

THE WORLD IS CHANGING - OR IS IT?

In the midst of recent tragic events, there is no better time to look at our changing world and reflect, and what better way to do so than through representations of our changing world in literature, as Herald writer Sam Jones reports.

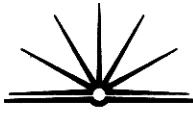
With the world on the brink of war and terror striking close to home, this Herald writer figured what better way to look at our changing world than through its representation in literature and in the media - notably Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card's Lord of the Flies by William Golding and the poem ~~"The Door"~~ by ~~the~~ multimedia screenshot of "Fractals" found on the Microsoft Encarta CD-ROM and ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~September 11th~~ speech by United States President ~~George W. Bush~~. A changing world is any ~~at~~ so what is a changing world? A changing world is any physical alteration to the planet on which we live in, or more idiomatically, the alteration of the immediate environment of a group or individual. The irony is, through texts



examined here, this world has not changed much. As while there are changes on the surface, some human constants remain.

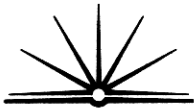
Take a look at Ender's Game, a ~~novel~~ which portrays a futuristic world with vast social, political and technological changes. The world is now divided ~~into~~ between countries under the ~~second~~ Warsaw Pact and the hegemony of the United States, but are temporarily united to confront the perceived threat ~~off~~ of an alien species known as the "Buggers". An International Fleet (I.F.) has been established and is based off-world in battle stations around the solar system to neutralise these threats. There have also been immense social changes - notably the cultivation of young child prodigies to train them as commanders in order to fight the buggers. As well as this, the futuristic world also restricts families to two children, with the third offspring being made an outcast. Clearly, along with these social changes, technological changes is also incredibly evident in this enthralling novel - from the presence of monitors in everyday classrooms to the ansible that allows for instantaneous communication to the awesome, terrific weapons of mass destruction such as the 'doctor'.

To show these changes, Orson Scott Card has



used the science fiction genre - with its advanced technology and alien lifeform. Also incorporated into this are scientific jargons - such as 'inertia', 'vortex', 'polararch', 'third' - which gives new meanings to old words and help Card create a convincing and authentic new world.

Having said that, I must also point out that underneath these changes, superficial if you like, human emotions remain the same. Feelings of rivalry, hatred and prejudice are human traits that remain, however, feelings of love and friend are remain the same as well. Through Card's use of the third person narration, with Card being the omnipotent narrator, he is able to make between Ender (protagonist) to Peter (Ender's brother) to the Bugger Queen, to reveal all sorts of feelings. There is an ever-present rivalry between Peter and Ender, as well as from Bernard and Bonzo Madrid, who are jealous and envious of Ender's special ability. The physical retribution inflicted on Ender by Bonzo reveal hatred from Bonzo to Ender, ^{Ender's} as well as questioning of Peter - "Why does he hate me so much" also reveal hate, but a wider hatred from the humans is to ~~shown~~ at the Buggers is also shown. This hatred is



reverted is based on pure, blind prejudice and the wrong assumption that the Buggers are out to annihilate and destroy humanity - clearly not the case at the end when Ender interacts with the Bugger Queen and discover that humanity was wrong in believing so. The power to 'inflict pain is the only power that matters' and that 'killing is the first thing we learnt' also shows that human traits remain the same. However, feelings of love and friendship - 'the kid is wrong, I am his friend' and "You won't know her (Valentine) but you will still love her" reveals that amongst these technological changes, and social and political changes - some things remain the same - This novel does bring us to question ~~the~~ ourselves about the world. We live in a world of change - awesome technology, and maybe +in the future - the ability to travel to outer space, but why are we still bring these traits and negative vices with us? As Card said 'our genes won't let us decide any other way'. So nothing really changes in this world, ~~how~~ how is it?

² Similar to Card's concept that change is on the surface is Microsoft's Fractals, an interactive



Multimedia encyclopedic article that on Fractals - a mathematical concept that ^{applied to a shape} ~~even shows that~~ when it has the same structure view at any scale. The ~~the~~ article contains a diagram juxtaposed on top of the text. This is a great example of how authors view and present change. The composer here has shown that while there are technological changes and vast changes in how information is presented - underlying this, the article and information is the same, and ironically, everything is just a repeat as shown by the Fractal. Using symbols, icons and hyperlinks, the composer has shown that the changes are technological - with the icons and hyperlinks representing the notion of technological advances. But ironically, the article is about a "self-similar object" that repeats itself, hence showing that while there are superficial changes, there are some constants that remain.

Now to a classic example of how things stay the same. As a kid, I was bored stiff with William Golding's Lord of the Flies - a novel about a group of school boys being stranded on a desert island. However, as an adult I could now look back and fully comprehend



what Golding has been trying to say - that human emotions remain even when there are severe changes in the environment. Lord of the Flies deals with a major alteration of the boys' environment, which in effect, affects their social behavior. Away from the civilised world, ~~the group of boys~~ - from church, school, parental guidance, government organisations, the boys have no ~~quieting~~ moral guidance. Over time, they revert to savage, bestial-like behavior, ending in the brutal slaying of two of their groups. The powerful and emotive writing of Golding, from the ~~former~~ naval lieutenant's formal comment - "I would have thought a group of English boys would be able to put up a better show" (revealing the naive faith in the civilised facade) to the killing of Simon - written in an agonising chant tone - "kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!" reveals the true extent of human brutality, that even with the world of the boys changing physically, those feelings still does not change. This novel brings about a good point that ^{negative} the ~~the~~ ^{negative} vices and human traits - aggression, rivalry, lust for power - are endemic with the human race - here they are simply unrestrained.

P.T.O



So literature has provided humanity with a glimpse into the future - more importantly, making us realise that everything is fundamental to save. ~~Nothing~~ Fundamental things, such as feelings and emotions remain even though technology might. To put it in the words of Orson Scott Card (introduction to Ender's Game) "You can change the props and actors but the story of human history remains unchanged." So the real hope - and the real change - remains with us - that just like Ender, we carry the hope of peace and harmony (peaceful bug zers) and the real change is with us to let go of such traits and negative vices and change the world for the better.