimately with us - in our own capacity for self-deception and our unwillingness to deal directly and courageously with the realities and injustices of our daily lives [29].

**Culture**

Mummery joins a millennium 'liberationist' group in the sixties to allay his cynicism and by 1972 he expresses the view that London is 'an almost-concrete Utopia' inhabited by 'xenophobic barbarians' (p97). Linking this concept with entropy, we see how a decadent culture has begun to emerge in Britain, as Mummery elucidates. "'We're a nation in decline ... A genuinely decadent civilisation. That's its real attraction as a golden twilight which can't possibly last. No point in trying to improve us. We know we're going down the drain. And we don't care'' (p97).

This final sentence reads like a chant from a Sex Pistols song and is the voice of a dispirited youth who believed there was great hope in the sixties with the rise of the Beatles and a Labour government. But like many, Mummery 'was convinced he had lived through a Golden Age which had lasted up to the making of "Let It Be"' (p103). The fifties had been austere, the sixties exciting and avant-garde, but the seventies saw the beginning of entropy. Even the sixties had been overrated as David 'Moorcock' Mummery the social anthropologist explains to Mary and Josef, 'how the Swinging Sixties' chief appeal was that they allowed grown people to dress up as
Cowboys and Indians' (p352). Moorcock often eulogises about the sixties, but like many since, now realises this romantic view is a somewhat unreal one. However, they still have fun, getting stoned and attending festivals, singing along with Lennon and Jagger and hearing performance poetry from the unlikely Piers Swineburn and Lord Wheldrake (more internal referencing) and arriving at the simplistic conclusion that Amsterdam is 'the symbol of an achievable millennium'.

Moorcock continues to comment on British culture through other characters, many of whom show cynical reactions to the so-called hippy revolution. Patsy Meakin, a minor character and avant-garde filmmaker, uses the zeitgeist to his advantage:

The counter-culture had taken Patsy by surprise and only received his interest because of the pretty girls it attracted. All his previous bohemian dalliances with beatniks, socialists, the jazz and folk scenes, had been disappointing since the few girls around had usually been plump, short-sighted and more interested in talking about sex than doing it ... If it promised the joys of teenage dolly birds, good drugs, and the chance of an orgy or two, he was willing to look a bit of a twit (p89-90).

Moorcock suggests this may have been a prevalent view.

As an older citizen Josef has seen things come and go and likes to voice his own observations regarding cultural change. He witnesses at first hand the changing demographic and racial patterns of his neighbourhood and noted how, in the late fifties, 'the economy took a rise allowing the youth of South London to trade their razors for reefers and dress more attractively' (p46). In other words the black culture was far preferable to that of the aggressive Teddy Boys. Josef manages to survive what Moorcock implies were two of the most destructive forces of the twentieth century: World War II and Thatcherism.

Josef decries this end of the old world and identifies an irony occurring in the ever-growing entity which is London. He blames the home counties and what he calls the 'Thatcher-belt' for ruining the real London. "'You hear them moaning about the people who were born there as if those
were the interlopers! It's classic imperialism" (p378). He fears that these stockbrokers and estate agents will "turn London into some appalling Dorking" (p378). Such parasites are standardising the whole country, if not the world, into a huge mall of identical stores and fast food chains. Josef's fear is the threat of what J-F Lyotard called 'junk postmodernism' [30] describing the eclectic, kitsch meaninglessness where money transcends any aesthetic criteria and that London will become a sentimentalised American theme park, such as Dickensland. This fear is realised when David's cousin George outlines his plans to open The New Ludgate Chop House on the site of The Old King Lud pub. This is symptomatic of a familiar Disnification of history and traditions. Ludd was the founder and protector of London, a Celtic god of great importance to history, myth and fantasy, and it seems quite ludicrous that he becomes the icon for a plastic theme-restaurant where "For two hundred quid a year you're issued with old coinage ... Disneyland's shown the way ... [it's a] totally protected fantasy" (p468). Mary sees this as an inevitable process of the self-mythologisation of civilisation, but Josef rejects such farcical deception. Jean Baudrillard in *Simulations* uses the term 'hyperreal' to describe the counterfeit world we inhabit, in which Disneyland is really all there is.

The Scaramanga sisters represent the more rural, nostalgic village life that has been swallowed up by Greater London. They live in a cottage by the canal with barges at the end of the garden and drink tea from china cups, but their haven is ruined by the Blitz: 'All the insects, all the butterflies and birds were gone, as in a fairy tale" (p234). It is as if something beautiful has been destroyed; London like some garden of Eden has been spoiled by man's hubris and greed. Josef begins to understand the true gravity of life's dark side. He can sense evil in what he learns telepathically and can feel the city's pain. Twenty years after the war he teaches David what he has learnt.

"Never let anyone persuade you, Mummery, that there is no such thing as pure evil. Those who merely believe in good and who easily dismiss the existence of evil are nothing but
Moorcock manages to debate political issues of civil liberty, historical interpretation and the economical and social threat posed by capitalism and its free-market enterprise. *Mother London* goes some way to explore individuals within the anonymity of London, commenting upon twentieth century politics, whilst exorcising personal demons in a cathartic expression, full of pathos and delirium.

The unorthodox addition of the italicised chorus of the people of London constantly interrupting the narrative is the most notable stylistic feature, which in itself does not make the novel a fantasy, but is a method of alienating the reader and creating hesitation.

*Mother London* is a novel of what Todorov called hesitation or, in Katherine Hume's terms, it could be placed in the sub-gene of 'literature of disillusion' which is perspectivist in terms of the fallibility of its narrative voices. There is uncertainty and subjective interpretation. In Hume's words, the author attempts to 'call attention to the limitations in the perspectives of any one individual. We are taught how fallible our senses are through exposure to visions of reality that contradict the senses: dream, psychotic experience and drugs' (p125). This description exemplifies Bakhtin's polyphonic novel.

**Madness**

David Mummery is an unreliable narrator using soliloquy to tell his tale. Josef is a biased if more objective commentator with an optimistic passion for life. Mary is an ambiguous and confused individual, whose grasp on reality is incomplete, as she remains in her dream world which is comprised of Hollywood glamour and surreal fantasy. Whilst Mary's version of reality involves actresses and comic book characters, Josef becomes the king of the dodgems and a knight on the merry-go-round. Nobody can deny these as true reality. Hesse uses the motif of the merry-go-round
in *Steppenwolf* to describe the transformations and flux in the individual personality. This is then projected onto the world in which 'The human merry-go-round sees many changes' [31].

Mary, like London, is a mother who has survived the war. Having woken from her coma she hears voices and seems to have second sight, but the voices are often brutal and pornographic which she tries to block out. A few centuries before she would have been branded a witch, but in our enlightened times she is instead institutionalised and estranged from her now grown up daughter. Josef gets into trouble with the law but his only crime is insanity - his madness is touching and comic, making him as intriguing as any of Mervyn Peake's absurd characters. On the theme of madness the reader is forced to question the whole concept of normality and about who decides who is sane or otherwise. Mary's dreams are described in some detail, and a reader may question the pertinence of such long passages, but it seems that Moorcock concurs with Freud who wrote in 1900:

> It is quite likely ... that a modification of our attitude towards dreams will at the same time affect our views upon the internal mechanism of mental disorders and that we shall be working towards an explanation of the psychoses while we are endeavouring to throw some light on the mystery of dreams [32].

As readers we sympathise with the patients and laugh at the paltry attempts at group counselling. David believes that the supernatural powers of the three are not so much signs of madness but rather that they have been 'touched by a sort of divinity'. Insanity is often associated with genius and artistry. Madness is still misunderstood and like Michel Foucault in *The History of Madness*, Moorcock has little time for psychiatry as an exact science. His thesis suggests that we are all relatively irrational but never any more insane than the institutions and authorities surrounding us and controlling our lives. True madness comes with war and that destroys all that is dear to us, our families, our identity, and our own home.
Josef's visions are the most vivid. During the Blitz he witnesses an apocalyptic hallucination of the city coming to life rousing 'the sleeping gods of London' (p247) like some modern day Blake. These sequences are the most obvious moments of fantasy in which three aspects of the city combine. He sees angels and giants from the city's mythology, and hears the voices of all the inhabitants and is aware of 'his voice joining the millions to form a single monumental howl' (p246). Moorcock's Second Ether trilogy contains similarly supernatural imagery. Angels and demons continue to symbolise a more personal battle and that internal conflict is projected onto the larger canvasses of world politics and even heaven and hell. After the war Josef continues having supernatural experiences which he relates as normal events - "I was walking there ... when I ran slap into a demon" (p317) and he accepts his own unpredictable imagination.

Moorcock often writes about visions and their effect on individuals, the purpose being to make the readers question their own sense of reality and suggest the existence of a greater and more spiritual 'reality'. In his short story, 'Lunching With the Antichrist' (1993) he depicts an ordinary vicar, Edwin Begg, who is changed by his encounter with the Rose from another plane. He assumes at first she is a vision or an angel, but later she gives birth to a new form of life, 'self-reproducing, a new messiah' [33] and he is left with his dreams whilst the reader is left with many questions. When younger, Moorcock has admitted to seeing visions of Christ and of buildings shimmer and it seems that he is keen to explore this theme and link it with his complex multiverse theory which suggests that all times, places, dimensions and planes of existence overlap and connect. Josef's vision during the Blitz reads like a description of the hordes of chaos in one of the author's earlier sword and sorcery fantasies. Like Elric, Mother London's characters rely on drugs and enter supernatural realms. As an interesting aside, Mummery claims an ability to predict the future,
whilst Moorcock himself believes he predicted the Dubrovnik corpse boats in his Cornelius book, *The English Assassin* [34].

It is during 1970 that Mary, Josef and David find the greatest fulfilment; it is a moment of perfect happiness in a fairground on a merry-go-round. All the characters agree 'they would gladly live this instant forever' (p371). Acid has enabled some kind of mystical 'multiversal vision' (p368) and the colour and wonder of the fairground is augmented by the gathering hippies, crowded as if at the Isle of Wight Festival 'in afghans and bell-bottoms and flowers they call themselves the children of the sun' (p368). In contrast to the demonic vision of Josef, this is a glimpse of paradise and a utopian end time. Back in 1975 Moorcock and The Deep Fix released their now cult recording *New Worlds Fair*, a concept album about a fairground which becomes the last place in a world which is dissipating. Songs such as 'Last Merry Go Round' and 'Dodgem Dude' follow the dangerous rides and false dreams that often end darkly. The fairground is a favourite setting for writers as different as Ben Jonson and Ray Bradbury who utilise the sinister atmosphere where customers experience both pleasure and fear, and become lost in a fake haze of movement, smells and sensuality.

The fairground is an ersatz world, one full of corruption and profit, in which the rust is covered by a veneer of paint and the customer is hypnotised and momentarily beguiled. It is interesting that in *Mother London* the characters are happiest at this moment. All their problems are forgotten and each has become an innocent child distracted from all tragedy that has befallen. All their friends join them on the final ride that seems to endlessly repeat itself. This moment of ecstasy is orgiastic, the jouissance unendingly repeated and from the merry-go-round, David cries a human and rather pathetic plea - "Don't let it ever stop" (p371). The rhetorical question remains. Is this really the apotheosis of human experience? Bakhtin details how feasts and fairs give people an ephemeral
release from guilt and order, thereby serving an essential function. Moorcock seems to follow Bakhtin's argument showing that laughter was the defeat of divine and human power, of authoritarian commandments and prohibitions, of death and punishment after death, hell and all that is more terrifying than the earth itself. Through this victory laughter clarified man's consciousness and gave him a new outlook on life [35].

Moorcock realises that madness and humour are effective methods of escape and fantasy, providing a new perspective on reality.

The novel ends with the enigmatic figure of Old Nonny who knows all the legends about Gog and Magog, the giants guarding London; about Bran the Celtic giant whose head is buried under Parliament Hill; of all the ghosts of the Bloody Tower, of Dick Turpin and Dan Leno. The novel concludes with a comforting, authorial voice reminding us of the value of fantasy. 'By means of our myths and legends we maintain a sense of what we are worth and who we are. Without them we should undoubtedly go mad' (p496).

London, home to millions, is herself growing senile and is personified by the dotty, homeless storyteller, Old Nonny. She wanders the streets, sharing her wisdom like the last surviving wyrd sister keeping alive the ancient mysteries and eternal wonders of the city. Old Nonny is London and by giving one easily missable reference, Moorcock completes his own multiverse by making Josef refer to her at one point as 'Mrs. C.' (p369). This has huge implications with regard to Moorcock's complicated internal referencing, because as regular readers know, Mrs. C. is Jerry Cornelius' mother, which creates an intertextual question and links Mother London with the Cornelius and Pyat novels. It is difficult to discern the seriousness of Moorcock's intention; being unpredictable he may just be teasing readers or making an important, intellectual statement. Mrs.C. certainly fulfils a universal role similar to London, and if Jerry is everyman then there is no difficulty in
following the argument that his coarse, senile but loveable mum, is in a multiversal sense, also the mother of us all. This may be the author's joke.

Through the voice of David Mummery, Moorcock expounds his theories of the multiverse and justifies such beliefs as his only answer to the fear of dying.

Theories of Time are mostly simplistic like Dunne's, attempting to give it a circular or linear form, but I believe Time to be like a faceted jewel with an infinity of planes and layers impossible either to map or to contain; this image is my own antidote to death (p486). Mummery's views are presented to us as Moorcock's autobiography. He believes in the goodness inherent in humanity and is desperate to devise an escape for us from the horror of non-existence. Even if London has failed to realise Blake's vision, then like Josef Kiss, and Moorcock, we must cling to our hope that humanity is essentially good. This is a Romantic notion. "London endures. Her stories endure. People's demand for Romance endures. And I retain confidence in human nature" (p110-111).

Mother London is a cyclical vision made up of dreams, motifs and allusions all of which form a narrative pattern which explores myths of survival, identity, the sacred and the profane. Moorcock explores spiritual dimensions of fate and freewill, offering hope in a secular world. Paul Witcover wrote in his review of the novel:

The distinction between madness and sanity is subjective, lying wholly on personal systems of belief: there alone is salvation or damnation, good or evil to be found. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say that only through self-awareness are Moorcock's characters able to choose between sanity and madness, good and evil. It is his insistence upon the necessity of choice that makes Moorcock such a deeply religious writer [36].
*Mother London* is a novel about love, loss and redemption in which the city becomes a metaphor for faith and salvation. The real London is, of course, the one in your mind.
Notes

[6] Interzone 29, p62
[7] Clute & Grant The Encyclopedia of Fantasy
[8] Bakhtin Rabelais and His World, p39
[14] The Jewel In the Skull in Hawkmoon
[16] Bakhtin Problems With Dostoevsky's Poetics p6
[17] Problems with Dostoevsky's Poetics p28
[19] L Coupe Myth p54
[20] Problems With Dostoevsky's Poetics p126
[21] C Wilson The Outsider p55
[22] N Frye The Anatomy of Criticism p37
[23] 'Antivity' Issue 4, Orion, p11
[26] The Retreat from Liberty p30
[27] D. Hebdige Subculture p145
[28] Rabelais and His World p9
[29] Retreat from Liberty p89
[31] H Hesse Steppenwolf, Penguin 1965, p73
[32] S. Freud The Interpretation of Dreams p165
[33] In Lunching With the Antichrist p101
[34] Private Letter - see appendix
[35] Rabelais p90
[36] New York Review of SF no 36, p10
Chapter 8  THE LITERATURE OF ANARCHY

The state organisation, having always been, both in ancient and modern history (Macedonian Empire, Roman Empire, modern European states grown up on the ruins of the autonomous cities), the Instrument for establishing monopolies in favour of the ruling minorities, cannot be made to work for the destruction of these monopolies. The anarchists consider, therefore, that to hand over to the state all the main sources of economical life . . . would mean to create a new instrument of tyranny.

Peter Kropotkin, 'Anarchism' [1].

Between the Wars

Moorcock's own political ideals follow closely those of the self-styled left-wing anarchist Peter Kropotkin, who advocates collectivism and the dismantling of authority. Most of Moorcock's novels explore the uses and misuses of power. In his system, 'Order' is a synonym for tyranny and authoritarian control, whilst 'Chaos' symbolises the more liberal theories of individual autonomy and community best represented by anarchism, which rejects authority and hierarchy. Moorcock expounds his ideas in the following way, adding cultural commentary.

Pre-Thatcher Britain was not Weimar Germany and Thatcher's Little England is not the Third Reich, but parallels clearly exist. The authoritarian personality is inclined to place heavy emphasis on Order when in reality it has only the limited imagination to visualise a kind of sublime Tidying Up. The effect is that, while the apparent Chaos is halted, the various channels of possibility which operate in a less restricted social climate are blocked even as conventional solutions are patently seen to fail. [2]

It is important to note that Anarchism is different to Socialism in that the former will not tolerate the existence of any state control, but demands that all power is decentralised. True autonomy, argues the anarchist, can only occur when the individual is truly free of all forms of authority, and is instead making self-conscious, independent decisions from free choice and for the benefit of the community. Moorcock believes that any form of authority, left wing or right wing, ends up as oppressor.
Uncertain of the consequences of genuine social change, nervous of the 'Chaos' manifested through the incoherent euphoria and destructiveness of the mob, leaders of revolutions fall back on the methods of their predecessors in an effort to restore the rule of 'Law' [3].

This was a pattern made famous by George Orwell in *Animal Farm*. There is a strong tradition that Moorcock is following and in literary terms Anarchists frequently cite such texts as William Godwin's critique of eighteenth century justice, *Caleb Williams* and William Morris' vision of utopia, *News From Nowhere*.

Whereas *Gloriana* evokes the carnival, and *Mother London* is a polyphonic novel, the Pyat tetralogy has one distinct voice. The narrative voice of Pyat expresses the opposite views to those held by the author - as if the memoirs were written by his doppelganger. By his own admission Moorcock has difficulty sustaining the writing, professing that the material is 'Hard, dangerous stuff to contemplate' [4]. Moorcock clearly rejects the evils of tyranny and campaigns against prejudice and sexism, but has taken on the demanding task of entering the consciousness of the anti-hero. His disclaimer is made immediately in the introduction to *Byzantium Endures* when Moorcock claims that he merely edits the manuscript of one who is 'a liar, a charlatan, a drug addict' (p8). On reading the memoirs it becomes clear that whilst the young Pyat dreams of scientific progress with a utopian vision of a technocracy, as an older man he has become excessively reactionary and mentally unbalanced. It is the older, schizophrenic Pyat who writes in retrospect and he interrupts his own stream of consciousness with his vitriolic asides 'uttered' in a sometimes impenetrable mixture of English, Russian and Polish, giving the impression that he is shouting directly at the reader. Whilst much of the prose is clearly structured following his unorthodox journeys chronologically, the text is continually disjointed and obfuscated by his wilder and darker passions. It is in these moments that the reader encounters the real man, and confronts his most violent thoughts. The splintered text and paranoid perspective adds to the anarchic style.
Moorcock uses the distasteful, if sometimes amusing, voice of Pyat to create a distancing for the reader. He sees the form as being Wagnerian; epic in scale and involving recurring leitmotifs, where the familiar history provides the momentum for the overall structure. Pyat's voice is designed to add a particular effect as Moorcock explains:

"With each sentence there is the possibility that it is not the truth. So each sentence has to contain or contribute to an ambiguity. Each sentence therefore fulfils a specific function. Each one is building to maintain a specific kind of illusion: the illusion of multiplicity, of many moral choices, a world of considerable subtlety. [5]"

Moorcock consciously creates ambiguity. Firstly, the reader wonders if this is the same Col. Pyat who appeared in the Cornelius books, but it is the narrative that provides the greatest ambivalence because Moorcock provides a warning from the outset. "I would prefer to let the reader judge what are lies and what is truth" (BE p8). It is this ambiguity which defines the Pyat novels as Fantasy, or at least fantastic realism. Since Empson's study of poetic uncertainty, Seven Types of Ambiguity, fantasists such as Moorcock, following a tradition set by James Joyce and William Burroughs, are not frightened to celebrate ambiguity and use poetic devices within the novel. This being said, it must be stressed that all Moorcock's work is tightly structured.

Todorov argues that "The reader's hesitation is the first condition of the fantastic" [6] and that ambiguity is subject to the reader's own perception. He further states that whilst 'literature does admit a requirement of validity or internal coherence' [7] the use of the unreliable, or in his terms, 'represented' narrator is suitable for the fantastic - "This narrator's discourse has an ambiguous status, and authors have variously exploited it" [8]. The Pyat novels are modernist in their use of experimental, fragmented language as well as the novels' feeling of a loss of the sense of meaning in a volatile world; and yet Pyat's uncertain voice expresses vividly the post-modern condition.

Most of all, these novels are about a fluctuating period in European history, a time which caused confusion, change, violence and loss; appropriate subjects for the fantastic novel. Each novel needs
to be assessed in more detail to appreciate Moorcock's subtle use of irony, figurative language and sense of horror. It is also worth providing a brief overview to the sequence to help contextualise a work of epic proportions.

The four volumes which compose the memoirs of Colonel Pyat are referred to as the 'Between the Wars' sequence. *Byzantium Endures* (1981) presents us with Pyat's precocious adolescence and pretentious engineering ambitions. The Russian Civil War disrupts his plans and he finds himself unwillingly fighting alongside Makhno, the anarchist revolutionary folk-hero. In *The Laughter of Carthage* (1984) Pyat gets caught up in the proto-fascist political machinations of 1920s Turkey and Italy before becoming a travelling speaker for the Ku Klux Klan in the United States. *Jerusalem Commands* (1992) evokes the glamour of Hollywood where Pyat stars in silent movies. During filming in Egypt, he is tricked and brutally abused. At the point of breakdown he returns to his ideals of creating a technocratic utopia. The final volume *The Vengeance of Rome* (in preparation) examines Pyat's involvement with the two most frightening tyrants of recent history, Hitler and Mussolini. Pyat has already indicated his sympathy for Mussolini's vision. 'Adolf Hitler, representing proud masculinity, and Benito Mussolini, representing the spiritual, feminine side of the fascist discipline. Left alone, I think they would have made perfection' *(JC p443)*.

The novels are a biased history of the terrifying political changes in the twentieth century, particularly those leading into the Russian Civil War and then the Second World War. Pyat, whose racism and invective are forced upon the reader, is an unsympathetic character and an egotist, whose anti-Semitism led to the book being heavily censored in the USA. Pyat also has the ability of continually reinventing himself, and like the Eternal Champion he can be 'resurrected' with a different identity depending on the context and complications. He is more despicable than the usual picaresque rogue, being guilty of murder, torture and rape and his views are bigoted and naive,
condemning anyone who does not concur with his intolerance. The ultimate irony is that he is probably a Jew: a Jewish anti-Semite. Pyat manages to delude himself that his circumcision had been necessary for hygienic reasons, and that his father came from a pure dynasty of Cossacks. Pyat's beliefs are firmly rooted in the ideal of Plato's Republic, with its specific components and strict order, symbolised more specifically by the Byzantine Empire which in his view brought order to the world in a utopia of law, authority and nationalism. His obsessive fear is that Islam and Judaism will defeat and overturn the western world. This xenophobia is aimed at the cities of Carthage and Jerusalem and what they represent mythologically and politically.

The four cities in the titles are significant. Byzantium became a powerful force under the control of Alexander the Great and in the 2nd century BC its army supported Rome in its various wars becoming, in effect, the Eastern wing of the Roman Empire. Eventually, in 330 AD Constantine the Great rebuilt the city as a new imperial capital renaming it Constantinople, and it remained one of the richest cities in Christendom until it was finally overrun by Ottoman Turks. After the schism of 1054, the Orthodox Church achieved independence from the Pope. The Eastern Orthodox Church developed its own sacraments, doctrine and rituals, which have become a stylised and dogmatic tradition with which Pyat closely identifies, however sincere his faith might be.

Carthage in Africa was, according to legend, founded by Dido, and probably began trading as early as the 9th century BC. The dominant religion involved human sacrifice to gods such as Baal, and therefore considered by Christians to be pagan, or worse, satanic. In ancient history Carthage forged a respectable empire with leaders such as Hannibal, but was eventually defeated by the more powerful Roman Empire that eventually led to it becoming a centre of Christianity by the 2nd century. The city continued to change hands and in the 6th century it became part of the Byzantine Empire, until it was seized by Arabs.
Jerusalem became the focus of the Crusades whereby European Christians fought Muslims for control of the Holy Land. Still tormented by political conflict Jerusalem is a holy site for Christians, Jews and Muslims. Although Israel was the birth land of Christ, it is interesting that the most important Christian power resides in Rome.

The so-called 'Eternal City', Rome was the capital of the greatest empire in ancient Europe. After Julius Caesar's death Augustus brought the republic to an end and appointed himself the first Emperor, forging a force of law and order on a world scale. Like all powers and authorities the Roman Empire collapsed a thousand years before its Byzantine equivalent. Rome contains the Vatican state, home of the Roman Catholic Church, which boasts more than 900 million followers. Rome most emphatically symbolises power and order. [9]

All four cities are emblems of entropy; romantic places that once wielded power but are now collapsed or in the case of Jerusalem, still in turmoil. Moorcock is keen to bring the reader's attention to the death of Empires, and by evoking these historically important cities manages to provide a metaphor for the ebb and flow of invasion, and the changing patterns of dominance between different cultures, religions and belief-systems. Byzantium is the Greek city of order and high art; Carthage is the domain of the pagan oriental; Jerusalem is the home of the Jew; Rome is now the archetype of a fallen, decadent city which once ruled the world and Pyat seems to link Zion with Carthage (cf LC p346). T.S. Eliot refers to Jerusalem, in The Wasteland, as one of the ruined cities with 'fallen towers' which is 'unreal' and W.B. Yeats shows a constant fascination with Byzantium, famous for its ornate architecture and crafts, which, in 'Sailing to Byzantium', becomes the utopian city of aestheticism, a place of decadence where he can become part of the tantalising 'artifice of eternity'.

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It is interesting that Pyat says little about London, another great city, and even sweeps the English Empire to one side in a few lines - 'The Romans left roads and villas. The English leave cold cups of tea and stale crumpets and guest houses littering the world from China to Rio de Janeiro' (BE p288). It is only later that he retires to London to be near Mrs Cornelius, his guardian angel.

Pyat is guilty of hubris. If we are to believe even some of his claims then he is certainly unusually gifted and somewhat unlucky not to have gained recognition, but the reader is always made to feel suspicious and wary of his arrogance as he tends to promote himself with extreme egomania: 'I felt somewhat godlike . . . a messiah' (BE p202). This self-indulgent ranting leads to one of the first of his lengthy tirades in which he rewrites history and mythology, working himself into a frenzy. Because he cannot reconcile his anti-Semitism with his slightly deluded Christian faith he has had to recreate Jesus as a Greek, a prophet in the mould of Plato. 'What can save the world? Not the Jewish-Moslem God . . . Only the Son can save us. Christ is a Greek.' (BE p288). He stands firm in the belief that the spirit of the Roman Empire will continue in Russia as long as the nation does not lose faith in the great traditions and the ancient wisdom. Pyat depends upon the authority of the metanarratives, he needs them to make sense of his own life and to retain an identity. The two world wars caused so much change and confusion that the individuals caught up in the chaos depended upon structures and rules to give their lives shape. In Moorcock's multiverse this eternal champion is an agent of Law fighting against anarchism, although it is ironic that his adolescence is a series of adventures involving illicit sex, smuggling, cocaine and masturbation. Pyat is also a victim of self-deception.

Ironically, the most shocking episode in Byzantium Endures is not Pyat's fault, but involves his tragic relationship with the innocent Esme. Childhood friends Pyat and Esme grew up together with
the greatest of tenderness and affection and it is clear that she is in love with him, but he is too
ignorant and full of his own self-importance to appreciate her love. Whilst he sleeps with
prostitutes and lives a debauched life she waits patiently for him. Years later when he comes to
realise his feelings, she has gone to help in the war as a nurse. Determined to find her he finally
stumbles upon her as a pitiful and dirty prostitute who tells him indifferently, "I've been raped so
often I've got calluses on my cunt" (p352). This memory will continue to haunt him through all
four books - a leitmotif of the entropy of romance and sexuality. Esme personifies Russia in terms
of innocence raped - a noble country wrecked by a civil conflict of sectarian warfare. Continuing
with this metaphor, Pyat then performs his greatest illusions so far. Being fickle he is filled with
hatred for Esme, accusing her of betrayal, and shame for his home, so with a sleight of hand he
reinvents both. He renames Kiev, 'the Rome of Russia' (BE p15) and then disappears to
Constantinople/Byzantium which quickly becomes his true spiritual home ('Tsargrad'), just as later
Hollywood becomes his new 'birthplace'.

Esme's reinvention is his greatest act of self-deception. By the second novel The Laughter of
Carthage, he resolves to forget that the real Esme exists and with a Frankensteinian bravura creates
a new Esme who will not betray him. The new 'Esme' is in fact a thirteen-year-old Romanian whore
and to a Western reader this is little more than paedophilia. Unaware of his hypocrisy he even
admits to himself, 'Oh, Esme my sister ... I never wanted you to be a woman' (p354). As soon as
he can he sails to the USA and he lies to his new Esme, promising to send for her. Instead he
satisfies his lusts in brothels and extends his hypocrisy to the extreme. 'I remained loyal in spirit to
Esme ... (It was at a bawdy house, however, I had my first experience of a full-blooded negress)'
(LC p428). This is charged with extra irony as he makes no secret of his vociferous racism. Still
taking cocaine and acting the libertine, Pyat believes in his own innocence and importance.
The USA brings new optimism and a new identity, as Max Peters, but even his faith in the Knights of the Fiery Cross who preach white Protestant supremacy cannot provide the blueprint for the new Byzantium and inevitably he is betrayed and rejected. Before the second novel ends the reader is provided a glimpse of the horrors to come in the final testimony of Pyat, allowing Moorcock to juxtapose the techniques of the KKK who 'staple testicles to a tree' with those of Auschwitz nazis who 'passed their leisure skinning youths alive' (*LC* p560). Not allowing despondency to set in Pyat, or Peters, idealises Los Angeles before he has got there. After all - 'The holy wood is where Parsifal discovered the Grail' (p575). It is difficult not to admire his optimism.

*Jerusalem Commands* is stark in its portrayal of evil, with Pyat becoming a more obvious victim. The most incredible thing about his story is that he survives so many horrors. Pyat in this sense represents us all, survivors of this century who have witnessed some of the worst atrocities committed against the human race. This third volume compels the reader to become less judgmental of Pyat whose message is sobering and challenging. His most noble comment comes at a successful time for him and is perhaps the moral of the whole sequence.

> Now I have learned that Chaos is God's creation and it is our duty merely to order our part of the universe. Perhaps we are all too slow to accept responsibility. I cannot blame the British Empire, nor the American, nor Hitler, nor Mussolini without accepting some blame myself. (*JC* p249)

This jolts the reader from any comfortable distance or high moral ground. There is no place left at which to deflect our self-responsibility. In her review of *Jerusalem Commands* Ruth Rendell calls Pyat 'The kind of protagonist whose function is to show us the baser side of ourselves' [10]. Pyat is Everyman - the reader's double.

As the memoirs move relentlessly on to the concentration camps, the mood becomes more stark and the atmosphere increasingly stifling. His visions become more apocalyptic and demonic after he agrees to commit a real rape for a movie they are filming out in Egypt, and the memories
become mingled in a haze of hallucinations in which he seems to enter the Egyptian underworld. These nightmares become, in turn, confused with the Nazi vision for 'Order, Security, Strength' (p339) and we are offered a glimpse into Sachsenhausen. Pyat, still arrogant, mistakes himself for Osiris who has been buried alive by Set, the lord of darkness, also known as Satan. During his 'death' he is sexually abused and humiliated by a demoniac hermaphrodite. This time the hermaphrodite is not a symbol of fulfilment, but rather of grotesque brutality at its most repulsive. This episode is written as a montage of dream, memory and myth. It is only when he is resurrected by Anubis that he can escape the horrors of this century. Moorcock warns us that we need beliefs and ideals to help us to make sense of the chaos; we need visions and ambitions to continue into the future, and we carry within us the spirit of ancestors and generations past.

Pyat is clearly not an anarchist, but Moorcock is, and by presenting reality from a distasteful perspective he makes a strong case against the rise of political authority and tyrannical forms of control. Moorcock stated his views on power and violence in a letter to The London Review of Books.

I'd guess that roughly the same proportions of sadists and psychopaths, useful for genocidal work, exists in any society and emerges at appropriate times. It's apparently impossible for an ordinary middle-class person to imagine the deep lust for power at any price, the violent sexualised fantasies and ambitions of that frustrated sadist who could very easily be a neighbour, a colleague or even a spouse. Most of us would prefer to think such people exceptional. Or fictional. Or foreign. I believe they represent a fairly large percentage of the world's population. [11]

Like the inimitable Miss Jean Brodie, Pyat mistakes Mussolini's tyranny for progress and lawfulness; for him any form of chaos is an aberration.

The 'Between the Wars' sequence attempts to portray patterns in history concerning wars, empires and the various struggles for power on a world and individual scale. Moorcock interrogates such uprisings in history, seeking to highlight and understand forms of cruelty and horror. As in the
pure fantasy texts the powers of Chaos and Law continue their eternal struggle towards either
domination or cosmic balance. The author orders the chaos with his carefully planned structured in
his attempt to discover the true 'Nature of the Catastrophe'. In Pyat's commentary the reader is
allowed an insight into an individual's struggle for internal sanity. The most complimentary feature
regarding Pyat is that he is committed to strong ideals.

Fantasy is an expression of the chaos in our lives, whether it is psychological, spiritual, physical
or political and Moorcock demonstrates how it is only fantasy which can adequately communicate
the more complex reality around us.
Notes

[3] *The Retreat from Liberty*, p26
[7] Todorov *The Fantastic* p82-3
[8] Todorov *The Fantastic* p86
[9] Much of the information on the four cities came from 'Encarter' 97 cd-rom.
Chapter 9  **CHAOS THEORY**

'Life sucks order from a sea of disorder'.

(James Gleick Chaos, p299)

Now resident in Texas, Moorcock is keen to include North America in his ever-expanding multiverse. His triptych of novels known as 'The Second Ether' is not properly a trilogy. *Blood* (1994) is an experimental novel that suffers slightly from being compiled of previously published episodes; *Fabulous Harbours* (1995) is a collection of related stories, leaving *The War Amongst the Angels* (1996) as a sequel to *Blood*. Set in a future alternative Mississippi, the four central characters are experienced gamblers in the Game of Time or 'la zeitjuego'. The players in the game can make decisions which affect their own destinies and the novel investigates this existential notion of having the freedom to choose your own future, and in doing so, affect the whole multiverse. Bakhtin noted that 'Games are closely related to time and to the future' [1] and gambling has obvious connections with chance and destiny.

Equilibrium in a disordered world is achieved with pseudo-mathematics, through playing a type of virtual-reality game that involves the symbiosis of player and character. The 'Chaos Engineers' are comic strip heroes from a typical 'space-opera' pulp magazine, although the author never allows the reader to be completely certain of this, but the episodes with Captain Billy-Bob Begg and his corsairs fighting the evil 'Original Insect' soon become a post-modern pastiche of irony and self-reference. Their adventures are woven into the main narrative that follows the relationship between four players of the Zeitjuego. These 'jugadors' are able to 'fold' through time and space to the second ether to begin the true game which is 'a struggle between life and death' (*B* p222). The game is psychic, involving the disembodied consciousness floating through ether, but only when spirit is combined with physical reality (blood) is fulfilment accomplished. The game owes something to
Herman Hesse's *The Glass Bead Game* (1943) in its obscure dependency upon the aesthetics of music, mathematics and creativity, and also to Jung in that true human individualism is achieved through 'our own collective power' (*WAA* p239).

The ambiguous protagonist, the Rose, who is part flora, part human, first appeared in *The Revenge of the Rose* (1991) and has become an important character in Moorcock's dramatis personae. She is not only a member of the ever-growing Von Bek clan, but, we are told, is the author's own cousin with whom he has a particular empathy. Moorcock seems to be attempting to achieve a post-modern narrative similar to that of John Fowles in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.

In *Blood*, she alone seems to be enlightened enough to express a Rousseau-esque hope that "'The world is full of more wisdom than destructive ignorance... Why can't that vast majority of us band together to achieve peace and equity?'" (p178). Once more this echoes Moorcock's anarchistic ideals of what Kropotkin calls 'mutual aid' [2].

Once again Moorcock writes on a grand scale, not content with quotidian episodes the novel *The War Amongst the Angels* culminates in Armageddon and the style is described by David Profumo in the Daily Telegraph as 'Bunyan on disco biscuits' [3], but Moorcock manages to provide metaphysics with little moralising. The familiar Moorcockian pantheon fight the final battle for the balance, echoing many of the finales of his eternal champion sword and sorcery tales. This time, however, there is a difference. A casual footnote states that 'The War in Heaven had long since ceased to be between God and the Devil. Now it was between a myriad different interests, each increasingly losing sight of its original goals in a series of pointlessly cynical alliances' (*WAA* p162). Those interests are still represented by the dualism of chaos and order, except now the terms have been refined and informed by the author's reading of science's chaos theory so that chaos becomes 'plurality', and law is the 'singularity'.

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Chaos theory is a wholly appropriate discipline from which to adopt concepts, its position and aims within the boundaries of traditional science run parallel to those of fantasy within the literary establishment. Firstly, as James Gleick argues, 'Believers in chaos . . . speculate about determinism and free will' [4] and they conclude that the natural world is far less predictable than traditional science has lead us to believe. Secondly, echoing Moorcock's epic scope, chaos theory views the world macrocosmically, rather than in the quantum terms of particles and quarks. The question Gleick identifies as important to chaos theory is one which has obsessed Moorcock for more than thirty years - 'in a universe ruled by entropy, drawing inexorably toward greater and greater disorder, how does order arise?' [5]. Scientists are discovering non-linear systems and patterns in all areas of rational enquiry leaving previous reductionist theories seeming too simplistic. Such discoveries include Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle and Ed Lorenz's famous 'butterfly effect' in weather systems. The concepts of Entropy and Equilibrium were developed as long ago as the nineteenth century when the German physicist, Hermann von Helmholtz declared that the universe was dying a heat death. In literary terms, fantasy literature can make mimetic texts seem simplistic in comparison.

In interview Moorcock is explicit about his references in Blood.

Chaos theory is a distinct help in that it provides a logic system which means you can develop fiction more readily. The more tools you've got the more you can structure something. Chaos theory has helped me enormously with that, it's handy for swift structuring of non-linear structuring. [6]

That final phrase is reminiscent of chaos theory that claims to see patterns emerge within scientific irregularities.

In this near future the world has become unstable due to the natural entropic pull, causing ultra-reality to leak violently from the Biloxi Fault and time is now measured by 'degrees of deliquescence' (B p9). Entropy inevitably leads to a gradual dissipation into nothingness as a
natural state. Rosemary Jackson argues that in the language of fantastic literature, entropy becomes a metaphor for what she calls 'undifferentiation ...(which)... refuses difference, distinction, homogeneity, reduction, discrete forms' [7]. Moorcock’s fantasy fits her model, but his work also offers an alternative to entropy. Love and life-affirming sexuality can replace drained energy and allow individuals to rediscover or recreate their identities and empower them to travel the moonbeam paths of the multiverse to a new time or plane of existence.

Moorcock tackles metaphysical questions, and his metaphor of the zeitjuego adds a different dimension to Einstein's famous statement that God is not playing dice and concurs with Sartre's notion that 'man makes himself' [8]. In the game, it is only people who roll the dice, forging their own destinies. The Rose states their true aim - "'We're playing for the power to change the human condition'" (B p169). Moorcock's presentation of God is always as a benign and absent abstraction, or the closest he gets to identifying the creator is as 'the Great Mood'. He does however, use the scientific concept of fractals to explain how we are smaller versions of infinity or 'echoes of some lost original' (B p60).

It remains for us to entertain ourselves and play our hand with the greatest skill. Life is a gamble and a gambol, or a comic book, and the characters in 'The Second Ether' series are creating worlds as much as Moorcock himself. They appear to become the characters in the game they are playing, leaving the edges between play and reality blurred and ambivalent, creating a post-modern 'Mobius strip' of never-ending layers. We are left frantically searching for meaning in our chaotic voyages across malleable landscapes, adrift in a steam boat or dirigible heading towards the 'Biloxi Fault' portending uncertainty.

Moorcock's romantic, extravagant adventures often involve airships landing in lost cities, in the tradition of Haggard or E. R. Burroughs and in his most recent books he goes back to his own
childhood heroes and writes of pirates, highwaymen and the wild west. *Tales from the Texas Woods* (1997) includes a 'lost' Sherlock Holmes story, and even resurrects characters from his teenage years in comic strip writing: most notably Zenith the Albino and Sir Sexton Begg, a version of that famous London detective, Sexton Blake. Moorcock has also been enticed into returning to his comic book beginnings and from November 1997, DC published a successful 12 monthly comic series called *Michael Moorcock's Multiverse* scripted by the author himself. The comic merges stories of Elric, Begg and the Rose, the latter being a rewrite of much of the content of *Blood*, called 'Moonbeams and Roses'. The format adds further understanding to the concept of the Multiverse, which, we are told, is made up of 'Countless versions of the old stories which we learn from our dreams, which are echoed by our own stories, which are in turn re-told... and which we are sometimes able to change' [9]. The Rose is given great prominence, as she is in *The War Amongst the Angels*. She is the eternal champion, 'I have one personality and a million selves' [10], and as such she is 'sworn to bring coherence out of chaos and chaos out of stagnation' [11]. That he returns to the comic format shows Moorcock's own cyclical career.

Once again, in the comics, Moorcock raises and develops his favourite themes that enable us to dream of exotic adventures wherein that Romantic spirit of chaos eternally defeats the dull, predictable and soulless singularity of Reason. To return to the debate about the importance of fantasy and fabulation, a character from *The War Amongst the Angels* comments acidly that he wants to kill his author. "We can resist literary feudalism. It is time for us all to explore new ideas, new territories! . . . It is time we raised the ambitions and standards of popular fiction" (p175).

Experimenting with forms and ideas has always been Moorcock's priority. In the final chapter of *Blood*, Jack has discovered that "Literacy is our most valuable gift, the source of memory and enduring myth" (p245), which serves as a reminder that the author himself deserves a place in our
literary canon, having developed from a precocious avant-gardist to one of our greatest storytellers and myth-makers.

CONCLUSION

Fantasy is a protean resource available to all writers, and its presence is ubiquitous as is clearly shown in the Waterstones/Channel 4 top one hundred list, 'The Books of the Century' compiled in 1996 from votes cast by the general public. All the top three could be classed as fantasy with *The Lord of the Rings* at number one. In fact seven of the top ten at least contain fantasy elements. Surprisingly, every one of the top ten books by British authors is a fantasy. Out of the complete hundred, I count thirty five as being fantasy, either straight fantasy such as Peake's Ghormenghast trilogy, or sf such as *Brave New World*, or horror such as Banks' *The Wasp Factory*, or children's fantasy such as *The Wind in the Willows*. Many more, which I have not counted, contain fantastical elements, such as *Trainspotting*, or are by authors who also use fantasy such as Golding, or are writers like Kerouac who is part of the beat generation.

Fantasy is an element which bridges myth, Romance, satire, Gothic, sf, horror, surrealism amongst many other modes and genres, and in fact, fantasy's most notable feature is its ability to evade definition, crossing, as it does, so many established boundaries and expectations. Moorcock, more than anyone, is breaking down these divisions and forcing literary scholars to rethink their theoretical schemes. Moorcock will not fit neatly into any existing school or tradition.

Sometimes, a fantasy or fabulation, call it what you will, is not so much 'text' as 'texture', and some of Moorcock's novels are better described as 'collages' or 'symphonies'. He has now set a template for other writers to break conventions and defy the booksellers' categories.
Whether fantasy is a genre, mode, impulse, resource, spiritual stimulus or art form, it is most certainly essential for the human expression of both dreams and reality. Within the 'field' of fantasy itself, Moorcock is a leading exponent whose books are some of the late twentieth century's most original works of fiction.

I do celebrate the mythologising creativity of the human mind ... As ecstatic dimension upon dimension unfolded, scattered, blended and bent, making every object a thing of intense beauty, sometimes of terror; as extraordinary encrusted patterns revealed themselves in the most familiar things, I was consumed with the most profound emotion at the harmony I sensed in the whole unseen multiverse.

Michael Moorcock 1998 [12].
Notes

[7] Jackson *Fantasy* p72
[8] see Sartre's essay 'Existentialism and Humanism' (1946)
APPENDIX 1

There follows a list of Michael Moorcock's novels, collections of short-stories, graphic novels and non-fiction.

Millenium/Orion have collected most of the Eternal champion mythos into fourteen volumes which I list first, including short descriptions and original publication dates. The rest are novels and books not included in this republishing project, with which I have also added comments.

The editions cited in this reader's guide are those from which I have quoted in this thesis, so this appendix also acts as my primary bibliography. See the bibliography below for theoretical and general references.

This is not an exhaustive guide to the works of Michael Moorcock. For a list of collector's first editions see John Davey's

Michael Moorcock: A Reader's Guide.
MICHAEL MOORCOCK: A Reader's Guide

The Tale of the Eternal Champion Millennium/Orion Omnibus Editions.

Volume 1 – VON BEK (1992)


Volume 2 – THE ETERNAL CHAMPION (1992)

The Dragon In the Sword (1989) John Daker.

Volume 3 – HAWKMOON (1992)

The Jewel In the Skull (1967)
The Mad God’s Amulet (1968)
The Sword Of the Dawn (1968)
The Runestaff (1969)

Volume 4 – CORUM (1992)

The Knight of the Swords (1971)
The Queen of the Swords (1971)
The King of the Swords (1971)

Volume 5 – SAILING TO UTOPIA (1993)

The Ice Schooner (1969) Based loosely on Conrad’s The Rescue.
The Black Corridor (1969) SF – co-written with Hilary Bailey.
The Distant Suns (1975) Jerry Cornelius tale c/w with James Cawthorn.


The Warlord of the Air (1971)
The Land Leviathan (1974)

Volume 7 – DANCERS AT THE END OF TIME (1993)

An Alien Heat (1972)
The Hollow Lands (1974)
The End of All Songs (1976) A homage to the fin-de-siecle.

Volume 8 – ELRIC OF MELNIBONE (1993)

Elric of Melniboné (1972)
The Fortress and the Pearl (1989)
The Sailor on the Seas of Fate (1976)
An anthology of over 30 Jerry Cornelius stories by Moorcock and others, including the famous IT cartoon strip (1971) and much of the original artwork. Originally formatted as *The Nature of the Catastrophe* (1971), this edition includes new stories and incorporates material from *The Lives and Times of Jerry Cornelius* (1976).

Volume 10 – **THE PRINCE WITH THE SILVER HAND** (1993)
*The Bull and the Spear* (1973)
*The Oak and the Ram* (1973)
*The Sword and the Stallion* (1974) Sequel to *Corum*.

*The Transformation of Miss Mavis Ming* (1977) The hardback version mistakenly printed only the first chapter, ‘Constant Fire’. See *Behold The Man*.
*Elric At the End of Time* (1981) Originally a graphic novel – see below.

Volume 12 – **STORMBRINGER** (1993)
*The Sleeping Sorceress* (1971) aka *The Vanishing Tower*
*The Revenge of the Rose* (1991)
*Stormbringer* (1965)

Volume 13 – **EARL AUBEC** (1993)

Volume 14 – **COUNT BRASS** (1993)
*Count Brass* (1973) Sequel to *Hawkmoon*.
*The Quest for Tanelorn* (1975) Four champions unite to attain Cosmic Balance and ends the Eternal Champion cycle.
Phoenix House Omnibus editions

THE CORNELIUS QUARTET (Phoenix/Orion 1993)
   The Final Programme (1968)
   A Cure For Cancer (1971)
   The English Assassin (1972)

A CORNELIUS CALENDAR (Phoenix 1993)
   The Adventures of Una Persson and Catherine Cornelius in the Twentieth Century (1976)

BEHOLD THE MAN AND OTHER STORIES (Phoenix 1994)
   Behold the Man (1969) Karl Glogauer becomes Jesus.
   Constant Fire (1977) See Legends At the End of Time.
   Breakfast In the Ruins (1972) Episodic sequel to Behold the Man.

Others

Sojan (Savoy 1978) containing short stories from 1957–75 and some non-fiction.

The Sundered Worlds (ROC 1965) aka The Blood Red Game.

A Warrior of Mars – City of the Beast, Lord of the Spiders, Masters of the Pit (originally Compact 1965)

The Winds of Limbo (Mayflower 1965) aka The Fireclown.

The Shores of Death (NEL 1966) Sf.


The Rituals of Infinity (Arrow 1971) aka The Wrecks of Time. Introduces the multiverse.

Gloriana, or The Unfulfill’d Queen (Fontana 1978 and revised Phoenix 1993)

The Brothel in Rosenstrasse (Orion 1982) An erotic novel about another Von Bek.

Mother London (Secker and Warburg 1988)

Tales From the Texas Woods (Mojo 1997) Anthology of new stories and non-fiction.
Col. Pvat - Between the Wars (Jonathan Cape)
    Byzantium Endures (1981)
    The Laughter of Carthage (1984)
    Jerusalem Commands (1992)
    The Vengeance of Rome – in preparation.

The Second Ether (Orion)
    Blood (1994)
    Fabulous Harbours (1995)
    The War Amongst the Angels (1996)

In Preparation
    Silverheart, The King of the City, 3 new Elric novels

Graphic Novels

    The Swords of Heaven, The Flowers of Hell (Star 1979) with Howard Chaykin.
    The Crystal and the Amulet (Savoy 1986) with James Cawthorn.
    Elric of Melniboné (First USA 1987) with Eric Craig Russell.
    Elric: Sailor on the Seas of Fate (First USA 1987) with Eric Craig Russell.
    Elric at the End of Time (Paper Tiger 1987) with Rodney Matthews.
    Michael Moorcock's Multiverse (DC 1998) comics #1 –12.

Non-Fiction
    Wizardry and Wild Romance (V. Gollancz 1987) Study of Fantasy literature.
    Fantasy: The 100 Best Books (Xanadu 1988) with James Cawthorn.
    Death Is No Obstacle (Savoy 1992) Interviews with Colin Greenland.

Editor
    Tarzan Adventures (1957-58)
    Sexton Blake Library (1959-61)
    New Worlds #142 – 207 (1964 to 1973)
    SF Reprise (1966-67)

Music
    Deep Fix    New World's Fair (UAG 1975: Griffen CD 1995)
                  Brothel In Rosenstrasse (Cyborg 1992)
    Hawkwind    Warrior On the Edge of Time (UAG 1975) Sonic Attack (RCA 1981)
                  Zones (Flicknife 1983) Live Chronicles (Griffen 1994)
    Also worked with Robert Calvert, Nik Turner and written songs for Blue Oyster Cult.

Film
    Co-wrote screenplay for The Land that Time Forgot, with James Cawthorn.
APPENDIX 2

Letters From Moorcock and Ballard

Contents

1) Moorcock illustrated title page

2) M.M. to Gardiner - November 1994

3) M.M. to Gardiner - September 1995

4) M.M. Interview - November 1993

5) Ballard to Gardiner - August 1998
The White Prince, or A Dead Man's Inscription.

Melodramatic Episodes in the
Life of Captain Albert Beggs.

By the Rev. Mr. Michael Moore.

In conclusion, I wish to say, that the
part which the Wandering Few have in

Exploring the Continents of Life and Death,

may be summed up in this - that their

united strength and courage, while venturing

into Africa, yet even this is not our

 central theme, which concerns the mystery

of Captain Beggs' headless corpse, the murder-

which often, often, filled him with reflection.

from the Red Sea to the White Sea.
Dear Jeff,

Thanks for your letter. If this is short, it’s because I’ve run out of time. I have a deadline to deliver a screenplay by the end of next week and I’m only on Act One -- and this is the end of this week... Had a nasty turn with my computer, which lost days of work at a stroke. I actually watched it fade away... A trying time. I appear to have a computer-friendly temperament and usually only threaten to tear its little wires out and feed them to a spinning jenny.

Your questions gave me a lot of trouble. It’s the old story, that you produce a metaphor -- and if you could do it any other way, you wouldn’t have produced the metaphor (i.e. something interpretable on any number of levels). My ‘search’ with the early Jerry Cornelius, was for a method of telling a story which would allow for a pretty wide range of interpretation -- in fact it was designed to be interpreted as the reader wished. Obviously, I have my own obsessions, but I tried to present a kind of actuality -- symbolic, maybe, but very much in the terms and language of our present age, which I think began to be felt in the sixties and, indeed, predicted. Its not pleasant to have ‘predicted’ the Dubrovnik corpse boats, but the seeds of Balkan civil war were always there. You sensed it because nationalism was the only-permissible alternative to communism and the rhetoric of nationalism is the only other rhetoric they’re familiar with. If THE FINAL PROGRAMME was ‘about’ the dawning computer age, then A CURE FOR CANCER was my response to modern imperialism and Vietnam in particular, while, if you like, THE ENGLISH ASSASSIN addressed the issues of Europe and British attitudes to them, while THE CONDITION OF MUZAK acted as restatement, resolution and coda, and was structured internally that way as well. I’m very proud of the structuring of those novels, especially the last two. The first two were actually experimental, but the last two no longer were. I’d found that particular medium I needed. The reason I switched to a more conventional narrative in Pyat was because I’d discovered the one thing I hadn’t really achieved in Cornelius was a sense of passing time. One’s Mozart,
the other's Wagner, as far as I'm concerned -- and I make no comparisons of achievement, just of method! The short stories also, for me, have a certain assurance. Jerry is a technique. The notion of entropy was, for me, especially in my early years when I was full of teenage angst (and came up with Elric), to do with the inevitability of death. Being of an optimistic and, I hope, fairly realistic disposition, I decided that death might be inevitable but quality of life could be worked out in personal and social terms which would guarantee the best possible use of that span. Entropy has no moral quality, but it matters, in my view, how we deal with the fact. The romantic tendency is to dramatise death, to give it a lot of Gothic luxury and rather avoid the fact (as in the current plague of vampire novels). As I said in Wizardry and Wild Romance, generic fantasy has a tendency to put on a good show, riding its richly-dressed war-horses up and down the ranks, but its inclined to bolt at the first whiff of gunpowder. Jerry was an attempt to deal with the material of modern life without giving the reader much of an out. That's one reason for showing the 'real' Jerry as a bit of a wanker, an obvious failure, while his mother always acts as a chorus, in case we should forget... Chaos tends to diffusion and Law tends to stagnation. Preserving something can kill it as successfully as letting it disintegrate. Moderation in all things... This is my somewhat conventional belief -- a sort of epicurianism -- that life should be enjoyed to the full and that its responsibilities should be taken seriously. I was attracted to aestheticism as a lad -- I was far too robust to be able to emulate any of my pallid heroes, except possibly Richard Le Gallienne, and he was far too robust to be a hero. I read Pater and Ruskin and Whistler and all that. Greenery-yallery, blue and white. I longed to look pale but interesting. Anyway, those ideas are very attractive to me -- epicurianism, I mean. But I was anxious to avoid traditional versions -- I was and still am very interested in popular fiction as a form and was to a large degree looking for new popular forms, much as Hart or Hammerstein or Sondheim (or even Weill) did. I think there comes a point where you can hardly help writing 'literary' fiction, but that's another story. God is probably the Cosmic Balance... My understanding of all this stuff has become refined through the fiction, so it's very hard what my 'intentions' were in the earlier work, since I hardly knew them myself. I've played different riffs on the ideas. If anything, the hermaphrodite in The Final Programme (&c) is a failed ideal, a little bit of a disappointment, but not altogether unsuccessful.

The changes in the penultimate chapter of Gloriana are relatively minor, so as not to disturb anything else in the book. They're easily compared. They were written in response to several women arguing that that scene, as it was written, could be seen as a justification of rape. Gloriana's failure to achieve orgasm was to do with her repression, her function as a symbol. In that there's some thematic similarity between Gloriana and Behold the Man. By asserting her own identity, her own needs, she also breaks free of the terrible burden of being a living symbol. I saw most women as living with that kind of burden. I was trying, if this doesn't sound too nuts, to 'reverse' the idealising allegory of The Fairy Queen and give Gloriana back her humanity. I'm also very fond of Quire. I would say that love, in the form I most admired it, was a respect for, and celebration of, the individuality of others, a
positive desire to understand and enjoy the world. It’s not a sentimental notion and has almost nothing to do with romantic love in its later versions. The Eternal Champion was first drafted when I was seventeen. The novella was written when I was 21 or 22. I had an inclination to self-dramatization in those days. The exorcism of that aspect of myself probably came first with Behold the Man and later with Breakfast in the Ruins. I really do think that if we make an effort to love one another we could produce a pretty good quality of life all round. On the other hand, as someone active in politics, I know how hard that can be to achieve. So I’m trying to deal realistically, if you like, with very romantic ideas. I think some aspects of The Eternal Champion are as you describe, but many, such as in Corum and Hawkmoon, are fundamentally humanistic -- we can change if we get rid of ‘gods’. I have a belief in the randomness of the natural world, but I do not believe in ‘fate’. I am involved in politics. That means I believe it’s possible to change the human condition for the better (or the worse) -- I’m just not sure to what degree. Sometimes I wonder if it’s worth it -- but it’s in my nature to be optimistic and try to work for things to improve. That relates, for instance, to my championship of the women’s movement and my admiration for Andrea Dworkin. Things could be a great deal better and the means of making them better are within our power. What disgusts me is the self-centred, self-important people who refuse to consider those means -- mostly powerful white men with a vested interest in social disharmony.

How do I keep so disciplined? Well, it’s not quite so simple when you’re at my end of things. But, put simply, it’s my job. It’s been my source of income since I was 16. I hardly know any other way of working. The piece in Casablanca pretty accurately describes what I go through. It rarely gets any easier. I have enormous anxieties, at least until I’m ready to start work in earnest. I still find it very hard to identify those anxieties for what they are. That said, I have a facility. I can still write a novel in less than a month (Revenge of the Rose, for instance) and get a considerable pleasure from the actual processes of structuring something (assuming I’ve achieved what I hoped to achieve, which isn’t always) whereas I’ve learned that most people have a hard time learning those principles -- it’s a gift for structure which in the main creates prolific composers, playwrights, novelists and even painters -- an instinct examined and refined, if you like. I was expelled from my school partly because I kept the other kids awake every night telling stories (mostly pinched from the likes of Kipling). I enjoy the business of telling a story. I have developed ways of harnessing and channeling those anxieties to power the work itself. I grew up in a school of journalism where frequently the deadlines were a matter of a few hours, let alone days or weeks. That teaches you to write 800 words concisely and vividly. 1500 words is a luxury. I also wrote a lot of comic strips, which few people have a facility for doing, and this taught me (see Death is No Obstacle!) to cut out a lot of fat -- narrative, picture, dialogue -- and all moving the story forward. This training gives you a large repertoire of short-cuts which you have to unlearn if you want to write a certain kind of fiction.

Well, this wasn’t so short, after all! All best,
Dear Jeff,

Thanks for your letter. We've been travelling pretty much non-stop since the first week we returned to Texas, so I apologise for the delay in replying.

I don't have an opinion on your proposals except to say I have difficult defining 'Fantasy' as a readily defineable genre -- or frequently even as an element. I don't believe that any technique or method is more or less useful than another -- everything depends upon individual human talent in the end. The authority of the author is often all we're talking about.

I'm glad you think I'm a writer of my time. Having gone over my own stuff -- much of it for the very first time (and I still haven't read all of it) -- I have mixed feelings at the moment! But some of it seems at least as relevant as it ever was.

I'm talking to some interactive computer game people in Austin who do live-action stuff. The possibilities for that medium are enormous and I'm getting interested in that. It sometimes seems that what I was trying to do in Jerry Cornelius could better be done on and for computers now.

I've answered your questions in long hand. In haste to get something back to you -- but please don't hesitate to ask for amplification where useful to you.

Best,
An Interview with Michael Moorcock, November 1993

How influential was the war to your writing?

Wartime London had an enormous effect on my imagination. It is a very peculiar landscape. It’s a malleable landscape — wasteland and ruins as you grow up. Your entire memory is one of something in transition: something between being one thing and another. So that kind of landscape, I think, probably is the single greatest effect on my writing.

How did your schooling affect your outlook on life?

I had a strong influence in Rudolf Steiner when I was a small child and I think it stuck with me for some time in many ways and I don’t mind it having stuck. Steiner was interested in ‘mystical cosmology’ and his whole philosophy was very gentle and, as it were, kind. I was always attracted even if never interested in practising it. I got most of my basic ideas from Steiner as well as from writers of the fifties like Poul Anderson and Fritz Lieber.

What are your hobbies?

Work, travelling, walking, climbing. I also collect ephemera. I’ve done my stint of haymaking.

What do you enjoy reading?

So many writers. I was reading everything from an early age. George Bernard Shaw, Dickens, Nesbit, E.R. Burroughs, E.J. Henty, Haggard — good adventure story writers. Also George Eliot and more obscure writers like Adam Smith. Peake was my strong inspiration. I have a wide range of tastes.

Have you ever used drugs to stimulate your writing?

I do believe hallucinatory drugs can aid creativity but oddly enough I rarely use them in that respect. I had a reputation for writing everything on acid, which is simply completely untrue. I am very prone to visions, of seeing things that are not there, or inventing things out of what is there — a very intense visual imagination. Therefore, I’m doing a lot of the same things as people who have dropped acid and the intensity gives my work that quality. Drugs are not to be given to anyone under forty. You have to be mature and responsible.
What is your opinion of science fiction?

I don't really have any great talent for writing sf. My imagination doesn't lead in that direction. Sf demands a kind of rationalism, a kind of reductionism, which does rationalise the imagination in a way I find uncomfortable. Fantasy is more flexible.

How would you define fantasy?

I don't believe there is such a thing as fantasy or science fiction or detective fiction and so on. I think there are certain writers who in their field shine and in every one of those fields you'll get some good writers emerging. Sometimes the field itself can limit the writer's work and then frequently the writer does something about it. I hate generic terms.

Why do you think Elric is so popular?

I have a feeling people like ambiguous characters - they have to interpret them. I think Elric and Dracula have certain things in common - vulnerability as well as a penchant for violence. That seems to be the formula people like. It was not ever conceived cynically.

Explain your use of entropy.

We use up a lot of energy, collapse and grow cold. I believe in a sense, human love conquers entropy and that you'll find running through a lot of my books.

Is the Pyat in 'Between the Wars' the same as the character in the Jerry Cornelius books?

There's a malleability about all those people that means they can never be quite exactly the same characters in any given story. So I wouldn't say he was exactly the same, but I think of him as being the same. I think of him as the same character in different circumstances. Mostly what you find with my characters is that the characters stay the same but their circumstances change. When circumstances change they frequently act differently, behave differently, say something differently or their attitude is different. We are all something else in altered circumstances.
Describe some of your involvement in films.

The *Final Programme* was a disaster. The director thought he was being clever. I get bored with many projects - film ideas very rarely do go very far.

Why is *The Vengeance of Rome* taking so long?

I'm finding it difficult to stay in that milieu as long as I would like because of the terrible events and the thoroughly evil people who are predominant in this final volume (Hitler, Mussolini). It makes it difficult to remain sane for very long lengths of time.
Dear Mr. Gardiner,

I'm glad you enjoyed Cocaine Nights. I hope you go on to other things. I hate literary theory/bullshit/strong feelings. I suppose the answer is yes—to be honest, to answer 'literary' leaves me gagging. The trouble with literary criticism is that it tends to turn into an ideology, constantly concern itself with self-serving ideology, supposedly concerned to purify the novel. Lear's nature and the need for the imagination are complete bunk. The imagination is life itself. The complete works of Shakespeare, Lear, Beckett—complete works. If you like your own Jeeves, Brontë, etc., be sure you've familiarised yourself with all kin. Meanwhile, best, I think.

[Signature]

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FICTION (MINE + MOONCOCK'S LIKE EVERYONE ELSE'S) IS MEANT TO PROvoke, EXHILARATE, ENTERTAIN, INFORM, AMUSE + SCANDALISE—NOT TO BE POKED + PRODDED LIKE A CADAVER ON AN AUTOPSY TABLE—I SUGGEST YOU COMPLETE YOUR PH.D. AND THEN TAKE UP HOTEL MANAGEMENT OR PHYSIOLOGY.
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