Fixing the Future: Examining Social Cycles in Cold War Science Fiction Fix-Up Novels

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Thesis submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

In

English

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May 8, 2024

Blacksburg, VA

Keywords: Science fiction, pulp fiction, fix-up, retcon, social cycle theory, Cold War, *The Martian Chronicles,* Ray Bradbury, *City*, Clifford D. Simak, *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, Walter M. Miller Jr.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the relationship between Cold War science fiction fix-up novels and social cycle theory. The study engages with textual, cultural, and comparative analysis to elucidate and analyze links between the fix-up novel format, a cyclical conception of human history, and the Cold War setting of the construction and publication of three SF novels. The objects of this study are three Cold War era fix-up novels with origins in World War II pulp science fiction magazine short stories: *The Martian Chronicles* by Ray Bradbury, *City* by Clifford D. Simak, and *A Canticle for Leibowitz* by Walter M. Miller Jr. The project examines these three novels alongside the reflective nature of the fix-up novel format, the authors' interactions with social cycle theory, and the Cold War cultural considerations of ideological instability and the threat of annihilation. By examining these works through the lens of retroactive continuity, social cycle theory, and the Cold War cultural imaginary, this thesis demonstrates the complex interplay between literature, culture, and history, and the ways in which SF authors have used their works to engage with the pressing concerns of their time.

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General Audience Abstract

The Cold War era novels *The Martian Chronicles* by Ray Bradbury, *City* by Clifford D. Simak, and *A Canticle for Leibowitz* by Walter M. Miller Jr. share origins in pulp science fiction magazine short stories. These authors consolidated and revised previously published short stories to produce these works, known as fix-up novels. These three fix-up novels interact with representations of human progress as cyclical or non-linear. This project examines how the Cold War setting of the authors may have influenced science fiction authors' conceptions of human progress as cyclical. This thesis studies how the revision process of creating fix-up novels combined with the transition from World War II to the societal anxieties of the Cold War may have impacted the cultural messages of these novels.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my committee members Dr. Knapp and Dr. Dubinsky for their support of this thesis project. Thank you both for the time, attention, and enthusiastic engagement you devoted to this project as readers. Your thought-provoking questions and insights into my topic inspired me, and I was honored by the care you took in considering and adding to the details of my work. Thank you also to Dr. Knapp for nominating this project for the Chermside Award.

I would especially like to thank my committee chair and advisor Dr. Avery Wiscomb. This project would have been nowhere near as successful (or complete) without our bi-weekly meetings and your continuous support, advice, and curiosity. I could not have asked for a better chair, advisor, and mentor during this program.

Thank you all for everything you've taught me over the years.

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Introduction

Soon after World War II, a long period of ideological tension broke out between the United States and the Soviet Union. This Cold War lasted four decades from around 1945-1990, and it was underscored by the fear and possibility of global annihilation through the newly invented atom bomb. In the early Cold War setting, the “fix-up” novel emerged as a popular form of literature in the science fiction (SF) genre. Authors used this format to connect prior works, often previously published in pulp-fiction magazines, together with new material. Three of the most influential examples of Cold War fix-up novels are Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicle*s (1950), Clifford D. Simak's *City* (1952), and Walter M. Miller Jr.'s *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (1959). These works not only reflect the anxieties and preoccupations of the Cold War era but also engage with the concept of social cycle theory, the idea that human societies rise and fall in repetitive, predictable patterns. By examining these novels through the lens of the Cold War cultural imaginary and social cycle theory, we can gain valuable insights into the complex interplay between literature, culture, and history.

The study of fix-up novels and their relationship to the Cold War and social cycle theory is important for several reasons. It sheds light on how influential authors of this period grappled with the threats posed by nuclear weapons and the ideological conflict between capitalism and communism. Bradbury, Simak, and Miller, through their narratives of Martian colonization, the decline of human civilization, and post-apocalyptic rebuilding, respectively, reflect on the flaws of human progress and the cyclical nature of history. By examining these novels, we can see how SF literature served as a vehicle for exploring the hopes, fears, and contradictions of the Cold War era and growing concern about the quality of human progress. This research also explores important aspects of the role of culture and literary interpretation in understanding the past and present. I investigate the Cold War influence in the production and reception of SF literature and

the ways in which SF authors challenged or reinforced cultural narratives about progress, especially through interactions with social cycle theory. Through this exploration, this thesis contributes to ongoing debates in literary and SF studies about the complex relationship between texts and cultural influences.

The first chapter of this thesis focuses on the concept of the fix-up novel and the role of retroactive continuity in adapting these works from previous texts. It explores Bradbury, Simak, and Miller's methods of combining previously published short stories into coherent novels, often by adding new connecting material or revising or amending existing passages. For example, in *The Martian Chronicles*, Bradbury uses a series of expeditions to Mars as a unifying framework, while also adding new stories and bridge passages to create a more cohesive narrative. Similarly, Simak's *City* is held together by the device of intelligent dogs reflecting on the history of human civilization, with each story serving as a chapter in this larger narrative. By examining these works through the lens of retroactive continuity (retcon), this chapter sheds light on the creative process behind the fix-up novel and its significance as a literary form.

The second chapter describes the authors' interactions with social cycle theory. It examines how Bradbury, Simak, and Miller employ themes of rise and fall, repetition, and the cyclical nature of history to explore the human condition and the dangers of unchecked technological progress. In *The Martian Chronicles*, for instance, Bradbury uses the colonization of Mars as a metaphor for the history of the American frontier, with the same patterns of conquest and exploitation being repeated on a new world. Similarly, in *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, Miller's depiction of a post-apocalyptic world in which knowledge is preserved by the Catholic Church serves as a commentary on the cyclical nature of human history, with the same mistakes being repeated over and over again. By analyzing these works through the lens of social cycle

theory, this chapter demonstrates how key SF authors of the Cold War era used this concept to grapple with the anxieties and possibilities of their time while also using it to hold together their stories while transforming them into novel form.

The third chapter situates these novels within the broader context of the Cold War era and examines how they may reflect and respond to the cultural and political tensions of the period through their interactions with social cycle theory. It explores how the ideological conflict between capitalism and communism and the threat of nuclear annihilation influenced the themes and concerns of SF literature during this time. For example, in *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, Miller's depiction of two catastrophic atomic wars serves as a powerful warning about the dangers of unchecked military power and the cyclical nature of human faults. Similarly, in *City*, Simak's portrayal of a world in which humans have been replaced by intelligent dogs can be read as a commentary on the dehumanizing effects of technology and the dangers of isolation and unchecked individualism. By situating these works within the Cold War cultural imaginary, this chapter demonstrates how SF literature served as a powerful vehicle for exploring the hopes and fears of the era.

Together, these chapters demonstrate the significance of social cycle theory in SF literature in Cold War-era fix-up novels. The thesis highlights the ways in which Bradbury, Simak, and Miller used the fix-up novel form and social cycle theory to grapple with the anxieties and possibilities of their time. In doing so, they not only reflected the cultural considerations of the era but also challenged readers to confront the cyclical nature of human history and the dangers of repeating past mistakes. However, it is also important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. By focusing on three white, male American authors, this thesis offers a necessarily partial view of the SF literature of the Cold War era. Future studies could

expand the scope of analysis to include a more diverse range of voices and perspectives, including women, people of color, and authors from other countries and cultures. Additionally, while the concept of social cycle theory provides a useful framework for interpreting these novels, it is not without its critics. For example, some scholars have argued that the idea of history as a series of repeating cycles is overly deterministic and fails to account for the role of human agency and contingency in shaping events. Future studies could critique such a world view, and evaluate its linkages to assumptions about human history as shown in these and other SF novels.

Despite these limitations, the insights offered by this thesis are still relevant in our current moment. As global tensions lead to instability in our own times, the issues of ideological conflict, war, and nuclear weapons are at the forefront of many world issues. By studying the SF literature of the Cold War era, we can gain a deeper understanding of how culture impacts the creation and interpretation of fiction. By examining authors' interactions with social cycle theory, we can also study how SF literature reflects on the nature of human progression. In carrying the past into the future, authors of this genre often speculate on ways in which their current societies advance towards repetitions of past mistakes. By studying their findings and speculations, we can recognize the ways in which our actions and choices are shaped by the patterns and cycles of the past.

In conclusion, this thesis demonstrates the enduring significance of fix-up novels like *The Martian Chronicles*, *City*, and *A Canticle for Leibowitz* for our understanding of the Cold War era and its cultural legacy. By examining these works through the lens of social cycle theory and the Cold War cultural imaginary, we can gain valuable insights into the complex interplay between literature, culture, and history. As we navigate the challenges and uncertainties of our

own time, the lessons offered by these novels are more important than ever. By confronting the idea of cyclical human history and the dangers of repeating our past mistakes—as these novels show—we can work towards a more just, peaceful, and sustainable future.

Chapter One: Fix-Ups and Retcon

The beginning of the "Golden Age of Science Fiction," which lasted from roughly 1937-1950, is typically linked to pulp-fiction magazines despite the lack of consensus regarding which decades accurately encompass this period. The term "Golden Age" "is nearly always used of genre magazine [science fiction], and it is almost always seen as referring to the period ushered in by John W. Campbell Jr.'s assumption of the editorship of *Astounding Stories* in Oct. 1937."[1] Pulp-fiction magazines became popular in the United States in the 1920s.[2] These magazines were "distinguished by their cheap price (made possible by cheap, coarse wood pulp paper with usually untrimmed edges to the pages), and usually a seven-by-ten-inch size."[3] Their low price point and engagement with a "variety of genre tastes" appealed to the increasingly educated population of the U.S.[4] The genre of science fiction (SF) thrived with the popularity of pulp fiction, especially under the hands of capable SF magazine editors. Most notably among these editors was John W. Campbell, editor of *Astounding Science Fiction* (previously *Astounding Stories*), who helped popularize SF magazines by, among other tactics, employing passionate young male writers.[5] Many famous SF authors such as Ray Bradbury, Isaac Asimov, Robert A. Heinlein, and A.E. Van Vogt began their careers by publishing short stories in pulp-fiction magazines. By the 1940s, magazines including *Astounding, Thrilling Wonder,* and *Startling Stories,* dominated the market of pulp SF.

World War II changed the field of pulp SF as magazines struggled under wartime censorship, "rationing of paper, ink, and type-metal," and audience disillusionment with new war

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[1]John Clute and Peter Nicholls, *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 258.
[2]Adam Roberts, *The History of Science Fiction*, Palgrave Histories of Literature (Basingstoke England ; Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0903/2008300083-t.html.
[3]Canavan, Gerry, and Eric Carl Link, eds. *The Cambridge History of Science Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
[4] Roberts, *The History of Science Fiction*, 254.
[5] Ibid., 149.

technology, namely the atom bomb.[6] Although "the wartime attrition rate [for pulp SF magazines] was high," by the end of World War II, "science fiction had broken down the pulp barriers. This was happening not only in the slick markets but also in book publishing."[7] In addition to SF authors publishing stories in higher-quality "slick" magazines marketed toward the professional classes, "the steady increase in the number of science-fiction anthologies was a further sign of the interest in and credibility being placed on science fiction as a marketable product."[8] In addition to the new demand for SF anthologies, the novel format began to gain popularity in the SF genre. Possible explanations for this rise can be found in the newfound credibility of SF, the return of British influence after the war, and the health of the postwar U.S. economy.[9] SF authors and publishers now had to appeal to an audience attracted to the novel format over pulp-fiction magazines.

The "Fix-Up" Novel

Some American SF authors reused and marketed their previously published pulp-fiction stories as novels to accommodate the rising interest in the novel format. They accomplished this by compiling, revising, and transforming their stories into coherent novels, often with new connecting material. Scholars have studied the practice of compiling and changing stories into novels in a variety of genres. In SF, however, the product of this method is commonly referred to as a "fix-up" novel.

The term "fix-up novel" is one label for the format or genre that combines short stories

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[6] Michael Ashley, *The Time Machines: The Story of the Science-Fiction Pulp Magazines from the Beginning to 1950*, 1 online resource vols., Liverpool Science Fiction Texts and Studies 24 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), chap. 5.
[7] Ibid., 196.
[8] Ibid., 197.
[9] George Edgar Slusser, Gary Westfahl, and Eric S. Rabkin, *Science Fiction and Market Realities* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 11.

into coherent novels. Some other labels for this format of stories include "short story cycles," "mosaic novels," "composite novels," "framework novels" and "domain novels." The most appropriate term for this format of story is a widely debated topic in scholarship, and some of these concepts are presented as subcategories of others. Rolf Lundén posits that the "plethora of terms" for this format of literature is the result of "the 'spuriousness' of this form of writing, and its considerable variety, [which] have made critics pronouncedly insecure in their labeling attempts."[10] However, the most common labels for this format are "short story cycle," "composite novel," and, in science fiction, "fix-up novel," although each of these terms carries a slightly different definition, connotation, and history.

In *The Contemporary American Short-Story Cycle: The Ethnic Resonance of Genre*, James Nagel argues that the "short story cycle" is not a format of novel, but "a rich genre with origins decidedly antecedent to the novel."[11] Unlike the "sustained fictional narrative"[12] of the novel, the label "short story cycle" indicates "that each contributing unit of the work [is] an independent narrative episode, and that there [is] some principle of unification that gives structure, movement, and thematic development to the whole."[13] According to Nagel, the historical application of the word "cycle" to literature shifted from the ancient Greek "collection of verse or narratives centering around some outstanding event or character" to the medieval English "concept of works that are independent but enriched by inclusion in a group of related pieces."[14] Nagel admits "that the term 'cycle'...carries misleading suggestions, at least in its workaday sense of circularity."[15] He explains that the definition of "cycle" as "the fact of a series

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[10]Rolf Lundén, *The United Stories of America: Studies in the Short Story Composite* (Rodopi, 1999), 12.
[11]James Nagel, *The Contemporary American Short-Story Cycle : The Ethnic Resonance of Genre* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 1.
[12] Ibid.,12.
[13] Ibid., 2.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid, 12.

of events being repeated many times"[16] is not the meaning of the term in literary history.[17] However, Nagel fails to offer a definition or history for the term "cycle" in the label "short story cycle" outside of the Greek and medieval English connections. He acknowledges that "the concept of the 'short story cycle' remains to be sufficiently defined."[18] The lack of sufficient definition for the term lies in its "inherent limitations."[19] Among these limitations are the term's "undue stress on a cyclicality that is often absent from this form of narrative"[20] and its implication of "inferior status in the generic hierarchy"[21] of a literature market that predominantly favors novels.

To update the term "short story cycle," Maggie Dunn and Ann Morris suggest the label "composite novel" for the "literary work composed of shorter texts that—though individually complete and autonomous—are interrelated in a coherent whole, according to one or more organizing principles."[22] While the term "*composite novel* traditionally means…a novel written by a number of authors," the authors argue that it also accurately represents the connection of interrelated stories in the format of a novel.[23] James Nagel, who prefers the term "short story cycle" for this format of story, denounces the term "composite novel" because it deemphasizes the rich literary history of the short story.[24] Dunn and Morris, however, claim that the emphasis "on the whole rather than the parts" benefits this style of story by aligning it with the popular novel genre.[25] They argue that "although a novel is usually structured by plot, a linear narration

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[16] Oxford University Press. "Oxford English Dictionary." (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2000), s.v. "Cycle," http://dictionary.oed.com/entrance.dtl.
[17] Nagel, *Contemporary American Short-Story Cycle*, 12.
[18] Ibid., 13.
[19] Maggie Dunn and Ann Morris, *The Composite Novel: The Short Story Cycle in Transition* (New York: Twayne Publishers; Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan: Canada; New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1995), 2.
[20] Lundén, *United Stories of America,* 14.
[21] Dunn and Morris, *The Composite Novel,* 4.
[22] Ibid., 2.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Nagel, *Contemporary American Short-Story Cycle*, 10.
[25] Dunn and Morris, *The Composite Novel,* 6.

involving causation, it can be structured alternatively, or by association—that is, by juxtaposing events, images, themes, and/or characters in some sort of coherent pattern."[26] Independent short stories that form a whole, therefore, have the ability to "reflect or extend" the representative qualities of the novel through the interrelationship of the stories.[27]

In *The United Stories of America: Studies in the Short Story Composite*, Rolf Lundén combines aspects of the terms "short story cycle" and "composite novel" for the label "short story composite." He defines the short story composite as "the book consisting of autonomous short stories which interconnect and join into a larger whole."[28] Like Nagel, Lundén argues that labeling these books as novels "fail[s] to characterize the specificity" of the format and encourages "overly totalizing readings"[29] of the stories they contain. The term "short story composite" emphasizes the importance of the short story to this genre and labels the format's "loosely composed structure" while avoiding the weaknesses of the word "cycle."

Nagel, Dunn and Morris, and Lundén agree on the difficulty of choosing the most appropriate term to label the book that combines independent short stories into a coherent whole despite preferring different labels. Scholars have responded to this difficulty by applying a variety of terms to this format. Some scholars believe that "debates [about what we call books], while often fascinating in the context of a single text, ultimately obscure a longstanding, wide-reaching tradition."[30] Lundén agrees "that it is neither possible nor fruitful to draw exact boundaries between various forms of writing…particularly in the case of the short story composite."[31] Despite the long history of debate about the proper term, there is still no general consensus on the most appropriate label.

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[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Lundén, *United Stories of America,* 5.
[29] Ibid., 25, 26.
[30] Jennifer J. Smith, *The American Short Story Cycle* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2018), 4.
[31] Lundén, *United Stories of America,* 26.

In the genre of science fiction, the generally accepted term for the "book made up of stories previously published, but altered to fit together, usually with the addition of new cementing material" is "fix-up" or "fix-up novel."[32] SF author A.E. van Vogt anecdotally coined this term and "has written (or compiled) more fix-ups than any other sf writer of stature."[33] *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* specifies that, for fix-up novels, "the end product is generally marketed as a novel, though it tends to read more episodically than most novels."[34] Eric S. Rabkin, a SF scholar, takes issue with the term because it "suggests that the original work was somehow flawed or…not fit to be part of a real novel."[35] However, "fix-up novel," like "composite novel," aligns this format of book with the novel genre in a beneficial way. Rabkin's other complaints are that the term is "tarred" by the simple and "mechanical" writings of Van Vogt and that it "suggests that the composite novel is produced after the fact."[36] While Van Vogt may have coined the term, it has evolved beyond being associated solely with his style of writing. The term "fix-up" appears in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction, The Oxford Dictionary of Science Fiction,* and various other highly regarded works on SF to describe noteworthy texts. The authors of the latest edition of *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* disagree with Rabkin's assertion that the perceived intentions of the author of a fix-up novel hold bearing on the value of the work. They argue that the term applies whether the author carefully planned a fix-up novel, assembled one after the fact, or retroactively published independent stories out of an existing book. The most convincing justification for the term fix-up novel, however, is in its close association with the Golden Age of Science Fiction and its aftermath. The

[32] Clute and Nicholls, *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, 627.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Eric S. Rabkin, "The Composite Novel in Science Fiction," *Foundation* 0 (Spring 1996), 94.
[36] Ibid., 95.

term's connection to a prominent SF writer of the time, Van Vogt, and its popularity in labeling books from this period reveal a valuable attachment to the time and the genre.

Three of the most influential SF fix-up novels of the Golden Age of Science Fiction are *The Martian Chronicles* (1950) by Ray Bradbury, *City* (1952) by Clifford Simak, and *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (1959) by Walter M. Miller Jr. These books, published during the Cold War, all contain stories that were published in pulp-fiction magazines during World War II. These texts have maintained their credibility over time despite some SF scholars' fears of negative reactions to the label "fix-up novel." All three novels appear in the list of representative composite novels in Dunn and Morris' work on the subject.[37] Two of these works have also received prestigious awards that reveal their long term acclaim: Simak won the International Fantasy Award and the Retro Hugo Award for *City* and Miller won the 1961 Hugo Award for Best Novel for *A Canticle for Leibowitz*.[38] Although *The Martian Chronicles* has not yet received any awards, its continued popularity and use within educational settings cements its prestigious place in American literature. These three novels are also representative because of the time period in which they were written and compiled. The majority of the short stories that make up *The Martian Chronicles*, *City*, and *A Canticle for Leibowitz* were written during the Golden Age of SF and compiled into fix-up novels as that era came to an end. From a wider historical perspective, the pulp-fiction magazine stories that form the basis of these books were mainly composed during World War II and fixed up during the Cold War. These three fix-up novels are the articles of this study because of these representative qualities and their high regard in SF studies.

Retroactive Continuity

[37] Dunn and Morris, *The Composite Novel,* xxiv, xxv.
[38] Mark R. Kelley, "Clifford D. Simak Awards," Science Fiction Awards Database. https://www.sfadb.com/Clifford_D_Simak.

Elgin Frank Tupper appears to have coined the phrase "retroactive continuity" in its current use in his 1973 book on German theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg. In this religious context, Tupper explains that, because "the free God produces new events" that "constantly reestablish" the continuity of history, "retroactive continuity ultimately means that history flows fundamentally from the future into the past, that the future is not basically a product of the past."[39] The term gained popularity in wider secular contexts with a similar meaning when it was taken up by the "culture of serialized comics" in the 80s.[40] The concept of retroactive continuity still mainly "has some currency in media studies" and usually appears in scholarly articles on forms of fictional media such as comic books, movies, and video games.[41] The term is often shortened to "retcon" and can act as a noun simply meaning "retroactive continuity" or a verb meaning "to add retroactive continuity." Retcon applies to literary studies as well as other media studies.

In "*Retcon*: Value and Temporality in Poetics," Joshua Clover explains that he took the concept of retcon from the "region of narrative theory"[42] or "the intellectual tradition that works explicitly to understand the general rules of narrative"[43] for his study of poetry. Retcon, however, often breaks traditional rules of coherence and continuity in narrative. In any form of media, retcon is "a narrative process wherein the creator(s) and/or producer(s) of a fictional narrative/world … deliberately alter the history of that narrative/world such that, going forward, future stories reflect this new history, completely ignoring the old as if it had never happened."[44]

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[39] E. Frank Tupper and Wolfhart Pannenberg, *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), 100.
[40] René Glas, "Performing on the Edge of Rules and Fiction," in *Battlefields of Negotiation*, Control, Agency, and Ownership in World of Warcraft (Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 146,.
[41] Joshua Clover, "*Retcon*: Value and Temporality in Poetics," *Representations* 126, no. 1 (2014): 14.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Kent Puckett, *Narrative Theory: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139522502, 2.
[44] Andrew J. Friedenthal, *Retcon Game: Retroactive Continuity and the Hyperlinking of America*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2019. https://doi.org/10.14325/mississippi/9781496811325.001.0001, 6.

Retcon can cause issues for the audience of media it is applied to because of emotional or logical responses to retconned material. Some fans may believe that changing aspects of a work retroactively negatively disrupts or impedes the fictional history of the work. However, retcon can be a useful tool for narrative creation.

Retcon can be particularly useful in the creation of fix-up novels. Authors of fix-up novels often begin with a collection of unrelated or minimally connected short stories. These authors may retroactively make changes to details of plots, settings, characters, and other aspects of their previously written works to create coherent novels. Authors of fix-up novels often retcon their work in creative and distinct ways, leading to an abundance of evidence of retcon in the comparison of their original short stories to their novels.

Retcon: *The Martian Chronicles*

Ray Bradbury first published his novel *The Martian Chronicles* in 1950. Inspired by Sherwood Anderson's famous composite novel *Winesburg Ohio*, Bradbury compiled some of his previously published pulp-fiction stories into this fix-up novel. Bradbury began his project with thirty-four original short stories, twenty-two of which were previously published in magazines.[45] He interspersed twelve of these older stories, written between 1946 and 1949, with new stories and "bridge passages" meant to lend coherence to the piece as a whole.[46] In addition to the twelve previously published short stories, the first edition of *The Martian Chronicles* included three new stories and the eleven new connecting bridge passages which have been included in every edition since. Multiple editions of *The Martian Chronicles* with variations of stories have been published since the first. However, the first edition of *The Martian Chronicles* most closely reveals the

[45] Jonathan Eller, "The Body Eclectic: Sources of Ray Bradbury's Martian Chronicles," *New Series* 11 (1995), 379.
[46] Ibid., 380.

transition from disconnected pulp-fiction short stories to a fix-up novel. After the first edition, Bradbury and his editor worked to revise the general framework of the novel for different audiences by adding or subtracting stories. The first edition, therefore, provides Bradbury's original choices in adapting his pulp-fiction stories into a fix-up novel.

Bradbury's original twelve pulp-fiction stories had little in common aside from the setting of most of them on Mars. Two of these stories, "There Will Come Soft Rains" and "Carnival of Madness," were even set on Earth. To retcon these stories into a coherent novel, Bradbury incorporated unifying formatting decisions and bridge passages in addition to extensive edits to the content of these stories.

One of Bradbury's most important moves in unifying the stories of *The Martian Chronicles* was to place each chapter on a timeline. The title of each chapter is preceded by the month and year it takes place in the book. These dates range from January 1999 to October 2026 in the first edition, and they shift to January 2030 to October 2057 in editions released closer to 1999. This timeline allows for the stories to be read as a continuous account of the colonization of Mars by humans. This timeline also helps reconcile the widely varying characters, settings, and plots of each story. These shifts can be accounted for by the months and years between each story. Bradbury's timeline, a simple formatting decision, creates a smoother cohesion within his book.

In "The Body Eclectic: Sources of Ray Bradbury's *Martian Chronicles,*" Bradbury scholar Jonathan Eller outlines many of the changes Bradbury made for retroactive continuity in *The Martian Chronicles.* According to Eller, Bradbury's major retcon tactics include: presenting each expedition to Mars as a chronological progression, reusing major characters from these expeditions, altering dates and birthdates, and adding important clarifying details about major

plot points.[47] Eller's summaries of these devices offer good starting points for further exploration of retcon from Bradbury's pulp-fiction stories to *The Martian Chronicles*.

The Mars expeditions in *The Martian Chronicles*, as Jonathan Eller points out, are important "links," or retcons, to the previously published stories.[48] In Bradbury's pulp-fiction tales of Mars, "the four stories of initial contact with Mars were not interconnected—each originally stood as a distinct vision of first contact."[49] The First Expedition to Mars is introduced in the short story "Ylla" in the novel. "Ylla" is a mildly revised version of Bradbury's pulp-fiction story "I'll Not Ask For Wine," and the details of the First Expedition are "largely untouched"[50] between versions. For a cohesive history of the Mars expeditions in *The Martian Chronicles,* Bradbury then "added passages to the other stories which placed them in a sequence as the Second, Third, and Fourth Expeditions."[51] For example, in the short story "Earth Men," Bradbury presents a different first exploration of Mars by humans. In the story's novel revision, Captain Williams tells a Martian, "we are…the *Second* Expedition! There was a First Expedition, but we don't know what happened to it."[52] The Third Expedition to Mars is introduced in the bridge passage "The Taxpayer" and explored in the new story "The Third Expedition."[53] Finally, Bradbury introduces the Fourth Expedition in his chapter " — And the Moon Be Still As Bright," a revision of his pulp story of the same title that presents another original exploration. Bradbury brought cohesion to several old and new short stories by retconning for this succession of expeditions.

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[47] Ibid., 391.
[48] Eller, *The Body Eclectic,* 390.
[49] Ibid., 380
[50] Ibid.,391
[51] Ibid., 380
[52] Ray Bradbury,. *The Martian Chronicles*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2012, 22.
[53] Ibid.

Eller argues that the "interweave [of the expeditions] works even deeper into the book" by providing Bradbury with reusable characters.[54] The members of the Fourth Expedition, for example, appear several times throughout the book. One character, Sam Parkhill, originated in the pulp-fiction story "The Off Season." Bradbury uses this same character as a member of the Fourth Expedition and continues his story in the novel revision of "The Off Season." Through the reappearance of Parkhill, Bradbury creates one continuing line between two otherwise separate stories. Members of the Fourth Expedition Captain Wilder, Doc Hathaway, and Jeff Spender function similarly in their reappearances or mentions of their characters in later stories. This tactic of retcon extends beyond the Fourth Expedition as well. For example, Captain Nathanial York from the early chapter "Ylla" has a town dedicated to him in the much later "The Naming of Names." The repetition of these characters adds threads of continuity to *The Martian Chronicles*, which often features new characters in each chapter.

Bradbury carefully attends to dates and numbers in *The Martian Chronicles* to bolster the continuity formed through repetition of characters. Eller explains that Bradbury "accommodate[s] the advance of the chronology into the twenty-first century by altering the birthdates of crew members and the years of the expedition landings."[55] Eller's detail of retconned birthdates occurs in the revisions between the pulp-fiction story "Mars is Heaven" and its novel revision "The Third Expedition." In each version, the crew members respond to their captain's inquiries about their birth years in different ways:

"Mars is Heaven":

> "When were you born, Lustig?"
> "In 1910, sir.

[54] Eller, *The Body Eclectic,* 391.
[55] Ibid., 391.

> "That makes you fifty years old, now, doesn't it?"
> "This being 1960, yes, sir."
> "And you, Hinkston?"
> "1920, sir, In Illinois. And this looks swell to me, sir."
> "This couldn't be Heaven," said the Captain, ironically. "Though, I must admit, it looks peaceful and cool, and pretty much like Green Bluff, where I was born, in 1915." He looked at the chemist. "The air's all right, is it?"[56]

"The Third Expedition" in *The Martian Chronicles*:

> "When were you born, Lustig?"
> "Nineteen-fifty, sir."
> "And you, Hinkston?"
> "Nineteen fifty-five, sir. Grinnell, Iowa. And this looks like home to me."
> "Hinkston, Lustig, I could be either of your fathers. I'm just eighty years old. Born in 1920 in Illinois, and through the grace of God and a science that, in the last fifty years, knows how to make some old men young again, here I am on Mars, not any more tired than the rest of you, but infinitely more suspicious.[57]

The new birth years in the novel align with the timeline imposed on each story. While Lustig in "Mars is Heaven" provides the context of the year 1960, "The Third Expedition" appears in the novel under "April 2000" and therefore needs no further context clarification. Dates also play an important role in retconning stories onto the novel timeline in other ways. For example, in censoring books in the magazine story "Carnival of Madness," "They lined them up against a library wall one Sunday morning twenty years ago, in 2229."[58] The main character of the story also pronounces, "In this year of Our Lord 2249 I have built a mechanical sanctuary."[59] In the novel, however, "They lined them up against a library wall one Sunday morning thirty years ago, in 1975," and the sanctuary was built "In this year of Our Lord 2005."[60] Bradbury maintains

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[56] Ray Bradbury, "Mars is Heaven," *Planet Stories,* Fall 1948, 58.
[57] Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles*, 47.
[58] Ray Bradbury, "Carnival of Madness," *Thrilling Wonder Stories,* April 1950, 97.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles,* 166.

continuity in *The Martian Chronicles* through these date revisions while also adding to the context of the story. The extreme censorship of books, for example, takes place twenty-four years before humans first landed on Mars, and readers can trace the effects of this event on other characters and plot lines in the novel.

Finally, Bradbury retcons important explanations for major plot points into his chapters of *The Martian Chronicles.* Eller points out that "in a very important long addition to 'And the Moon be Still as Bright," the Fourth Expedition realizes that the Martians have "been suddenly and silently exterminated by the chicken pox carried by the crews of the three earlier expeditions."[61] In the pulp origin of this story, Bradbury gives no explanation for the Martians' disappearance from their abandoned planet. The retconned explanation of human-transmitted chicken pox not only provides a logical continuation of the expeditions from previous chapters, it also adds depth to the book as a whole. "And the Moon be Still as Bright" examines the implications of destructive humans' arrival on Mars. Bradbury further emphasizes the themes of the chapter in the novel by creating a situation in which humans have already caused mass destruction through carelessness. Bradbury used retcon in his revisions for *The Martian Chronicles* to inject and develop deeper themes from his stories throughout the novel.

Bradbury's retcon choices in converting his pulp-fiction short stories into the fix-up novel *The Martian Chronicles* reveal his desire for cohesion and unity across his stories. He created unity throughout his previously published stories by placing them on a timeline, creating a progression of Mars expeditions, managing dates within stories, and offering explanations for major plot points. Bradbury's retcon not only created a cohesive story, but also provided him with a chance to develop deeper meaning in his previously published works. Bradbury's retcon of the stories of *The Martian Chronicles* formed the novel into a cohesive and meaningful work.

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[61] Eller, *The Body Eclectic,* 391.

Retcon: *City*

Clifford D. Simak published his acclaimed fix-up novel *City* in 1952. For *City*, Simak compiled "eight short stories seemingly intended only for magazine publication."[62] Simak also added a ninth story, "Epilogue," to *City* two decades after its publication. The original eight previously published stories bear surprisingly few edits and revisions from their original forms to their placement in the novel. Most of these stories, which chronicle the downfall of humans and the rise of a civilization controlled by dogs, were clearly written in connection with each other. Characters who make multiple appearances across these pulp-fiction stories, such as the Websters, Jenkins, and the sentient dogs, also appear in the novel. In most cases, Simak included minimal retcon revisions from his original pulp-fiction stories to the novel format of *City*. The few revisions Simak made have little impact on the novel as a whole, but they help emphasize Simak's social messages. Simak's main method of retcon, therefore, was incorporating new unifying bridge passages between his short stories to add depth and unification to the novel.

Although it was not his main method of revision, Simak did engage in retconning details of his pulp-fiction stories for *City*. The transition from the 1944 pulp-fiction story "Huddling Place," to the second chapter of *City*, also entitled "Huddling Place," reveals Simak's general method of retconning his previously published work through small revisions. The short story and novel chapter are remarkably similar; Simak made practically no changes to grammar, punctuation, or plot points. Most of the dates and numbers in the chapter were untouched as well. For example, a character who lived from "1920-1999"[63] in the story maintains that lifespan in the novel.[64] There is, however, one adjustment to time as the main character's "twenty-five years of quiet life" in the magazine story become "thirty years of quiet life" in the novel. The other small

[62] Clifford D. Simak, *City*. New York, NY: Open Road Integrated Media, 2015, x.
[63] Clifford D. Simak, "Huddling Place," *Astounding,* July 1944, 134.
[64] Simak, *City,* 43.

change to the story occurs at the end of the chapter. The end of the short story "Huddling Place" concludes with a final message from the robot Jenkins to his agoraphobic master Webster. Jenkins explains that he declined an invitation for Webster to travel to Mars to save a friend: "'I had a rather strenuous time, sir,' said Jenkins. 'They were so insistent that finally, much as I disliked it, I resorted to force. But I finally persuaded them you never went anywhere.'"[65] For the end of the chapter "Huddling Place" in *City*, Simak simply removed these lines. The retraction makes Webster's fear of the outside and deep disappointment in himself the final focal point of the chapter. These two simple changes in time and ending give the chapter "Huddling Place" higher stakes. Passing thirty years in solitude seems more profound than twenty-five, and Webster's responsibility for his friend's death is highlighted when Jenkins's role in the refusal is deemphasized. These edits are representative of Simak's revisions for *City*: they have minimal to no impact on the original plot lines of the stories.

The bridge passages in *City*, which appear before every tale, are where Simak carried out his major retconning. These passages are presented as notes "written by doggish commentators long after the events in the story had taken place."[66] In the novel, the canine authors offer their interpretations of the tales their notes, which "parod[y] present-day Biblical analysis,"[67] precede. The notes are meant to serve as both myths about humans, which the dogs call "Websters," and a preservation of human history for edification of future generations of puppies and dogs. In his 1959 review of *City*, Robert Silverberg credits the bridge passages of dog notes with the unification of the novel, stating that the stories "all hold beautifully together, each story growing

[65] Simak, "Huddling Place," 149.
[66] Simak, *City,* x.
[67] Ibid., xi.

out of the one before it."[68] More recent scholars David W. Wixton and Thomas D. Clareson agree: the doggish notes are the true unifying factor of the fix-up novel *City*.[69]

In his introduction to a 2015 print of *City*, David W. Wixton suggests that "the stories [in *City*] themselves…are after all just individual stories; it is the 'notes'...that place them in a context that lights them up with the extra layers of implied meaning that could not be gleaned from the stories themselves."[70] The notes in *City* serve to create continuity in the retroactively incorporated larger story of the dogs and offer deeper meaning to the individual stories presented in the novel.

Simak enriched the retcon in *City* through the recurring characters and the wider story of the bridge passages. The most important recurring character is the intelligent, unnamed dog scholar who narrates the bridge passages. The bridge passages, or "Notes," before each tale are the musings and studies of this narrator. The narrator is the most recent dog scholar who sets his examinations of the stories that follow his notes in conversation with the musings of the other recurring dog scholars Bounce, Rover, and Tige. The stories in *City* are presented as the history that these contemplative dogs retroactively study and discuss. The existence of these recurring characters and their musings are the direct result of the events in *City.* The chapters build up to the dogs' present so that their notes are a continuation of the story that develops throughout the novel. Simak ties the chapters of *City* together through the addition of the dog scholars and their wider story.

Simak also uses the notes in *City* as an opportunity for retrospection. The first note and tale in are a good example of the depth Simak retconned into the previously published tale through the note. The first tale in *City*, also entitled "City," follows the destruction of a city by

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[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid..

neglect. Two nostalgic men, one old and one young, contemplate the downfall of cities as the former inhabitants move further out into the country.[71] In his notes before this tale, the unnamed dog narrator remarks that this tale will be especially difficult for the dogs to understand as dogs themselves are not mentioned in it.[72] The narrator then lays out the theories of the recurring dog scholars who contribute to many of the notes throughout the novel. Bounce and Rover admit to confusion about the concept of a "city," which they see as "an impossible structure…[which] would lead to mass neuroticism which in a short period of time would destroy the very culture which had built the city."[73] The dog scholar Tige, however, "contends that this first tale is the story of the actual breakdown of Man's culture" because the concepts of killing and war presented in the tale could never have been created by dog minds.[74] These dog notes complement the tones of decay and despair that permeate "City," but they also deepen their meaning. While "City" on its own reflects the loneliness of the loss of human connection, the dogs' notes point out that this loss was due to the "nervous" and violent nature of humans. The relationship between the first note and tale, in which the note explores greater depth of the meaning of the tale, is present between each tale and its preceding note. The predictable formula of the dogs highlighting the lessons in each tale lends greater cohesion to the book as a whole.

In a 1976 publication of *City,* Simak writes, "Looking back on *City* I have no regrets. There are occasional twinges when I read a paragraph that I know I could write more concisely now than I wrote it then. But this is only a passing twinge."[75] Simak's edits to his pulp stories reflect the same attitude of allowing past works to stand largely unaltered as products of their time. His bridge passages, then, carry the brunt of the retcon in *City.* The dog scholars and their

[71] Simak, *City,* 7-36.
[72] Ibid., 5.
[73] Ibid., 4.
[74] Ibid., 5.
[75] Ibid., 4.

in-depth reflections of the book's chapters add both continuity and greater significance to *City.*

Retcon: *A Canticle for Leibowitz*

Walter M. Miller first published *A Canticle for Leibowitz* in 1959. Miller compiled three of his previously published short stories and novellas for this fix-up novel. His source material was substantial and, to an extent, interrelated, unlike the unconnected short stories that formed Clifford D. Simak's *City*. Miller published his pulp-fiction works in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction.* The first story in the saga, "A Canticle for Leibowitz," may be classified as a short story; it spans twenty pages in the April 1955 edition and was Miller's first publication in the magazine. The following year, the magazine published Miller's "And the Light is Risen" with the description "a short novel." "And the Light is Risen" fills seventy-nine pages of the August 1956 edition. "The Last Canticle," the last story in the series, also carries the description "short novel" and spans forty-nine pages of the February 1957 edition. Miller took advantage of the length and quality of these pulp stories to form his fix-up novel. Miller's retcon generally takes the form of revisions of word choices and lengthy additions to his stories.

A Canticle for Leibowitz is made up of three parts: "Fiat Homo," "Fiat Lux," and "Fiat Voluntas Tua." These parts directly correlate to Miller's stories "A Canticle for Leibowitz," "And the Light is Risen," and "The Last Canticle." To account for major differences in characters and plots of the sections, Miller separates each section by a six-hundred year interval. However, Miller not only used his short stories for the base of his novel's parts, but also reused much of their language, characters, and plot lines. Rather than maintaining his short stories and adding new bridge passages and details, as Bradbury and Simak did, Miller mainly revised by adding to his existing prose. This method of revision created a seamless blend of old and new materials in

each section of the book. For example, the beginning of the short story "A Canticle for Leibowitz" and the first lines of the novel are extremely similar.

Magazine Story "A Canticle for Leibowitz":

> Brother Francis Gerard of Utah would never have discovered the sacred document, had it not been for the pilgrim with girded loins who appeared during that young monk's Lenten fast in the desert. Never before had Brother Francis actually seen a pilgrim with girded loins, but that this one was the bona fide article he was convinced at a glance. The pilgrim was a spindly old fellow with a staff, a basket hat, and a brushy beard, stained yellow about the chin.[76]

Novel *A Canticle for Leibowitz*:

> Brother Francis Gerard of Utah might never have discovered the blessed documents, had it not been for the pilgrim with girded loins who appeared during that young novice's Lenten fast in the desert. Never before had Brother Francis actually seen a pilgrim with girded loins, but that this one was the bona fide article he was convinced as soon as he had recovered from the spine-chilling effect of the pilgrim's advent on the far horizon, as a wiggling iota of black caught in a shimmering haze of heat.[77]

The main differences between these versions are the minor edits to the first line and the additions to the second. From the pulp story to the novel, the word "would" has been changed to "might" and "monk" to "novice." While the first edit of word choice is relatively insignificant, Miller's shift in vocabulary from "monk" to "novice" occurs throughout his revisions and indicates an important correction to his previous work. Brother Francis has not reached the status of a monk in either of these openings, so the title "novice" is more appropriate for him. Miller's revision reflects a better understanding of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in the novel than in his previous work. Miller's minor retconned revisions in *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, such as this vocabulary shift, reveal corrections to his work for the sake of accuracy to his source material: the Catholic religion.

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[76] Walter M. Miller Jr., "A Canticle for Leibowitz," F&F, April 1955, 93.
[77] Walter M. Miller Jr., *A Canticle for Leibowitz.* New York: NY. Eos, 2006, 3.

Miller also edited his work through significant additions to the prose of his short stories. In the example above, the addition to the second line of the novel is representative of this retcon method. Miller added the effect of the pilgrim on Brother Francis and imagery for the pilgrim to this paragraph. The additions to the story go much further than these details, however. Before the next line of the short story, which is also included in the novel, Miller inserted two paragraphs. These paragraphs include the addition of important symbols that unify the three parts of the novel. For example, the second paragraph of the novel mentions "the buzzards" that Francis contends with in the desert. Buzzards become an important symbol of cycles in *A Canticle for Leibowitz* and appear in all three sections of the book. However, they make only brief appearances in the novellas "And the Light is Risen" and "The Last Canticle." Miller unifies the three sections of the novel by repeating the symbol consistently throughout them. His retroactive incorporation of buzzards into the story that forms the first section of the novel is an example of retcon as the symbol enhances the cohesion and unity of the novel.

The two paragraphs that Miller added between his original sentences also introduce important aspects of the world in *A Canticle for Leibowitz* that build up to vital plot points later on. In these paragraphs, this new information pertains to the mutant, "misborn"[78] humans who suffer from the effects of the radiation from atomic war. In his previous works, Miller does not engage with the idea of mutations and suffering caused by radiation until "The Last Canticle." In the three parts of *A Canticle for Leibowitz,* however, the misborn humans play important roles: they kill Brother Francis at the end of "Fiat Homo," engage in the fighting of "Fiat Lux," and pose ethical dilemmas for the monks in "Fiat Voluntas Tua." In her article on the topic, Alexandra H. Olsen suggests that "the theme of the nature of humanity here becomes a thread that unifies the sections and reaches into the third section with Mrs. Grales, the two-headed

[78] Ibid., 3

woman whose second head is Rachel."[79] These misborn humans, which Miller retconned into the first two chapters of his novel, unify the stories through the dangers and ethical issues they pose. Miller's preferred tactic of retcon, adding additional information to his previously published prose, is revealed through this example of his expansion of the radiation's effects on humanity in *A Canticle for Leibowitz.*

Walter M. Miller retconned his pulp-fiction stories into a coherent novel format by reusing the bulk of his previously published work and adding new content into it throughout the novel. Miller's retcon tactics are different from making significant changes to his prose or adding bridge passages between his pulp stories; it creates a smoother extension of the stories he originally wrote. Miller was able to retcon his stories through this method because of how complete and connected his original stories were. Miller obviously wrote original three pulp fiction stories with each other in mind, although they all stand mostly independently from one another. The inclusion of the six-hundred year gaps between stories helps to explain the drastic shifts between the stories. However, Miller's real work of unification lies in his careful addition of information into his existing prose.

New Outcomes

In the United States, the popular demand for the format of SF stories shifted from pulp-fiction magazines to novels around the early 1950s. To accommodate this change, some authors who had previously published their works in magazines adopted the fix-up novel format. Some representative, acclaimed examples of this format are *The Martian Chronicles* by Ray Bradbury, *City* by Clifford D. Simak, and *A Canticle for Leibowitz* by Walter M. Miller. The fix-up novel

[79]Alexandra H. Olsen, "Re-Vision: A Comparison of A Canticle for Leibowitz and the Novellas Originally Published," *Extrapolation* 38, no. 2 (June 22, 1997): 135–135, 2.

format was especially beneficial in this situation because it allowed authors to reuse and combine their previously published works, as these three authors did in their novels. However, revisions and edits of the original stories were necessary for the marketing of unified, cohesive novels. Bradbury, Simak, and Miller all engaged in some retconning methods, such as revising word choices from their original stories. However, they also all engaged in unique and creative retconning methods of their own design tailored to their existing materials and intentions for their novels.

The fix-up novel format allowed Bradbury, Simak, and Miller not only to add cohesion to their previously published works, but also to deepen the social messages within them. In many cases, the changes to original stories often expanded themes of social commentary in the works. Rather than diminishing the individual stories and the messages they developed, retconning actually allowed authors to reflect on these works in order to enhance their value in one larger, coherent story. The environment that encouraged fix-up novels and retcon also stimulated reflection and interaction with social themes and issues. The results of these circumstances are renowned SF fix-up novels that maintain popularity and credibility even now, over sixty years after their release.

Chapter 2: Social Cycle Theory

Social cycle theory, which posits that human societies develop in a recurring pattern of rise and fall rather than linear progress, has captivated thinkers across disciplines from sociology and philosophy to history and political science. This theory also finds expression in literature, where authors employ it to structure their speculative visions of humanity's trajectory. At its core, social cycle theory challenges the notion of perpetual human advancement, instead emphasizing the repetitive nature of civilizational growth and decay.

In his 1927 article "A Survey of the Cyclical Conceptions of Social and Historical Process" Pitirim A. Sorokin traces some early origins of a cyclical theory of society to the book of *Ecclesiastes* in the Bible and "ancient astrology…[in which] a periodicity of the appearance of certain stars, and a belief in their influence on human affairs led to the belief that many social phenomena repeat themselves periodically in the course of time."[80] Sorokin cites the "ancient thought of India," "Taoism in China," and "Parmenides and Zeno's philosophy in Greece" as other possible early influences on the theory.[81] Another ancient Greek philosopher often associated with a cyclical social theory is Plato, who explores the idea that society cycles through five "forms of government," "aristocracy," "timocracy," "oligarchy," "democracy," and "tyranny."[82] He also posits that this cycle may relate to the different "types of character among men."[83] Theories of social cycles, then, can combine aspects of multiple disciplines such as politics and sociology to explain a non-linear progression of humanity.

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[80] Pitirim A. Sorokin, "A Survey of the Cyclical Conceptions of Social and Historical Process," *Social Forces* 6, no. 1 (1927): 28–40, https://doi.org/10.2307/3004654, 29.
[81] Ibid.
[82]Plato. *Plato's Republic: The Greek Text. Vol. II, Essays*. Edited by Benjamin Jowett and Lewis Campbell. London: Routledge, 2019. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429058677.
[83] Ibid.

Sorokin names "Machiavelli, Campanella, and Vico"[84] as important later proponents of social cycle theory. Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) in particular is famously associated with the theory of the "cycle (ricorso)" in his book *The New Science.*[85] In Vico's theory, "nations will be seen to develop in conformity with [a] division by a constant and uninterrupted order of causes and effects present in every nation, through three kinds of natures."[86] Vico believes that civilizations develop through three types of "natures" or stages: the divine, the heroic, and the human. These stages carry specific types of customs, natural laws, kinds of government, languages, characters, jurisprudence, authority, and reason.[87] Vico expands Plato's idea that cycles determine government and individual characteristics. To Vico, the cycles of humanity affect every aspect of human life. Some believe that because "Vico does not indicate any continuous tendency along which the eternal cycles run," his is "a systematic theory of goalless cycles of history."[88] Human progression or intentionality through social cycles is another area where theories may differ.

A more modern-era thinker, Oswald Spengler, published his two volumes of *The Decline of the West* "with its cyclical conception of history"[89] from 1918-22 to "extraordinary success."[90] Spengler applies the concept of cycles to the stars, plants, and human bodies and sexuality in his second volume, *Perspectives of World History*.[91] Spengler delves into the similarities of human cycles to cycles of the natural world, but he also emphasizes the differences caused by memory.

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[84] Sorokin, "A Survey," 33.
[85] Lifshitz, M. "Giambattista Vico (1668-1744)." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 8, no. 3 (1948): 391–414. https://doi.org/10.2307/2103210, 396.
[86] Vico, Giambattista, Jason Taylor, and Robert C. Miner. *The New Science.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020. https://www.degruyter.com/isbn/9780300249606, 365.
[87] Vico, *New Science,* 365-417.
[88] Sorokin, "A Survey," 34-35.
[89] Sorokin, "A Survey," 28.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Oswald Spengler et al., *The Decline of the West*, [1st American ed.], A Borzoi Book (New York: Knopf, 1962), 4, 5.

He explains that "it is only the pulse-beat of Being that endures throughout the generations, whereas waking-consciousness begins anew for each microcosm."[92] Many of Spengler's musings on "great epochs of the cycle — procreation, birth, and death" revolve around the differences from nature that the "mystical conviction of settlement" makes in the cycles of humanity.[93] Like the cycles of the natural world, however, Spengler's theory of the cycles of humanity is one of progression and decline.

In his work "A Survey of the Cyclical Conceptions of Social and Historical Process," Sorokin aims "to give an idea of a great variety of different rhythms and cycles which have been indicated by different authors."[94] There have certainly been variations and changes within social cycle theory from different authors in different times. Theories of cycles that affect humanity continue to evolve with more contemporary books such as *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), *The Fourth Turning* (1996), *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (2001), and *War and Peace and War: The Rise and Fall of Empires* (2007) analyzing humanity's relationship to cycles in different areas. Despite the variety and continuing evolution of social cycle theory, here it is simply used to describe a theory that humanity exists within a system of cycles, whether they be related to history, sociology, economics etc., rather than progressing in a linear way.

Although little work has been done to comprehensively examine how fiction authors interact with social cycle theory in their work, some trends have been identified. For example, in *Under the Shadow,* David Seed explains that *A Canticle for Leibowitz:*

> ...is not unique to dramatize the aftermath of disaster historical repetition. Postnuclear narratives by many authors ranging from Aldous Huxley to Neal Barrett Jr. show how the population has reverted to pastoral tribalism. Nor is it unique to use historical repetition

[92] Spengler, *Decline of the West,* 7.
[93] Spengler, *Decline of the West*, 104.
[94] Sorokin, "A Survey," 38.

> as an ironic comment on the present. Philip K. Dick does as much in *The World Jones Made* (1956), which describes the rise to power of a demagogue as a replay of political events in 1930s Germany. Miller, by contrast, establishes a whole series of resemblances in his novel in order to describe how the history of the West evolves in cycles.[95]

As expected from an SF scholar, Seed uses examples of SF novels to show a history of historical repetition and cyclical evolution in literature. His examples, however, show that the topic of cycles of humanity is popular in post-apocalyptic fiction and, by extension, SF. In fact, the interaction with social cycle theory is extremely apparent in SF novels such as *The Martian Chronicles* by Ray Bradbury*, City* by Clifford D. Simak, and *A Canticle for Leibowitz* by Walter M. Miller Jr. Although these authors reference cycles of humanity in different ways, deep interactions with social cycle theory are easily recognizable throughout their novels.

Cycles in *The Martian Chronicles*

Ray Bradbury focuses his exploration of social cycles in his 1950 novel *The Martian Chronicles* around the history of the colonization of North America. The novel covers one long repetition of American history before implying the new beginning of the cycle at the end of the book. Bradbury uses a repetition of the history of North America to form a pattern of social cycles in his novel. In addition to this history, he incorporates references to past famous literature to accentuate the repetitive nature of human history. Finally, Bradbury uses extensive symbolic language of cycles to underscore the nonlinear nature of humanity in *The Martian Chronicles*.

Bradbury's references to the history of North America in *The Martian Chronicles* appear in the stories of the first four expeditions of humans to Mars. These expeditions are a reflection of the colonization of America, and they also contain references to cycles of civilizations. During the First Expedition to Mars in "Ylla," Captain York is met by hostile Martians after causing a

[95] David Seed, *Under the Shadow: The Atomic Bomb and Cold War Narratives* (Ashland, UNITED STATES: The Kent State University Press, 2013), http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/vt/detail.action?docID=3120201, 82.

rift in a Martian marriage. The Martian woman in this story, Ylla, sees the expedition as a sign of hope. While she dreamily anticipates the arrival of the Earthmen, she is disappointed when her husband kills the passengers of the expedition.[96] The Second Expedition, explored in "The Earth Men," repeats the theme of Martian violence and hostility. In this story, the men from the expedition are mistaken by a Martian psychologist to be one mentally ill Martian using telepathy to replicate himself. In an attempt to end the delusion, the Martian psychologist kills the Earth Men and then himself.[97] The similar endings of these stories, with miscommunication leading to the violent deaths of the human explorers, begins the theme of repetition and cycles in *The Martian Chronicles*.

"The Third Expedition" is the tale of the next journey of humans to Mars.This story is a repetition of Martian violence similar to the first two expeditions. Bradbury, however, leans further into the theme of cycles and repetition in this chapter. When the Earthmen of the Third Expedition land on Mars, they encounter their childhood homes. Believing that they have made an error in their calculations, the men wonder if "maybe we should take off and land again."[98] The repetition of this story continues as the Earthmen are greeted by representations of their formerly deceased relatives.[99] Everything about the figures on Mars is a repetition of the figures in the men's lives, as indicated when one expeditioner notices the Martian version of his mother "was wearing the same perfume he remembered from the summer when she and dad had been killed in the train accident."[100] Longing and nostalgia for the past overtakes the members of the Third Expedition and makes them vulnerable to the Martians who are revealed to have taken the form of their loved ones through memories recovered from telepathy.[101] The themes in this

[96] Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles,* 2-18.
[97] Ibid, 33.
[98] Ibid., 28.
[99] Ibid., 43-62.
[100] Ibid., 60.
[101] Ibid., 36-50.

expedition explore the nostalgia of the Earthmen who appear to see their old homes and deceased family members. The men desire to repeat their childhood in "The Third Expedition," leading to a desire for a cyclical lifestyle in which one goes back to how things once were. This expedition also references the colonization of North America, as Bradbury points out that "after all, like the Pilgrims, these people came here to escape Earth."[102] The themes of cyclicality and a desire for repetition are clearly defined in these expeditions of *The Martian Chronicles.*

The Fourth Expedition to Mars in "And the Moon be Still as Bright" is a more specific representation of the exploration of North America by foreign explorers. While each expedition references this historical event, the repetition of the colonization of North America is most apparent in the Third Expedition. While exploring a now-empty Mars, the scientists of the expedition realize that the Martians have been wiped out by a strain of chicken pox carried by the first two expeditions.[103] The disease is important in two ways: it mirrors the death caused by foreign germs in North America after outsiders invaded the land, and it shows the disregard of humans for other life. Chicken pox is generally regarded as a childhood disease, one that vaccinations have essentially wiped out. From the past historical event of disease in Native Americans caused by foreigners, the Earthmen of 2033 should have been prepared to warn the Maritans of this possibility of disease. However, they disregard the value of the Martians' lives in the same way that they neglect the environment of Mars. This chapter more widely follows the attempts of one crewmember, Jeff Spender, to protect the environment of Mars from the other, more careless, members of the expedition.[104] Spender reflects on the cyclicality of the disrespect for the ancient civilization of Mars and compares it to past historical events:

No matter how we touch Mars, we'll never touch it. And then we'll get mad at it, and you

[102] Ibid., 54.
[103] Ibid., 69.
[104] Ibid., 31-72.

> know what we'll do? We'll rip it up, rip the skin off, and change it to fit ourselves…We Earth Men have a talent for ruining big, beautiful things.The only reason we didn't set up hot-dog stands in the midst of the Egyptian Temple of Karnak is because it was out of the way and served no large commercial purpose. And Egypt is a small part of Earth. But here, this whole thing is ancient and different, and we have to set down somewhere and start fouling it up. We'll call the canal the Rockefeller Canal and the mountain King George Mountain and the sea the Dupont sea, and there'll be Roosevelt and Lincoln and Coolidge cities and it won't ever be right, when there are the proper names for these places.[105]

Spender predicts that, just as humans have neglected or abused the history of past civilizations on Earth, they will carry this tradition on to Mars. The names that Spender predicts will be applied to Martian attributes, such as "Rockefeller," "Roosevelt," "Lincoln," and "Coolidge" are references to the specific American tendency to override the history of other societies. The other names of "King George" and "Dupont" are references to the origins of many American settlers from England or France. The connection supports the cyclicality of the tendency to erase other cultures that transcends American tradition. Later on, Spender also references "what happened to Mexico when Cortez and his very fine good friends arrived from Spain…a whole civilization destroyed by greedy, righteous bigots."[106] This reference to the history of the colonization of Mexico also expands Bradbury's social commentary past America. To focus the issue more specifically American history, however, Bradbury includes a member of the Fourth Expedition called "Cheroke."[107] Bradbury makes the connection to the colonization of Native American societies clear when Cheroke tells Spender, "I've got some Cherokee blood in me. My grandfather told me lots about the Oklahoma Territory. If there's a Martian around, I'm all for him."[108] Spender, however, kills Cheroke along with other men from the expedition, aligning him with the violent colonizers of North America despite his desire to be different.[109] Spender, who

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[105] Ibid., 74.
[106] Ibid., 88.
[107] Ibid., 66.
[108] Ibid., 81.
[109] Ibid., 82.

has begun to call himself a "Martian," is killed by the rest of his team in the end. The crew buries Spender in a Martian "sarcophagus…[in] an ancient Martian tomb yard."[110] Spender's death represents the beginning of another cycle of colonization on Mars, as by the end he represented the last protector of Martian culture stamped out by humanity.

As *The Martian Chronicles* continues, Bradbury includes allusions to famous literature and folktales to emphasize the repetition of humanity's progress on Mars. In "The Settlers," Bradbury begins:

> The men of Earth came to Mars. They came because they were afraid or unafraid, because they were happy or unhappy, because they felt like Pilgrims or did not feel like Pilgrims. There was a reason for each man. They were leaving bad wives or bad jobs or bad towns;they were coming to find something or leave something or get something, to dig up something or bury something or leave something alone. They were coming with small dreams or large dreams or none at all.[111]

This paragraph closely mirrors the famous opening of *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens:

> It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way…[112]

The reflection of Dickens here represents the consistent nature of the progress of humanity. Bradbury carries contradictions in the nature of humanity that Dickens outlined in 1859 into the circumstances of the colonization of Mars in his fictional 2001. In "The Green Morning," Bradbury makes another reference to past stories with his repetition of the North American folktale of Johnny Appleseed. The protagonist of this story, Benjamin Driscoll, acts as a version of Johnny Appleseed on Mars by planting trees throughout the forest to provide more oxygen to the human settlers.[113] Driscoll even points out the connection by stating that "in school they told

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[110] Ibid., 98.
[111] Ibid., 99.
[112] Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*. New York: G&D Media, 2022. https://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/PublicFullRecord.aspx?p=6913749, 7.
[113] Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles,* 100-106.

a story about Johnny Appleseed walking across America planting apple seeds. Well, I'm doing more."[114] The allusion to the Johnny Appleseed story once again brings Bradbury's examination of cycles back to American history and literature. For another American literary allusion, Bradbury offers "Usher II." This chapter is a retelling of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" in which the main character, Stendhal, uses the short story as inspiration to murder censors of art and literature.[115] Stendhal recreates the House of Usher on Mars and examines how the forgetting of past literature and history leads to a repetition of and decline in story quality. He directly references the cyclicality of this tendency by stating that there is always "a great majority afraid of the dark, afraid of the future, afraid of the past, afraid of the present."[116] Bradbury's repetitions of *A Tale of Two Cities,* the tale of Johnny Appleseed, and "The Fall of the House of Usher" reveal a tendency toward looking to the past as inspiration for the future. The extreme relevance of the literature of the past to the story of the future on Mars suggests a cyclicality in the stories of humanity which mirrors the cyclicality of human history.

The other main cycles in *The Martian Chronicles* are the wider cycles of destruction of the environment and the undertaking of war. In "The Silent Towns," near the end of the novel, most of the humans who have populated and polluted Mars leave the planet to engage in war on Earth. One man and woman are left on the planet, but their attempt at romance quickly dissolves due to the woman's desire for the repetition of the past. The man attempts entertainment through the form of films, "but all she wanted to see was an eighty-year-old film of Clark Gable. 'Doesn't he kill you?' she giggled. 'Doesn't he kill you, now?' The film ended. 'Run it off again,' she commanded. 'Again?' he asked. 'Again,' she said."[117] The symbol of an old film, the repetition

[114] Ibid., 102.
[115] Ibid., 161-181.
[116] Ibid., 163-164.
[117] Ibid., 154.

of the screening of the film, and the repetition of the phrases "doesn't he kill you" and "again" reveal a desire for the past as well as the repetitive nature of humanity. Because the only two humans left on Mars ignore each other for lack of attraction, the planet is once again empty of other inhabitants and lies in wait as the humans on Earth nearly eradicate each other and their planet through atomic weapons.

In "There Will Come Soft Rains," Bradbury explores the idea of human technology repetitively carrying on after atomic war has killed most humans. In this story, a fully self-sustaining robotic house continues the daily cycles of the family who lived in the futuristic building. The house is described as "an altar with ten thousand attendants, big, small, servicing, attending, in choirs. But the gods had gone away, and the ritual of the religion continued senselessly, uselessly."[118] Although the family no longer resides in the home, the daily habits of the residents continue to be undertaken by the house. The theme of repetition continues as the house recites the former owner's favorite poem, "There Will Come Soft Rains" by Sara Teasdale. The poem itself contains the language of forgetting and cyclical seasons enduring past the human tendency toward war. The poem reads:

> Not one will know of war, not one
> Will care at last when it is done.
> Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree,
> If mankind perished utterly;
> And spring herself, when she woke at dawn
> Would scarcely know that we are gone.[119]

The poem describes the situation of humanity in the chapter "There Will Come Soft Rains" as society, and the family of the house, have been destroyed by nuclear war. At the end of the story, the last representation of humanity, the house, is destroyed by a fire. While the fire eats away at

[118] Ibid., 250.
[119] Ibid., 253.

the house, "within the wall, a last voice said, over and over again and again, even as the sun rose to shine upon the heaped rubble and steam: today is August 5th, 2057, today is August 5th, 2057, today is …"[120] The fire in this scene represents the forces of nature burying the last traces of humanity as the repetitive nature of the house's final declaration reveals the role of the cyclical nature of humanity in its own downfall.

The last chapter of *The Martian Chronicles*, "The Million-Year Picnic," offers a tentative hope for the survival of humanity on Mars. In this story, the atomic wars on Earth have become so dire that one family escapes to the abandoned Mars. The family hopes for the arrival of another family to continue the human race on the planet, but they also fear the arrival of other humans as their "way of life proved itself wrong and strangled itself with its own hands."[121] Although the family represents a continuation of the cycle of humanity, especially with the pregnant mother symbolizing hope in new life, they also aim to leave behind the old ways of humanity that Bradbury rails against in the novel. When the children of the family ask to see the Martians, the father takes them to see that "The Martians were there—in the canal—reflected in the water. Timothy and Michael and Robert and Mom and Dad. The Martians stared back up at them for a long, long silent time from the rippling water..."[122] The reflections in the water signify a desire to create a new identity for humanity on Mars, but also the necessity of reflection for leaving the old tendencies and cycles of humanity behind. There is hope for humanity not only in the young family, but also in their ability to reflect on the past.

In *The Martian Chronicles*, Ray Bradbury mainly interacts with social cycle theory through the device of repetition. This device is used in the repetition of historical events, fictional events in the novel, words and phrases, and famous literature. The main cycle in the

[120] Ibid., 256.
[121] Ibid., 180.
[122] Ibid., 182.

novel is the beginning and end of the colonization of Mars by humans, which correlates with the suggested ending of humanity on Earth. The cycle of humanity seems to begin again, however, with the arrival of a human family on Mars. The family offers hope for a change in the cycles of humanity through their desire to reflect on the past and label themselves Martians rather than humans. Although the ending of the novel is somewhat hopeful, Bradbury clearly expresses disappointment with the past cycles of humanity through the repetition of historical mistakes and violent endings. Bradbury offers reflections of social cycles in *The Martian Chronicles* in the same way that the final family reflects, and both entities find humanity quite lacking.

Cycles in *City*

While Clifford D. Simak's 1952 novel *City* begins at a time of great technological accomplishment, the novel mainly details a period of humanity's decline. *City* follows generations of a family called the Websters, their robot servant Jenkins, and the intelligent, talking dogs they have helped to advance. These dogs narrate the notes before the tales that serve as their history of the nearly eradicated human race. Humanity in *City* declines rapidly due to its tendency toward isolation and violence. In its wake, the intelligent dogs, other animals, robots, mutant humans, and ants inherit the Earth. By the end of the novel, some of these entities have succeeded in successfully running civilizations beyond human input. The cycles of progression and decline, then, mainly occur in the history of the human race in *City.*

Generations of the Webster family appear in seven out of the original eight tales in *City.* The first tale, "City," begins with John J. Webster, a City Council member who informs the council that "the city is an anachronism. It has outlived its usefulness. Hydroponics and the helicopter spelled its downfall."[123] Webster briefly delves into the historical need for the city,

[123] Simak, *City,* 19.

stating:

> In the first instance the city was a tribal place, an area where the tribe banded together for mutual protection. In later years a wall was thrown around it for additional protection. Then the wall finally disappeared but the city lived on because of the conveniences which it offered trade and commerce. It continued into modern times because people were compelled to live close to their jobs and the jobs were in the city.[124]

John Webster explains that, although cities offered benefits to past humans, they are no longer necessary now that technology has advanced to cover the needs of humanity without them. In "City," the previous inhabitants of cities now favor isolation, and the majority of their houses stand empty. Because of their preferences, the city has become "an old tradition being kept alive when it should have been laid away."[125] After railing against the individualist attitudes of the majority, Webster also decides to leave the city. Henry Adams, a nostalgic young man, decides to preserve the city with his inherited wealth. Webster, however, has succumbed to the draw of individualism and solitude by almost accepting a job to push people out of cities and later leaving himself.

The next important Webster in the novel is Jerome A. Webster in the tale "Huddling Place." This Webster continues the downward spiral of the family in a more dramatic manner than John Webster before him. Jerome Webster, a specialist in Martian physiology, is asked to perform brain surgery on a close Martian friend. His agoraphobia, however, prevents him from accomplishing life-saving surgery on this Martian philosopher. With his friend's death, Jerome loses the Juwain philosophy, a great wisdom that would help dramatically advance humanity.[126] Instead of failing on a city-wide level, Jerome Webster is responsible for a detriment to all of humanity.

"Census" moves on to the next impactful Webster: Bruce. Hoping to make up for the

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[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid., 23.
[126] Ibid., 41-61.

failure of his grandfather, Jerome Webster, Bruce genetically alters dogs to equip them with speech and better sight. He explains that "thus far Man has come alone…Think of how much farther, how much faster it might have gone had there been two races, two thinking, intelligent races, working together. For, you see, they would not think alike. They'd check their thoughts against one another."[127] Bruce Webster, disturbed by his grandfather's failure, has decided that man is not good or intelligent enough to run society alone. He also respects and learns from the mutants who live apart from regular humans. Bruce represents progression in humanity in his willingness to turn away from the tendencies of his ancestors and include other species in the progression of society. He "had thought of a mind that knew no groove of logic, a mind unhampered by four thousand years of moldy human thought."[128] Bruce not only wants to disconnect himself from his family legacy of failure, he wants to push humanity past its spiral of decline by injecting the perspective of dogs into civilization.

Although Bruce Webster contributes to the progression of society, the next Webster in line, Tyler Webster, struggles with the cycle of decline and selfishness. In "Paradise," Tyler, the Chairman of the World Committee, restricts the news that there is a better life for humans that are transformed to live on Mars. He laments that, although Mars is "paradise! Heaven for the asking" the opportunity is also "the end of humanity! The end of all the ideals and all the dreams of mankind, the end of the race itself."[129] Tyler fears that, once humans know about the quality of life on Mars, they will leave Earth for it. Rather than seeing the transformation as progression, he worries that it would leave the mutants "to develop any kind of culture that they might wish—a culture that would scarcely follow the civilization of the parent race."[130] Tyler sees the pattern of

[127] Ibid., 73.
[128] Ibid., 79.
[129] Ibid., 120.
[130] Ibid., 138.

his ancestors clearly as a cycle of:

> *Accomplishment and mistake. But always counting for something. Each of them down the years. Jerome, who had lost the world and Juwain philosophy. And Thomas, who had given the world the space-drive principle that now had been perfected. And Thomas' son, Allen, who had tried for the stars and failed. And Bruce, who had first conceived the twin civilization of man and dog. Now, finally himself—Tyler Webster, chairman of the World Committee.*[131]

Tyler views himself as a protector of the human race and its culture, and he fears contributing to a period of decline of humanity like some of his ancestors. In the midst of his dilemma, Tyler realizes that the mutants have discovered Juwain philosophy that was lost by Jerome Webster and created a kaleidoscope that allows the user to empathize with the perspective of others.[132] Tyler struggles against this news and determines to kill the witness to the paradise of Mars. However, he considers the great stride of humanity that "for one hundred twenty-five years no man had killed another"[133] and decides not to maintain the "jinx upon humanity"[134] of his family. Although Tyler struggles greatly with the same temptations as his ancestors, he ultimately continues the progression of mankind by sharing the Juwain philosophy.

The next two Websters in line are Jon and Tom Webster who appear in "Hobbies." Jon Webster is fascinated with history and has spent twenty years writing a book and creating maps about "the history of a single city."[135] He lives in an old-fashioned house with a painting of the ancestral Webster house hanging above his outdated fireplace.[136] Jon's estranged wife attempts to convince him to be placed in a preservative dream state with her. She informs him that their son, Tom, "just goes out in the woods and lives by himself. He and a few of his friends. A bag of salt, a bow and arrows…claims he's learning something. And he does look healthy. Like a wolf.

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[131] Ibid., 122.
[132] Ibid., 133.
[133] Ibid., 139.
[134] Ibid., 128.
[135] Ibid., 159.
[136] Ibid., 150.

Strong and lean and a look about his eyes."[137] Jon's deep ponderings about the downfall of human society due isolation, lack of social structure, and loss of culture are juxtaposed by his son's willing return to a more primitive state as a hobby. In visiting his family home, Jon realizes the extent of the downfall of humankind and hopes the dogs can build "a better civilization than we built ourselves…perhaps a more successful one. For ours was not successful."[138] Jon Webster supports the downfall of humanity on Earth by sealing most of the remaining humans in their nearly-empty city.[139] He does not fully relinquish a possible future for humanity; he instead joins his wife in a long-term preservation tank.[140] Although Jon contributes to a decline in humanity, his actions are placed in a positive light as an attempt to allow other, better forms of life to thrive on Earth.

To emphasize the recurrence of the cyclical progression and decline of humanity, Simak includes one final Webster, Peter, and a quick reappearance of Jon Webster. In "Aesop," Peter is one of the last humans on Earth. Peter, having lived only in the civilization dominated by dog philosophies and ways of life, is seemingly innocent from violence and killing. However, the dogs witness him kill a bird with a new contraption, a bow and arrow, and relay the news to the family robot Jenkins.[141] When Jenkins hears the news, he ponders:

> What is a bow and arrow? It is the beginning of the end. It is the winding path that grows to the roaring road of war. It is a plaything and a weapon and a triumph in human engineering. It is the first faint stirring of an atom bomb. It is a symbol of a way of life…. And it was a thing forgotten. And a thing relearned.[142]

Jenkins quickly realizes that the reinvention of the bow and arrow signifies a new beginning of humanity's tendency toward violence. In an attempt to preserve the innocence of the dog

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[137] Ibid., 156.
[138] Ibid., 177.
[139] Ibid., 178-179.
[140] Ibid., 180.
[141] Ibid., 190.
[142] Ibid., 201-202.

civilization as he promised the Websters, Jenkins decides to remove the last of the problematic humans from Earth by ferrying them to another dimension. Jenkins does not worry about the preservation of humanity on this new world, for "man has a way with him—a very vicious way. A way of dealing with anything that stands in his path."[143] This "vicious way" of humanity is highlighted once more in the last tale, "The Simple Way," when Jenkins wakes Jon Webster to inquire about humanity's method of keeping ants at bay. Ants, spurred by help from the mutants, have begun to take over the world. Jenkins is disappointed, however, to find that humans resorted to killing ants with poison. Unwilling to adopt the violence of man, Jenkins informs the dogs that there is no way to deal with ants. Although Jon was one of the most selfless Websters, he fails to overcome humanity's tendency toward violence in the end.

Although Miller offers a modicum of hope for the continuation of humanity in the preserved humans, the cycles in *City* reveal a deep disappointment with the tendencies of humans. Miller uses cycles of generations of the Webster family's successes and failings to reveal the wider cycles of progression and decline in human history. In the end, humanity cannot break out of its violent past, and power is granted to other species. *City* emphasizes the possible downfall of humanity if cycles of isolation and violence are continued. The ignorance of humanity in the innocent dogs of the novel and their apparent break from human cycles reveals the corruption of humanity. This corruption seems to run so deep that most hope for mankind is lost, and the race is preserved only in Doggish history and cryogenic tanks.

Cycles in *A Canticle for Leibowitz*

Walter M. Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz* contains the clearest interaction with social cycle theory of the three novels examined in this study. Scholarship on the cyclical nature of this fix-up

[143] Ibid., 219.

novel is also the most abundant. Scholars such as David Seed,[144] Rose Secrest,[145] William H. Roberson,[146] and Dominic Manganiello[147] have written extensively on Miller's application of history and non-linear human progression in *A Canticle for Leibowitz.* Secrest sums up the matter in her statement: "*A Canticle for Leibowitz* is the most outstanding representation of cycles Miller ever wrote."[148] Miller relates the three sections of his novel to historical time periods and uses symbols of cycles throughout the book to emphasize the cyclical nature of human progression.

In his work on cultural cycles in *A Canticle for Leibowitz,* SF scholar David Seed points out that Miller "establishes a whole series of resemblances in his novel in order to describe how the history of the West evolves in cycles."[149] These "resemblances" are the reflections of historical time periods in the three sections of Miller's novel. The fact that Miller intentionally related each section of his novel to an age of humanity is widely accepted among scholars. The first section of *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, "Fiat Homo," resembles the Dark or Middle Ages. The next section, "Fiat Lux," reflects the Renaissance or Enlightenment. Some scholars believe this section also more specifically nods to the Protestant Reformation of England.[150] The last section, "Fiat Voluntas Tua," most closely reflects Miller's own historical setting: the Cold War. The historical reflections in each section of *A Canticle for Leibowitz* reveal Miller's development of social cycles theory in the novel.

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[144]David Seed, *Under the Shadow: The Atomic Bomb and Cold War Narratives* (Ashland, United States: The Kent State University Press, 2013), http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/vt/detail.action?docID=3120201.
[145]Rose Secrest, *Glorificemus : A Study of the Fiction of Walter M. Miller, Jr.* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2002), http://archive.org/details/glorificemusstud0000secr.
[146] William H. Roberson, *Walter M. Miller, Jr: A Reference Guide to His Fiction and His Life* (Jefferson, United States: McFarland & Company, Incorporated Publishers, 2011), http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/vt/detail.action?docID=728426.
[147] Dominic Manganiello, "History as Judgment and Promise in 'A Canticle for Leibowitz' (L'histoire: Jugement et Promesse Dans 'Un Cantique Pour Leibowitz')," *Science Fiction Studies* 13, no. 2 (1986): 159–69.
[148] Secrest, *Glorificemus,* 48.
[149] Seed, *Under the Shadow,* 95.
[150] Roberson, *Walter M. Miller, Jr.,* 74.

Miller creates the expectation of social cycles in the first section of *A Canticle for Leibowitz*: "Fiat Homo." The title "Fiat Homo" translates from Latin to "let there be man," a reflection of the similar biblical declaration by God in Genesis.[151] Like Genesis, "Fiat Homo" follows a new beginning of humanity. In Miller's work, however, this beginning takes place after a nuclear war has destroyed the majority of civilization.[152] In the novel, God tested mankind, "which had become swelled with pride as in the time of Noah" by commanding "the wise men of that age…to devise great engines of war…[and] to place the weapons in the hands of princes."[153] The resulting war was called the "Flame Deluge." William H. Roberson points out that "Miller's use of deluge is suggestive of the Old Testament Deluge, or The Flood, of Genesis 7:4."[154] Roberson's observation is supported by Miller's reference to Noah, a biblical figure who was spared from The Flood.[155] The allusions to the creation and flood stories of Genesis in "Fiat Homo" begin to characterize the section as a repetition of biblical history. Roberson goes on to state that "traditionally, a deluge represents the last stage of a cycle."[156] In *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, the Flame Deluge indicates the end of the age of humanity that came before the novel. The Flame Deluge's chronological place at the beginning of the novel, however, reveals that this war led to the beginning of the next age: a repetition of the Dark Ages.

David Seed suggests that *A Canticle for Leibowitz* presents "the aftermath of nuclear war as a rerun of the Dark Ages and…traces out a historical sequence through its three books until the novel ends at a point where nuclear war breaks out again."[157] The reflection of the Dark Ages in the novel is the entirety of its first section, "Fiat Homo." "Fiat Homo" follows Brother

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[151] Bible, King James. King James Bible. Vol. 19. Proquest LLC, 1996, 1:14.
[152] Miller, *A Canticle for Leibowitz,* 61-62.
[153] Ibid., 61
[154] Roberson, *Walter M. Miller, Jr.,* 65.
[155] Gen. 7:1-7.
[156] Roberson, *Walter M. Miller, Jr.,* 65.
[157] Seed, *Under the Shadow,* 95.

Francis, a young novice of the "Albertain Order of Leibowitz." The Catholic Order of Leibowitz is dedicated to preserving the remnants of human history spared from the "Age of Simplification," the period after the Flame Deluge when writings of every kind, "even sacred writings had curled, blackened, and withered into smoke while ignorant mobs howled and hailed it a triumph."[158] The monks peacefully protest the encouragement of ignorance through their archives. Brother Francis, who discovers relics of the order's uncanonized founding monk, Isaac Edwards Leibowitz, dedicates his life to the preservation of Leibowitz's documents.[159] Although the Order of Leibowitz is committed to knowledge, the realities of "Fiat Homo" reveal the setting of "a new Dark Age."[160]

To David Seed, the fact of "Fiat Homo" occurring during a Dark Age is largely revealed through Miller's "plays on the figural opposition between light and dark to articulate the limits of human understanding."[161] He points out that the document Brother Francis finds "signed by one I. E. Leibowitz, becomes incorporated into the abbey's archive by being copied and "illuminated—[a] pun, since no light is shed on the meaning of the document itself."[162] Seed goes on to explain that:

> Light, therefore, in this section of the novel, suggests the possibility of cultural change and carries retrospective postlapsarian ironies of loss. The historical inset explains that the present age is an 'inheritance of darkness' where humans are caught in a limbo between dusk and dawn.[163]

Seed's theory that the search for light signifies the current Dark Age in the novel can be strengthened with one key aspect of the monk's lives: their lack of practical reading light. The lack of electricity in "Fiat Homo" means that the monks who copy documents in the archives

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[158] Ibid., 26
[159] Miller, *A Canticle for Leibowitz,* 19.
[160] Seed, *Under the Shadow,* 96.
[161] Ibid.,101
[162] Ibid., 97
[163] Ibid., 101

read by candle light. One monk, who has been working on copying a set of documents for forty years, is described as "half-blind now from reading by dim light."[164] The lack of technology, specifically the ignorance of the technology that was once available to humanity, reveals the darkness shed over knowledge in this age.

The second section of *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, "Fiat Lux," occurs six hundred years after the first. Seed argues that, in this section, "the analogy between the novel's present and the Dark Ages establishes an expectation of cultural change, a new Renaissance."[165] Roberson agrees that, in Book II, "mankind is emerging from the Dark Ages onto the cusp of a Renaissance."[166] In her summary of the section, Secrest adds the more specific label "Scientific Revolution"[167] to her agreement that "Fiat Lux" resembles the Renaissance. Roberson concurs that "the period of 'Fiat Lux' is the beginning of a period of scientific and cultural renewal after the Dark Ages of 'Fiat Homo.'"[168] The best example of the revival of knowledge and scientific progress in this section is the creation of electric light. This advancement is alluded to in the Latin title of the section which translates to "let there be light."

"Fiat Lux" follows a new batch of monks in the Order of Leibowitz as they accommodate Thon Taddeo, a secular scholar and scientist using their archives for his studies. Taddeo is the cousin of Hannegan II, the ruler of Texarkana who intends to wage war against his surrounding tribes and kingdoms. Against the backdrop of this political turmoil, Taddeo studies and lives among the monks, frequently discussing science and faith with them.[169] During Taddeo's stay, one monk/inventor, Brother Kornhoer, completes his "dynamo," a reinvention of the electric

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[164] Miller, *A Canticle for Leibowitz,* 123.
[165] Seed, *Under the Shadow,* 101.
[166] Roberson, *Walter M. Miller, Jr.,* 34.
[167] Secrest, *Glorificemus,* 49.
[168] Roberson, *Walter M. Miller, Jr.,* 144.
[169] Miller, *A Canticle for Leibowitz,* 310.

lamp.[170] The theme of scientific reasoning conflicting with religious morality permeates this section as the monks replace a crucifix with this new invention before eventually removing it.[171] Thon Taddeo also argues with a poet who "[mocks him] for his arrogance…[and] offers him his glass eye, a convenient instrument of a removable conscience."[172] At the end of "Fiat Lux," Hannegan II makes advances into his surrounding territories and declares himself "the only legitimate ruler over the Church in this realm."[173] The section comes to an end with the continuation of war and the violent death of the poet.

"Fiat Lux" most closely resembles the ages of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment in the insistence of Thon Taddeo and certain monks on the progression of human knowledge and technology. While the monks in "Fiat Homo" were content to preserve knowledge, the figures in "Fiat Lux" intend to add to it. Brother Kornhoer is successful in his invention of the electric lamp, which fixes the issue of a lack of light in "Fiat Homo." In this section, the monks have become literally "enlightened." Scholars such as David Seed and William Roberson have also pointed out references to the English Reformation in the similarities to Hanegan II and King Henry VIII of England. Seed suggests that when Hannegan II "proclaims himself supreme head of the state, taking on the title of 'defender of the faith,' [it is an] echo of Henry VIII."[174] Roberson specifies that when Hannegan II "declares the pope to be a heretic and unworthy to be recognized by any church in Hannegan's empire… his act parallels The Act of Supremacy of 1534 that appointed Henry VIII as the protector and only supreme leader of the church and clergy of England."[175] Based on the details of scientific progression and a representation of the English Reformation, "Fiat Lux" is based on a repetition of the age from the Renaissance to the

[170] Ibid., 145.
[171] Ibid., 430.
[172] Roberson, *Walter M. Miller, Jr.,* 35.
[173] Miller, *A Canticle for Leibowitz,* 227.
[174] Seed, *Under the Shadow,* 109.
[175] Roberson, *Walter M. Miller, Jr.,* 74.

Enlightenment.

The last section in *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, "Fiat Voluntas Tua," is a representation of the modern age. Miller begins this section with an explanation of humanity's desire to travel in space:

> It was inevitable, it was manifest destiny, they felt (and not for the first time) that such a race go forth to conquer stars. To conquer them several times, if need be, and certainly to make speeches about the conquest. But, too, it was inevitable that the race succumb again to the old maladies on new worlds, even as on Earth before…[176]

In this introduction, Miller inserts the language of repetition through words like "again" and "before" and phrases such as "not for the first time," "several times," and "old maladies on new worlds." "Fiat Voluntas Tua" emphasizes the cyclical nature of humanity through an engagement with repetition. In this section, humanity has once again gained nuclear power. The monks of Leibowitz now have to contend with ethical issues such as the treatment of the "misborns," or humans born with radiation mutations. In this section, the abbot Dom Zerchi protests against euthanasia for radiation sickness before he, too, falls victim to an atom bomb. Before he dies, Dom Zerchi receives communion from a two-headed misborn. In the end, some monks escape Earth on rockets as large-scale atomic war breaks out.[177]

"Fiat Voluntas Tua" is the last stage in the cycle of *A Canticle for Leibowitz.* Miller reveals that the entirety of the story is a cycle by beginning and ending the book with the effects of atomic war. Just as humanity reached the brink of destruction in the Flame Deluge before "Fiat Homo," humanity has once again succumbed to its violent nature through the use of atom bombs. The ending of *A Canticle for Leibowitz* is ambiguous on the hope of sentient beings. Miller leaves only a slight hope for humanity on Earth with the monks who escape on rockets.

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[176] Miller, *A Canticle for Leibowitz,* 244.
[177] Ibid.*,* 621.

As they take off, one monk announces "sic transit mundus,"[178] or "thus does the world pass away."[179] Whether or not humanity will return to Earth is left unanswered. The spark of hope for sentient beings on Earth comes instead in the form of the misborn who provides Zerchi with the Eucharist. Zerchi realizes that the two-headed being is a "creature of primal innocence… [and] God gave to it the preternatural gifts of Eden– those gifts which Man had been trying to seize by brute force again from Heaven since first he lost them. [Zerchi] had seen primal innocence in those eyes, and a promise of resurrection."[180] The cycle of humanity on Earth may have come to an end after multiple repetitions, and the misborns are now free to begin a new cycle.

In addition to the references to historical ages in *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, Miller provides symbols of cycles in the deaths of major characters and the repetition of references to predatory animals. In the beginning of "Fiat Homo," both wolves and buzzards are mentioned as desert animals that target the starving Brother Francis.[181] These animals offer symbols of cycles as they both hunt by circling their prey. Their repetitive circles around Brother Francis offer a hint toward the larger cycles of the novel. At the end of section, Brother Francis is killed by misborns. Miller ends the chapter with the continued life cycle of the buzzards, who "laid their eggs in season and lovingly fed their young."[182] Although the life of one human ends, the cycles of nature and life continue. The end of "Fiat Lux" is a repetition of "Fiat Homo": the Poet from this section dies and "as always the black scavengers of the skies laid their eggs in season and lovingly fed their young."[183] The direct repetition of a major character's death and the language of the continued life cycle of the buzzards is a clear continuation of the cycles of the novel. As the novel ends with Abbott Zerchi's death, Miller leans into the ambiguity of the continuation of

[178] Ibid., 333.
[179] Roberson, *Walter M. Miller, Jr.,* 161.
[180] Miller, *A Canticle for Leibowitz,* 332.
[181] Ibid.,, 25.
[182] Ibid., 116.
[183] Ibid., 238-239.

the cycles of humanity through a different symbolic animal cycle. After the last humans leave Earth, "there were shrimp carousing in the breakers, and the whiting that fed on the shrimp, and the shark that munched the whiting…The shark swam out to his deepest waters and brooded in the old clean currents."[184] Miller emphasizes not only the natural cycle of life in this ending, but also the symbol of the shark. Sharks, one of the oldest fish, circle their prey similarly to buzzards and wolves. Miller highlights a return to earlier cycles as the shark engages in a simple cycle of life and returns to "old" currents. By connecting each section with human death and cycles of predatory animals, Miller highlights the theme of cycles throughout the novel.

Miller engages with social cycle theory through references to historical ages of humanity and the repetition of words, predatory animal symbols, and major character deaths in *A Canticle for Leibowitz*. Although the future for humanity is uncertain by the end of the novel, it is clear that the cycles of the past ages have been broken. This shift is mainly due to humanity's recovery of the ability to produce atomic weapons. The novel begins with a great destruction by atom bombs and ends with an even more dire atomic extermination of humans. Miller clearly separates the cycles of humanity and nature through the persistence of animals after each stage of humanity ends. Despite their different endings, the cyclical tendencies of both humanity and nature in *A Canticle for Leibowitz* are highlighted throughout the novel.

The Past, Present, and Future

The fix-up novels *The Martian Chronicles*, *City,* and *A Canticle for Leibowitz* demonstrate the cultural influence of social cycle theory on the science fiction imagination. Walter M. Miller, Ray Bradbury, and Clifford D. Simak all craft visions of humanity's future that are shaped by the recurrent patterns of rise and fall, progress and decline, that characterize

[184] Ibid., 334.

cyclical models of history. While each author deploys social cycle theory to different ends, their works are united by a pessimism about humanity's capacity to break free from the self-destructive tendencies that have defined its past. The atomic wars that bookend *A Canticle for Leibowitz,* the violence and environmental destruction in *The Martian Chronicles*, and the dehumanizing effects of the technological progress in *City* suggest that the cycles of human civilization will end in catastrophe.

However, even as they grapple with the implications of social cycle theory these authors also hold out the possibility of hope and renewal. In the mutated misborns of *A Canticle for Leibowitz,* the resilient family of *The Martian Chronicles*, and the emergent civilization of intelligent dogs in *City*, readers catch glimpses of new forms of life and consciousness that may or may not transcend the limitations of the human cycle. These speculations on future societies reveal the authors' desires for the freedom and innocence they associate with breaking free from current patterns of human nature. Ultimately, by engaging so deeply with social cycle theory, Miller, Bradbury, and Simak not only reflect the anxieties and preoccupations of their Cold War context, as I explore in the next chapter, but also contribute to a long tradition of cyclical thinking that stretches back to the frameworks of ancient civilizations. Through their examinations of the patterns they have seen extend through generations, these authors consider the past in conjunction with their Cold War setting and the possibilities of the future.

Chapter 3: The Cold War Setting

In October 1945, two months after the United States used atom bombs against Japan and ended World War II, English novelist George Orwell published a newspaper article entitled "You and the Atom Bomb." In this piece, Orwell muses on the effects of the new bomb technology and the possibility of "a state which [is] at once unconquerable and in a permanent state of 'cold war' with its neighbors."[185] The term "cold war" was later applied to the period of tension, exacerbated by the existence of atomic weapons, between the United States and the Soviet Union ranging from around 1945–1990. The exact start date of the Cold War is difficult to pinpoint because of the lack of physical conflict between these entities, which inspired the descriptor "cold." In *The Cold War: A New History,* John Lewis Gaddis places the origins of the Cold War soon after World War II, though "because the Anglo-American relationship with the Soviet Union had fallen into [a] pattern [of distrust] well before World War II ended, it is difficult to say precisely when the Cold War began."[186] Others, however, believe that the conflict began in 1947 with the United States' adoption of the Truman Doctrine, the "policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure" which "amounted to a declaration of ideological Cold War along with a declaration of geopolitical Cold War."[187] Similarly, some believe that the Cold War ended with the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989,[188] while others believe that "the year 1990, rather than 1989, truly marked the end of the Cold War" with the Soviet acceptance of "a united Germany in NATO."[189] Despite contention surrounding the exact dates that mark the beginning and end of the period, the four

[185] O. Dag, "George Orwell: You and the Atomic Bomb," https://orwell.ru/library/articles/ABomb/english/e_abomb., Tribune.
[186] John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), 27.
[187] Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War: A Very Short Introduction.* Second edition. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2021. https://www.overdrive.com/search?q=A7D1CD8F-ABC5-4C79-801B-A406010AA4CF, 29.
[188] Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (Univ of Massachusetts Press, 2007).
[189] McMahon, *The Cold War,* 163.

decades of ideological conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union had a clear and lasting impact on the cultural milieu of the United States.

In explaining the difficulties of providing a comprehensive history of the Cold War, Gaddis states that it "was fought at different levels in dissimilar ways in multiple places over a very long time. Any attempt to reduce its history exclusively to the role of great forces, great powers, or great leaders would fail to do it justice."[190] The Cold War as a historical period is a long and complicated story. As a background for the works of SF authors Ray Bradbury, Clifford D. Simak, and Walter M. Miller Jr., however, the impacts of the Cold War on American culture can be studied through two main cultural contemplations: insecurity over ideological instability and the threat of annihilation. These two considerations reveal a link between the American Cold War cultural imaginary and the instincts of American SF authors to interact with social cycle theory in their works.

Insecurity over Ideological Instability

The United States and the Soviet Union embraced two vastly different political ideologies in capitalism and communism respectively. During World War II, however, these two countries acted as allies against the threat of the Axis powers. Historian John Lewis Gaddis quotes Joseph Stalin, the head of the Soviet Union until 1953, as stating that "the alliance between ourselves and the democratic faction of the capitalists succeeds because the latter had an interest in preventing Hitler's domination…[i]n the future we shall be against this faction of the capitalists as well."[191] This ideological conflict between capitalism and communism was at the heart of the Cold War. Despite such differences in ideology, however, the United States and the Soviet Union

[190] Gaddis, *The Cold War,* xi.
[191] Ibid., 12.

shared some interesting similarities. Gaddis lists some similarities in both countries having been "born in revolution," embracing "ideologies with global aspirations," having "advanced across vast frontiers" as two of the largest countries during the Cold War, and having entered World War II "as the result of surprise attack."[192] Perhaps the most meaningful of these similarities, however, were the intentions of both the United States and the Soviet Union to shape global ideologies during the Cold War.

The Cold War revealed that the World War II alliance of the United States and the Soviet Union "had been, from the start, both a means of cooperating to defeat the Axis and an instrument through which each of the victors sought to position itself for maximum influence in the postwar world."[193] Neither country, it seemed, was ready "to accept a postwar world that resembled its prewar predecessor."[194] The opposing sides approached their attempts to impart their ideologies on a global scale with vastly different motivations, attitudes, and strategies. However, the Cold War revealed an underlying belief in both the East and West that global ideologies could and should be influenced long-term in favor of the victors' ideals. Despite the fact that "history…offers numerous examples of great powers following the path of compromise and cooperation, opting to act in concert so as to establish a mutually acceptable international order capable of satisfying the most fundamental interests of each," the deep desire for global influence of ideology on both sides of the Cold War rendered such a path unattainable.[195]

The belief in the benefits of influencing ideology globally was not native to the United States. Before World War I, there was an American attitude that "the United States would serve as an example; the rest of the world would have to decide how and under what circumstances to

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[192] Ibid., 7.
[193] Ibid., 18.
[194] Ibid., 17.
[195] McMahon, *The Cold War,* 4.

embrace it."[196] As a result, "American practices were isolationist: the nation had not yet concluded that its security required transplanting its principles" and "its foreign and military policy" was surprisingly unambitious.[197] Even after diverging from this isolationist mindset during World War I, most Americans remained unconvinced of the benefits of global influence. Instead, the postwar conditions abroad "had the effect of convincing Americans that they would be better off avoiding international involvements altogether."[198] This attitude continued even through the beginning of World War II. The United States did not fully enter World War II until Japan's direct attack on Pearl Harbor two years after the start of the war.[199] However initially reluctant the United States was to enter another international conflict, the Pearl Harbor attack fundamentally shifted its perspective on isolationism and global influence.

American historian Robert J. McMahon posits that "the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor decisively shattered the illusion of invulnerability that Americans had enjoyed ever since the end of the Napoleonic Wars of the early 19th century."[200] In addition to prompting the United States to enter World War II, McMahon traces this attack to the origin of "the obsession with national security that became so central a motif of U.S. foreign and defense policy throughout the Cold War era."[201] The realization that geographical distance no longer afforded the United States security resulted in American insecurity over a lack of global influence and military strength.[202] After World War II, the United States' fear that "the Soviet Union's internally driven hostility toward the outside world"[203] would result in the expansion of Russia and the global pervasion of communist influence was "intensified by the memory of…doomed efforts to shape a new world

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[196] Gaddis, *The Cold War,* 15.
[197] Ibid., 16.
[198] Ibid.
[199] McMahon, *The Cold War,* 7.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid.
[202] Ibid.
[203] Gaddis, *The Cold War,* 31.

order after World War I."[204] This newfound physical and ideological vulnerability led to self-conscious new policies and ideological panic in the United States.

During the Cold War, the United States strategically reacted to the fear of a lack of ideological control abroad. Toward the beginning of the period, the prevailing position was that, instead of outright war, a "long-term, patient but firm and vigilant *containment* of Russian expansive tendencies" would be sufficient to keep communism at bay.[205] Later, U.S. President Truman advanced this policy of containment to include "a program of military and economic assistance" to allow "free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way."[206] This initiative, known as the Truman Doctrine, was backed up by The Marshall Plan, a program intended to aid European recovery from World War II damage while simultaneously "seiz[ing] both the geopolitical and the moral initiative in the emerging Cold War."[207] These strategic attempts to influence accepted ideologies abroad, however, contrasted with the tumultuous reaction to the fear of communism within the United States. This fear resulted in a phenomenon generally referred to as McCarthyism after Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy who "launched his sensational crusade against the presumed hordes of communists who, he charged, resided within the halls of the US government itself."[208] McCarthyism was an aspect of a wider phenomenon known as a "Red Scare," a "time when enduring suspicions of Communists and those either sympathetic to them or insufficiently antipathetic to them flared into wide spread accusations of disloyalty accompanied by a narrowed definition of acceptable dissent along with social punishment for those who went outside the boundaries."[209] Initiatives like the Truman

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[204] Richard M. Freeland, *The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism : Foreign Policy, Domestic Politics, and Internal Security, 1946-1948* (New York: New York University Press, 1985), http://archive.org/details/trumandoctrineor0000free, 15.
[205] Gaddis, *The Cold War,* 29.
[206] Ibid.*,* 31.
[207] Ibid.*,* 32.
[208] McMahon, *The Cold War,* 116.
[209] Jonathan Michaels, "The Origins of Red Scare Anti-Communism," in *McCarthyism* (Routledge, 2017), 35.

Doctrine and The Marshall Plan in conjunction with the social phenomena of the Red Scare reveal an insecurity of the stability of American ideology in the United States and abroad.

The Soviet Union also subscribed to the idea that American ideology was fragile within the U.S. and globally, though this belief had a different origin and response. The Marxist-Leninist theories that informed Soviet leader Joseph Stalin's communist government instilled a deep confidence in the eventual downfall of capitalism and rise of communist ideology worldwide. Stalin believed in "the inevitability of wars between capitalist countries" which would mean "he could simply wait for the capitalists to begin quarreling with one another, and for the disgusted Europeans to embrace communism as an alternative."[210] Stalin's successor, Nikita Khrushchev, perpetuated trust in the idea of "the historically determined victory of communism over capitalism."[211] His confidence was supported by the theory that, through adherence to communist ideologies, the Soviet Union's "housing shortage would disappear, consumer goods would be abundant, and its population would be 'materially provided for.'"[212] Belief in the eventual success of communism convinced Soviet leaders that Marxist-Leninist governments within the Soviet Union's spheres of influence would persuade European countries "to choose leaders who would eventually unify the entire country under Soviet control."[213] Deep confidence in communism and doubt of capitalism led leaders of the Soviet Union to view the security of communist ideology throughout Europe as inevitable.

American attempts to prevent the global and internal spread of communism along with Soviet confidence in its ideology showed that, worldwide, the "idea of a crisis within capitalism did have some plausibility.[214] Although a relatively new idea for the United States to reckon with

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[210] Gaddis, *The Cold War,* 14.
[211] Ibid., 84.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid., 22.
[214] Ibid., 12.

during the Cold War, the instability of governmental ideologies has been a historical trend. Gaddis suggests that the ideological rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union was hardly unexpected, as "great power rivalries had long been at least as normal a pattern in the behavior of nations as had great power alliances."[215] Combating the historical trend of rises and falls in governmental ideologies was different, however, than simply acknowledging it. When confronted with the possibility of being overtaken by another powerful ideology, the United States reacted with insecurity in its lack of global and internal control.

The Martian Chronicles

In his fix-up novel *The Martian Chronicles,* Ray Bradbury interacts with the main cultural considerations of America during the Cold War. The first of these considerations, insecurity over ideological instability, is closely tied to the cyclical theory of society that can also be perceived in this work. In examining the instability of American ideologies, Bradbury weighs the worthiness of American culture to continue its cycles of repetition. He does this by closely examining the characteristics of the American culture that is transplanted on Mars in the novel. There is an implication in *The Martian Chronicles* that not only may American ideology and culture be fleeting, it may also be undeserving of continuation. Bradbury exhibits pessimism about Cold War American culture and ideology in *The Martian Chronicles* through an examination of capitalism and censorship in his stories.

Bradbury most clearly engages with the Cold War consideration of ideological instability in his chapter "The Off Season." Viewed through the lens of the American Cold War imaginary, "The Off Season" is a story of capitalism, isolationism, and ignorance of the past leading to the fall of humanity. In this story, a man named Sam Parkhill opens a hot dog stand on Mars. In the

[215] Ibid., 26.

creation of his "garish" stand, Sam "[swept] away the blue Martian sand" and "had broken the glass from some old Martian buildings in the hills" for a footpath.[216] These simple actions reveal Sam's deep irreverence for the Martian land and history. While Sam considers how he will "make thousands" on "one hundred thousand hungry people," he is approached by the last of the Martians.[217] Mistaking their presence for a threat, Sam kills one Martian and retreats from the rest. Sam tells the Martians that "you wander around in the hills, no leaders, no laws, and now you come tell me about this land. Well, the old got to give way to the new. That's the law of give and take."[218] The Martians counter, however, that the ship Sam uses is "as old as our world. It sailed the seas ten thousand years ago…and you came and took it, stole it."[219] Once Sam is forced to listen to the Martians, they grant him official ownership over his plot of land and warn him about the upcoming atomic war on Earth. Sam's rejoicing over his new business and land acquisition is quickly interrupted by the explosion of Earth into atomic war.[220]

Sam continually ignores the past through his treatment of the Martian land and inhabitants. His stance could be viewed as isolationist as he attempts to separate himself from these Martians through violence and retreat despite their willingness to help him. Although Sam advances his goals through Martian technology, he fails to recognize that his "new" ideas and progressions are as vulnerable to destruction as the Martian's society. This story also reveals some flaws of capitalism. Sam, whose main concerns are personal profit and expansion, dramatically celebrates his business luck. His capitalist interests, however, blind him to the fact that the rest of humanity is suffering. At the end of the chapter, Sam's wife points out this oversight as she informs him that "there'll be another batch of customers along in about a million

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[216] Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles,* 203.
[217] Ibid., 202, 203.
[218] Ibid., 204.
[219] Ibid., 208.
[220] Ibid., 216.

years."[221] She even mocks his business aspirations as he did pick "a swell spot for a hot dog stand…[but] this looks like it's going to be an off season." "The Off Season" condemns ignorance of the past, isolationist tendencies, and the selfishness of capitalism. Sam's moral failings seem to mirror those of America which, in the novel, becomes embroiled in atomic war. Through a Cold War cultural lens, Bradbury engages with the insecurity of the stability and worthiness of American ideology in this story.

Ray Bradbury also specifically calls out America's self-conscious Cold War fears in "Usher II." In this chapter of *The Martian Chronicles,* William Stendhal has escaped to Mars to avoid the intensifying censorship on Earth. Stendhal recounts the conditions of America that persuaded him to leave, stating that the country had become "afraid of the word 'politics' (which again became a synonym for Communism among the more reactionary elements, so I hear, and it was worth your life to use the word!)."[222] This fear of politics and communism results in mass censorship of literature, movies, and other forms of art. Stendhal states that those in power believe "every man…must face reality. Must face the Here and Now! Everything that was *not so* must go."[223] This emphasis on the present excludes the enjoyment and study of not only art, but also history. In the story, an investigator of "moral climate" follows Stendhal to Mars to make "things as neat and tidy as Earth."[224] Stendhal explains that "the rough men had come up and buried the Martians…and made everything safe. And then, with everything well on its way to Safety…[they] came now to set up their Moral Climates and dole out goodness to everyone."[225] The goal of the moral climate enforcers is to not only recreate the censored conditions on Earth, but also to conceal the evidence of the past civilization of Mars. In "Usher II," Bradbury

[221] Ibid., 217.
[222] Ibid., 164.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Ibid., 166.
[225] Ibid., 173.

emphasizes the connection between ignorance of the past and a push for ideological stability through the idea of sanitizing history and art. The moral climate agents believe that censoring the past as well as the present is the key to forcing citizens to accept their ideology. Bradbury ties censorship and ignorance of the past together with a mention of the fear of communism in "Usher II" to reveal the story's connection to his own American Cold War setting.

City

Clifford D. Simak's novel *City* was heavily impacted by the Cold War consideration of human instability. In *City,* the retconned notes by dog scholars allowed Simak to reflect on his own previously published short stories. Fictionally, however, the notes provide the scholarly perspective of the intelligent dog characters on the tales included in the novel. This move allowed Simak to emphasize the themes of *City* by explaining them through the dogs' perspectives. Simak highlights the instability of the human race as one important theme of *City.* This instability is underscored by the human flaws of social isolation and a lack of empathy.

In the notes of *City,* the dog scholars explain that the tales show how "the breakdown of the human race continues, with Man assaulted by a sense of guilt and plagued by the instability which results in the human mutants."[226] The dogs explain that "there is no word concerning the need of a certain static factor in society to ensure stability" in the tales of humans, and "throughout the legend it becomes abundantly clear that the human race placed little value upon stability."[227] The dogs in the third note of *City* connect instability with the creation of mutant humans. *City* offers no explicit details on the cause of the mutations in these humans, but their mutation seems to have resulted in heightened intelligence and a lack of social hindrances. These

[226] Simak, *City,* 63.
[227] Ibid., 64.

mutants, therefore, are brilliant yet usually unwilling to aid regular humans without personal gain. This connection between instability and the mutants reveals that the main human characteristic that leads to instability is selfishness.The “lack of stability” of the human race is later connected to “it's preoccupation with a mechanical civilization rather than with a culture based on some of the sounder, more worthwhile concepts of life [which] indicates a lack of basic character.”[228] Through these notes, Simak explicitly points out the lack of a stable core of human ideology that would ensure its preservation. In the fifth note, and throughout *City,* the core characteristic missing from humanity is specified as “man's inability to understand and appreciate the thought and the viewpoint of another man.”[229] The instability that leads to the downfall of humanity, therefore, is rooted in isolation from others and a lack of empathy.

Clifford D. Simak seems to have explicitly referred to the Cold War instability of his own setting through the instability of human society in *City.* Simak attributes this lack of stability to isolation from others caused by a deficit of empathy. The instability of mankind in *City* leads to the downfall of human civilization and the inheritance of society by the dogs who embrace empathy and community.

A Canticle for Leibowitz

In *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, Walter M. Miller mainly draws inspiration from the aspect of censorship that the Cold War fear of ideological instability fueled in the United States. The novel spans a period of around 1,800 years, and the secular ideology of the setting shifts over time. The Catholic church, however, provides a stable set of beliefs and rules for its monks. Despite the different settings and time periods, characters throughout the book continually encounter

[228] Ibid., 113.
[229] Ibid.

censorship that reflects the American reaction to the fear of ideological instability during the Cold War.

A Canticle for Leibowitz begins in a world of strict censorship. After the first atomic war, the "Flame Deluge," was the "Age of Simplification."[230] The Simplification was a period of time in which mobs retaliated against "rulers, scientists, leaders, technicians, [and] teachers" for their part in "having helped to make the Earth what it had become."[231] These angry mobs intended to burn and destroy any human history, intending to "teach our children that the world is new, that they may know nothing of the deeds that went before."[232] The Simplification reflects the Cold War desire for a shift in ideology. In the novel, this shift comes about violently with an aim of censorship of history. The Albertian Order of Leibowitz is the counter to this shift, as the monks attempt to preserve and learn from as much human history as possible. These monks are a symbol of stability, as their Catholic beliefs do not change throughout the ages. Through censorship and violence, the "simpletons" hope to repress the knowledge of the history that almost led to the destruction of the world. However, without the acknowledgement of the past, the instability of human nature will lead to a repetition of atomic war.

Although the Order of Leibowitz offers a positive view of stability in their willingness to maintain human records, they also provide an example of censorship in reaction to the fear of ideological change. When Brother Francis finds relics of St. Leibowitz and a pilgrim in the desert, his abbot orders him "not to discuss them, and preferably to think of the matters as little as possible."[233] In addition, "as a topic of conversation, the pilgrim remained forbidden subject matter in the abbey."[234] The abbot fears any disturbance to the abbey's system of thought that he

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[230] Miller, *A Canticle for Leibowitz,* 22.
[231] Ibid., 62.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Ibid., 61.
[234] Ibid., 60.

punishes and threatens Francis verbally and physically. Even the power intending ideological stability enacts censorship and threats to this end.

The last consideration of the reaction to instability in *A Canticle for Leibowitz* occurs in the censorship of news about atomic war. After an illicit test of a new atomic weapon, a defense minister skirts questions and attempts to placate a reporter through vague reassurances. The abbot, however, believes that:

> The government must know….And yet we hear nothing. We are being protected from hysteria. Isn't that what they call it? Maniacs! The world's been in a habitual state of crisis for fifty years. Fifty? What am I saying? It's been in a habitual state of crisis since the beginning– but for half a century now, almost unbearable. And why, for the love of God? What is the fundamental irritant, the essence of the tension? Political philosophies? Economics? Population pressure? Disparity of culture and creed? Ask a dozen experts, get a dozen answers.[235]

The government's efforts to censor the truth about the world simply confuse attempts to reach the root of the issue. Miller lists several Cold War considerations as possible reasons for the state of crisis in the world. However, he also acknowledges that the world has always existed in crisis, and that the issues he refers to are not new. The censorship of the issues in the news, however, reflects the Cold War consideration of censorship over ideological issues.

Walter M. Miller explores the issue of censorship as a reaction to ideological instability in *A Canticle for Leibowitz* by showing censorship on all sides of the issue. This reaction reflects Miller's setting of the Cold War United States. Fears of the Cold War advancing because of differing ideologies led to censorship of free expression. Miller not only reproduces this setting in his novel, he also comments on it. In *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, the censorship of history and news leads directly to a repetition of the atomic war from the beginning of the novel. Miller warns against the continuation of dangerous social cycles because of the desire to ignore the past, possible ideological shifts in the present, and the dangers of the future.

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[235] Ibid., 259.

Threat of Annihilation

At the end of World War II, the United States caused mass destruction and devastation with the use of two of their newly developed atom bombs against Japan. The creation of the atom bomb during the war sparked a marked contention between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Despite acting as allies in World War II, the United States maintained secrecy around the Manhattan Project, the program which produced the atom bomb. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, "mounted a major operation to spy on [their] allies in the middle of a war…they were waging together."[236] By 1952, the U.S. had developed and tested an even more powerful H-bomb.[237] Although the Soviet Union lagged behind in the development of nuclear weapons, the scope of possible destruction greatly impacted the global milieu of the Cold War.[238] One of the greatest global fears of the Cold War was that "with atomic bombs likely to be used, any new war would be apocalyptic."[239]

There is an element of historical repetition in the Cold War component of an arms race, as "arms races have characterized international rivalries throughout recorded history."[240] The "availability of weapons capable of wreaking unparalleled destruction," however, leant a new aspect of possible global destruction to the Cold War tension. This tension actually "kept war from breaking out" with the threat of the "equality of annihilation" and the adoption of the strategy of "Mutually Assured Destruction"(MAD).[241] MAD was a concept born out of the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 that theorized that, in the event of nuclear war, both powers of the Cold War should target each other's major cities for "the maximum number of casualties

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[236] Gaddis, *The Cold War,* 25.
[237] McMahon, *The Cold War,* 74.
[238] Ibid.
[239] Gaddis, *The Cold War,* 1.
[240] McMahon, *The Cold War,* 76.
[241] Gaddis, *The Cold War,* 80.

possible."[242] The idea "that if no one could be sure of surviving a nuclear war, there would not be one" does seem monumental in having kept the Cold War tensions from escalating into physical conflicts.[243] However, the threat of annihilation caused deep anxiety throughout the United States.

In his 1948 article "In the Name of Sanity," Lewis Mumford states that "the story of the atom bomb [has] a Sunday-school tagged at the end of it."[244] Just three years after the use of this weapon, Mumford connects its creation to "pride that begot blindness and infinite power that became impotence."[245] The main reason that Mumford applies a view of moral failing to the atom bomb is its ability to cause destruction on a unique scale. He acknowledges that World War II was a turning point in human civilization, as "in the course of fighting it the ancient art of warfare gave way to the increasing practice of genocide."[246] SF authors such as Ray Bradbury, Clifford D. Simak, and Walter M. Miller Jr. seem to have been influenced by the Cold War view that the atom bomb offered a new possibility of mass human destruction as well as a moral failing of humanity.

The Martian Chronicles

Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles* both reflects the American Cold War anxieties about mass destruction by atomic weapons and provides hope of a better future for humanity after these bombs are used. Ray Bradbury first mentions atomic war in *The Martian Chronicles* in its fifth story "The Taxpayer." In "The Taxpayer," a man named Pritchard wants to travel to Mars specifically to avoid the atomic war that he predicts will take place "on Earth in about two

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[242] Ibid., 80.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Lewis Mumford, *In the Name of Sanity* (New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1954), http://archive.org/details/innameofsanity0000mumf, 63.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Ibid., 65.

years."[247] This short chapter is permeated with Pritchard's anxiety, as he would offer "his good right hand, his heart, his head, for the opportunity to go to Mars."[248] Unlike the expeditioners who leave Earth to explore Mars, however, Pritchard wants "to get away from wars and censorship and statism and conscription and government control of this and that, of art and science."[249] With this statement, Pritchard sums up many Americans' real fears during the Cold War. Most of all, though, Pritchard begs to leave Earth because "there's going to be an atom war."[250] In the end, "they dragged him, struggling, away" from the rockets leaving Earth. Pritchards anxiety in this chapter, which leads him to offer everything he has and physically fight to leave Earth, is a representation of many Americans' Cold War fears. Bradbury explicitly connects the chapter to the Cold War not only through the fears of "censorship" and "government control," themes that pervaded America at the time, but also through the fear of atomic war. Pritchard's deep anxiety surrounding atomic war reflects the anxieties of the American people during the Cold War.

Bradbury continues the theme of atomic war throughout *The Martian Chronicles.* In "The Third Expedition," the captain ponders, "what would the best weapon be that a Martian could use against Earth Men with atomic weapons?"[251] Here, atom bombs are recognized as the most powerful weapons available to humans. Later, in "And the Moon Be Still As Bright," Spender, an advocate for Mars, explains that congress "hope[s] to establish three atomic research and atom bomb depots on Mars. That means Mars is finished; all this wonderful stuff gone."[252] Bradbury directly links atom bombs to the possible destruction of the history and beauty of Mars. The final stories in *The Martian Chronicles,* "The Luggage Store," "The Off Season," "The

[247] Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles,* 42.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Ibid.
[250] Ibid., 43.
[251] Ibid., 63.
[252] Ibid., 88.

Watchers," "There Will Come Soft Rains," and "The Million-Year Picnic," all deal with the reality of atomic war on Earth in the novel. Through this series of stories, Bradbury shows humans returning to Earth to aid in atomic war, the onset of atomic war, the effects of this war on Earth and on the few remaining humans on Mars, and the hope that the last of humanity can start again on Mars. Bradbury explores the devastation of atomic war in "There Will Come Soft Rains," which features an uninhabited home that burns to the ground.[253] This story is juxtaposed with the last of the novel, "The Million-Year Picnic," in which a human family respectfully chooses an ancient Martian town to settle in and vows to leave behind the old, violent ways of humanity.[254] Throughout *The Martian Chronicles*, Bradbury explores fears and potential outcomes of atomic war.

The Cold War inspiration for the theme of atomic war in *The Martian Chronicles* is clear. Fear of atomic war was rampant not only in the United States at the time of this novel's publication, but also globally. In *The Martian Chronicles*, Bradbury also ties these fears into a cyclical theory of society. In "And the Moon Be Still As Bright," for instance, Spender fears that humans will "be flopping their filthy atom bombs up here, fighting for bases to have wars. Isn't it enough they've ruined one planet, without ruining another?"[255] Placing atom bombs on Mars is seen as a repetition of the situation on Earth and a continuation of the tendency for societies to decline and fall. Spender explicitly makes this connection when he states that "one day Earth will be as Mars is today. This will sober us. It's an object lesson in civilizations." The fear of societal collapse due to atom bombs in *The Martian Chronicles*, however, is somewhat contrasted in the hope for a better future in "The Million-Year Picnic." Despite the fact that "wars got bigger and

[253] Ibid., 219-233.
[254] Ibid., 256-268.
[255] Ibid., 89.

bigger and finally killed Earth,"[256] "if there hadn't been a war" then "Mars would have been really poisoned by Earth civilization."[257] Instead, two families can break the violent cycles of humanity by respecting the history of Mars and "burning [that] way of life, just like that way of life is being burned clean of Earth" through atomic war. In *The Martian Chronicles,* then, atomic war is both a sensible fear and an opportunity for humanity to break out of its societal cycles. The first consideration is a reflection of Cold War anxieties, while the second is a hopeful desire for the betterment of humanity.

City

In *City* by Walter M. Miller Jr., the atom bomb is a symptom of the moral failings that lead to the decline of the human race rather than the cause. In *City,* humans have harnessed atomic power not only for weaponry, but also for the progression of technology. Although human progress through new inventions may seem beneficial, the lack of "aptitude for controlling its undesirable social results," as Lewis Mumford says about the atom bomb, leads to the destruction of the human race.[258] In the end, the acquisition of atomic power acts as a symbol of the negligence and selfishness that leads to the downfall of the human race.

In lamenting the downfall of the city, Jon Webster explains that "with planes powered by atomics there is no longer any transportation problem."[259] Atomic power has increased the abilities of human technology, but it also seems to detract from the human experience. In this instance, it encourages people to move away from cities and lose connection with others. When an older man is told there is "no use having gasoline…when you have atomic power,"he

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[256] Ibid., 267.
[257] Ibid., 268.
[258] Mumford, *In the Name of Sanity*, 63.
[259] Simak, *City,* 19.

nostalgically notes that "you can't smell atomic power. Sweetest thing I know, the smell of burning gasoline."[260] Another man muses on his inclination towards fireplaces, which he acknowledges are "Useless, because atomic heating was better—but more pleasant. One couldn't sit and watch atomics and dream and build castles in the flames."[261] On a more important note than the simple pleasures erased by atomic power, it also "took jobs away from hundreds of thousands."[262] "The Bureau of Human Adjustment," a new governmental department, is opened, to deal with the loss of "confidence and dignity" caused by these shifts.[263]

In *City*, atomic power results in the slow deterioration of human civilization by taking away motivations such as socializing, simple pleasures, and working. Rather than offering a tale of the potential violent outcome of atom bombs, Simak reveals a future where the ease of atomic power is what leads to the annihilation of human civilization. While Simak's is a different take on the dangers of technological progression, he draws his inspiration from the Cold War lack of social considerations toward atomic weapons.

A Canticle for Leibowitz

Walter M. Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz* is bookended by atomic war. The novel begins with the aftermath of the "Flame Deluge," an atomic war "that nearly ended everything" and resulted in the dangerous mutation of many humans. It ends with a similar atomic war and the implication that no unmutated human being on Earth survived. In *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, Miller connects the Cold War threat of annihilation to the character flaws of humanity. He also positions atomic war as a continuation of the societal cycles and the cause of the end of human civilization.

A Canticle for Leibowitz begins after a devastating atomic war that, in conjunction with

[260] Ibid., 10.
[261] Ibid., 45-46.
[262] Ibid., 24.
[263] Ibid., 25.

intense censorship, destroyed most of recorded human history. The Catholic Order of St. Leibowitz, however, has pieced together a description of the events leading to atomic war. In "Fiat Homo," Miller explains that God ordained wise men to "devise great engines of war such as had never before been upon the Earth, weapons of such might that they contained the very fires of Hell."[264] Although Miller does not explicitly state that these weapons were atom bombs, he describes "the demons of the Fallout" that caused death and sickness in humans, crops, and animals.[265] These references imply radioactive fallout, an effect of nuclear weapons that spreads radioactive material and causes biological harm. Once the wise men created these atomic weapons, they were ordered to distribute them to powerful rulers and declare:

> "Only because the enemies have such a thing have we devised this for thee, in order that they may know that thou hast it also, and fear to strike. See to it, m'Lord, that thou fearest them as much as they shall now fear thee, that none may unleash this dread thing which we have wrought."[266]

Despite these warnings, world leaders engaged in atomic war that nearly destroyed humanity and Earth's ecosystem. Miller connects this atomic war to the sins of "pride" and explains that "by stealth, treachery, and deceit [the leaders] did seek to rule."[267] The atomic war in *A Canticle for Leibowitz* was the result of both access to atomic weapons and the flaws of human nature.

Miller's description of atomic war in "Fiat Homo" shows clear Cold War inspiration. His description of the atom bomb, although not explicitly described as such, reveals the fear and reality of the devastation these weapons could bring. Although humanity has forgotten the name and true nature of the atom bomb in this section, the fear of the weapon remains. Brother Francis, for example, "visualized a Fallout as half-salamander…that the demon was capable of inflicting

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[264] Miller, *A Canticle for Leibowitz,* 61.
[265] Ibid., 62.
[266] Ibid., 61.
[267] Ibid., 184.

all the woes which descended upon Jacob was a recorded fact."[268] The societal fear of atomic weapons runs deep to be remembered beyond written history and without context. In addition to reflecting the Cold War fear of the atom bomb, Miller alludes to the Cold War concept of mutually assured destruction in the wise men's instructions to the world rulers. In fact, extrapolating from the time leaps throughout the novel, the first atomic war may have taken place around 1974. Not only does the first atomic war in *A Canticle for Leibowitz* mirror the fears and potential outcome of an atomic war, it can also be seen as a fictional representation of the historical Cold War as it mimics and takes place within this period. The Cold War fear of annihilation from atomic weapons is both reflected and represented in "Fiat Homo."

The last section of *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, "Fiat Voluntas Tua," explores the potential for atomic war to end human civilization. This section deals primarily with the abott's struggle against euthanasia in a world of suffering caused by radiation poisoning. This plot alone reveals the Cold War fears of atomic weapons. Even if death by atomic weapons is not instantaneous, they may cause mass suffering and the slow destruction of individuals. The section goes on, however, to end in the eradication of humanity on Earth as atomic war breaks out once again.[269] "Fiat Voluntas Tua" provides a fictional actualization of the Cold War fear of annihilation.

The middle of the novel, "Fiat Lux," provides the link of war throughout each section to reveal the cyclical nature of human society and highlight the shift that atomic weapons could cause. While "Fiat Homo" begins with atomic war and "Fiat Voluntas Tua" ends with atomic annihilation, "Fiat Lux" contains a realization of an ongoing threat of war. This war has no nuclear component because, at this point, atomic weapons have not been reinvented.[270] The importance of this war, however, lies in its message that war is a repeated outcome of the cycles

[268] Ibid., 17.
[269] Ibid., 243-334.
[270] Ibid., 120-239.

of humanity, with or without atomic weapons. Miller explicitly makes this point when an abbot wonders:

> Are we doomed to do it again and again and again? Have we no choice but to play the Phoenix, in an unending sequence of rise and fall? Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, Greece, Carthage, Rome, the Empires of Charlemagne and the Turk. Ground to dust and plowed with salt. Spain, France, Britain, America– burned into the oblivion of the centuries. And again and again and again. *Are we doomed to it, Lord, chained to the pendulum of our own mad clockwork, helpless to halt its swing?* This time, it will swing us clean to oblivion, he thought. [271]

The rise and fall of civilizations, often through war, has been a constant throughout human history. In this excerpt, and through the three sections of his novel, Miller shows an awareness of the repetition of this pattern throughout time. The difference, then, in the Cold War is the issue of atomic weapons. The Cold War fear of annihilation seems more drastic than its predecessors because it goes beyond individual suffering and the destruction of civilizations. During the Cold War, the fear of annihilation encompassed the breaking of societal cycles through the decimation of the entire human race. *A Canticle for Leibowitz* reflects the Cold War fear of atom bombs and places the onus of the destruction of humanity on its own flaws.

Hopes and Fears

The Cold War fix-up novels *The Martian Chronicles, City,* and *A Canticle for Leibowitz* reflect the common cultural considerations of the Cold War setting in which they were written. These novels all examine the insecurity over ideological instability that occurred during the Cold War and led to insecurity and censorship within the United States. They also provide a reflection of the American reaction to the threat of annihilation from the newly invented atom bomb. In

[271] Ibid., 264-265.

examining these considerations, these novels examine the cultural milieu of the United States during the Cold War.

In general, the Cold War fix-up novels of Ray Bradbury, Clifford D. Simak, and Walter M. Miller Jr. express a deep pessimism about the American cultural imaginary during the Cold War. They find American culture lacking in both its reaction to ideological instability and the conditions which led to the invention and use of the atom bomb. With the threat of the annihilation of the United States and the destruction of the human race through this weapon, these authors weigh the worthiness of American civilization. As a whole, they find the flaws of Americans too deep to consider the continuation of society as it is. The human race does not obtain overly hopeful endings in these novels. In Bradbury and Miller's novels, a few remaining humans are able to escape the destruction of Earth and presumably live in space. In Simak's, the remaining humans that did escape to space have also perished. The outlook on human civilization after the creation of atom bombs is bleak.

The Cold War encouraged Cold War SF authors to examine and judge human society through fix-up novels. Although these novels ultimately find humanity lacking, they do offer hope that by breaking the societal cycles of humanity, new beings may rise and progress past the failings of human beings. These novels, therefore, show not only a reflection of Cold War considerations, but also a hope that a new outlook or ideology will arise from the rubble of human civilization to lead to a worthier, more empathetic, and overall better society.

Conclusion

Cold War fix-up novels, exemplified by Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles*, Clifford D. Simak's *City*, and Walter M. Miller Jr.'s *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, serve as an example of the enduring significance of SF literature in facing the anxieties, hopes, and possibilities of the time. By examining these works through the lens of retroactive continuity (Chapter One), social cycle theory (Chapter Two), and the Cold War cultural imaginary (Chapter Three), this thesis has demonstrated the complex interplay between literature, culture, and history, and the ways in which SF authors used the form of the fix-up novel to engage with the pressing concerns of their era through ideas like social cycle theory.

One of the key insights offered by this study is the importance of retroactive continuity as a literary device in the creation of fix-up novels. As discussed in Chapter 1, authors like Bradbury, Simak, and Miller employed various strategies to adapt their previously published short stories into coherent novels. For instance, Bradbury used a timeline to place each chapter of *The Martian Chronicles* in a specific month and year, creating a sense of continuity and progression throughout the book. He also reused major characters from the expeditions to Mars, such as Sam Parkhill, to create connecting threads between otherwise separate stories. Similarly, Miller added lengthy passages to his existing prose in *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, incorporating new symbols and themes that enhanced the cohesion and depth of the novel as a whole. These examples demonstrate how the process of retroactive continuity allowed authors to create works that were greater than the sum of their parts, offering readers a more immersive and meaningful experience that spoke to the larger themes and concerns of the Cold War era.

Moreover, as explored in Chapter 2, by employing social cycle theory, these authors were able to delve into the cyclical nature of human history and the dangers of unchecked progress. In

A Canticle for Leibowitz, Miller structures his novel around three distinct sections that mirror historical eras: "Fiat Homo" (the Dark Ages), "Fiat Lux" (the Renaissance), and "Fiat Voluntas Tua" (the Modern Age). This structure, along with the repetition of symbols like the buzzards and the shark, emphasizes the recurrence of cycles in human civilization. Bradbury, in *The Martian Chronicles*, draws parallels between the colonization of Mars and the history of the American frontier, highlighting the repetitive patterns of conquest, exploitation, and destruction. These examples illustrate how engaging with social cycle theory allowed these authors to offer powerful critiques of the Cold War era's faith in progress and technology, and to remind readers of the importance of learning from the past to build a better future.

Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 3, these fix-up novels serve as valuable windows into the Cold War cultural imaginary, reflecting and responding to the anxieties, tensions, and possibilities of the era. The looming threat of nuclear annihilation, a central concern during the Cold War, is addressed in all three novels. In *The Martian Chronicles*, Earth is ultimately destroyed by nuclear war, while in *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, the novel begins in the aftermath of a nuclear apocalypse and concludes with another devastating atomic war. Simak's *City*, while not directly depicting nuclear warfare, presents a world in which human civilization has declined, in part due to the isolating effects of advanced technology—a commentary on the dehumanizing aspects of the Cold War's rapid technological progress. These and other examples demonstrate how SF literature of the era served as a vehicle for grappling with the pressing concerns and anxieties of the Cold War, offering readers a space to confront and process the complex realities of their time.

Looking beyond the specific insights offered by this limited study, it is clear that the SF fix-up novels of the Cold War era have much to teach us about the enduring power and

significance of literature. By using the unique form of the fix-up novel to engage with the anxieties, hopes, and possibilities of their time, authors like Bradbury, Simak, and Miller were able to create works that spoke to the larger themes and concerns of the human experience, and that continue to resonate with readers to this day. Whether it is through the use of retroactive continuity to create cohesive narratives, the employment of social cycle theory to explore a cyclical nature of history within those narratives, or the engagement with the cultural imagination of their era, these authors demonstrate the vital role that SF literature can play in helping us to make sense of the world around us, and in imagining new futures and possibilities.

The insights offered by this study have important implications for our understanding of the relationship between literature and society more broadly. By examining the ways in which SF authors of the Cold War era used their works to engage with the pressing concerns of their time, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the power of literature to shape our understanding of the world, and to offer us new ways of thinking about the challenges and opportunities we face. Whether it is through the use of metaphor and allegory to explore complex social and political issues, or through the creation of alternative worlds and futures that allow us to imagine new possibilities and perspectives, literature has a vital role to play in helping us to navigate the complexities of the human experience.

As we look to the future of SF literature, it is clear that the lessons offered by the fix-up novels of the Cold War era will continue to be relevant and important. In an era of rapid technological change, growing social and global political tensions, and increasing uncertainty about the future of our planet, the power of SF literature to help readers imagine new or alternate possibilities and perspectives is more important than ever. By engaging with the themes and concerns of our time, and by using the unique forms and devices of the genre to explore the

human experience in all its complexity and diversity, contemporary SF authors have the opportunity to continue the legacy of their Cold War era predecessors, and to offer readers new ways of thinking about the world and our place in it.

Ultimately, the fix-up novels of the Cold War era serve as a reminder of the power and significance of SF literature, and of the vital role that it can play in helping us to make sense of the world around us, our past and future. By examining these works through the lens of retroactive continuity, social cycle theory, and the Cold War cultural imaginary, this thesis has demonstrated the complex interplay between literature, culture, and history, and the ways in which SF authors have used their works to engage with the pressing concerns of their time. As we look to the future of the genre, it is clear that the lessons offered by these works will continue to be relevant and important, and that SF literature will remain a vital force for imagining new possibilities and perspectives in an increasingly complex and uncertain world.

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