

**Mind, Power and Society in Science Fiction:  
The Psi Corps Trilogy by J. Gregory Keyes**

Mikko Poutanen  
Pro Gradu Thesis  
School of Modern Languages  
and Translation Studies  
English Philology  
University of Tampere  
May 2007

Englantilainen filologia  
Kieli- ja käännöstieteiden laitos

Poutanen, Mikko: *Mind, Power and Society in Science Fiction: The Psi Corps Trilogy* by J. Gregory Keyes. Pro gradu -tutkielma, (ss. 1-88)

Pro gradu -tutkielmani keskittyy analysoimaan miten telepatia ja telepaatit esiintyvät science fiction -kirjallisuudessa valikoitujen teosten perusteella. Tutkimuskysymykseni pyrkii vastaamaan siihen, miten telepatiaa on kuvattu näissä teoksissa, millaista voimaa ja kykyjä telepatia sisältää, ja lisäksi miten telepaatit vuorovaikuttavat ympärillään olevan ei-telepaattisen yhteiskunnan kanssa. Aloitan analyysini telepatian ilmestymisestä kirjallisuuteen ja science fictioniin ja siitä kuinka nopeasti se on hyväksytty kyseisen genren valtavirtaan. Ulotan tutkimukseni myös parapsykologian puolelle tarjoten kyseenalaiseksi koettua tieteellistä tietoa siitä miten telepatia voidaan sisällyttää tiettyä tieteellisyyttä olettaen science fictioniin. Tutkielman puitteissa myös kaksi muuta tarjolla olevaa tulkintaa telepatiasta ilmaisemassa tiettyjä ideoita esitellään: telepaatti voidaan nähdä joko uutena yhteiskunnan ja ihmisyyden rajoitukset ylittävänä voimana, tai tuhoisana hirviönä, joka muuttaa tulevaisuuden dystopiaksi. Käsittelen myös lyhyesti mitä telepatia on ja mitä se ei ole käyttämällä muita science fiction teoksia esimerkkeinä.

Tutkielmani pääteokset ovat Alfred Besterin *The Demolished Man* (1953) ja J. Gregory Keyesin *The Psi Corps Trilogy* (1998-1999). Käytän analyysissa ja esimerkkeinä muitakin teoksia argumentaationi tukena tarjotakseni useita lähestymistapoja telepatiaan. Telepatian rakentuminen organisaatioiksi on tärkein syy valitsemieni teksteille. Valituissa teoksissa tutkimuskysymykseni kuitenkin keskittyy pääosin telepatian luomiin organisaatioihin ja näiden ja normaalin, ei-telepaattisen yhteiskunnan väliseen vuorovaikutukseen ja voimatasapainoon. Tässä keskustelussa 'toisen' merkitys ja käyttäminen science fictionissa identiteetin luomisessa on oleellista. Myös telepatian uhka yksityisyydelle ja siihen liittyvät jännitteet ovat tämän tutkielman kannalta merkittäviä teemoja. Keyesin teosten taustana on J.M. Straczynskin *Babylon 5* –TV-sarjan maailma. Lisäksi Keyes on nykyaikainen kirjoittaja, joka selvästi ja tarkoituksellisesti lainaa elementtejä omiin teoksiinsa Alfred Besterin 1950-luvun kirjoista (Keyesin kahden viimeisen kirjan päähenkilö on nimeltään Alfred Bester). Näin ollen on tarpeen tunnistaa telepatian ja science fiction –genren yhteinen kehitys.

Keyes kehittää kirjoissaan käsitettä näennäisen väistämättömästä konfliktista yhteiskunnassa, jota on järkyttänyt jonkin niin mullistavan käsitteen kuin telepatian synty. Tästä syntyneitä enemmistö-vähemmistö vastakkainasettelua voidaan tutkia Keyesin kirjojen kautta yhdistäen näiden teosten maailman omaamme selkeiden viittausten kautta. Esimerkiksi vainoamisen ja erilaisuuden teemat voidaan löytää tästä uudesta kontekstista helposti (erityisesti juutalaiset). Molempien tekijöiden teokset osoittavat, että voimatasapaino yhteiskunnassa, jossa on kahdenlaisia ihmisiä (telepaatteja ja ei-telepaatteja) on erittäin herkkä. Lopuksi osoitan, että science fiction -kirjallisuudessa telepatia harvoin osoittautuu ihmiskunnan pelastukseksi, tai edes sen henkisten rajoitteiden ylitse nostavaksi voimaksi. Sen sijaan usein käy ilmi telepaattien inhimillisyyttä: telepaatit ovat aivan yhtä inhimillisen ahdasmielisiä ja kostonhimoisia kuin normaalitkin ihmiset. Tästä näkökulmasta odotus siitä, että ihmiset voisivat kehittyä itsensä yli, ei siis ole todennäköinen, mutta se ei myöskään automaattisesti synnytä pimeää tulevaisuuden dystopiaa.

**Avainsanat:** telepatia, science fiction, Alfred Bester, Gregory Keyes, Babylon 5, dystopia

## **Table of contents:**

<b>1 – Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1-1 Looking At Fictional Telepathy</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1-2 Telepathy In the Literary Science Fiction Genre</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1-3 First Appearances and Mainstream</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2 – Exploring Telepathy</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2-1 Parapsychology</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>2-2 The Telepath Homo Superior</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>2-3 Gothic Monster</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>3 – <i>The Demolished Man</i> by Alfred Bester: Espers and Men</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>3-1 Representation of Telepathy</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>3-2 Issues of Privacy</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>4 – The Psi Corps Trilogy by J. Gregory Keyes: “The Corps is Mother, the Corps is Father”</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>4-1 Representation of Telepathy in The Psi Corps Trilogy</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>4-2 Issues of Privacy</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>4-3 The Inevitability of Conflict</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>5 – Conclusion</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>6 – Bibliography</b>	<b>85</b>

## 1 – Introduction:

Telepathy is a concept surely known to all on some level. Usually telepathy is an anomaly connected to fiction, simplified as extraordinary mind powers. However, there is a great deal more to telepathy than that. This thesis proposes to analyze telepathy in the literary genre of Science Fiction. Telepathy is dealt with in various ways in various literary works, and the implications of employing telepathy as a method of expression and representation in science fiction can be analyzed in further detail. In short, what does telepathy stand for, and how does it connect to the world of the reader?

It is not the purpose of this thesis to make an all-encompassing survey on the forms and uses of telepathy, but rather see how it is used in a few specific examples. These examples aim to illustrate how telepathy is introduced in the novel and how it is treated by the author is usually reflected in the attitudes of the protagonists of the novels. It is important to map out how these authors deal with the concept of telepathy in general. If telepathy is used in the same way by different authors, it may be possible to sketch out a pattern for the use of the ‘telepathic method’ as a literary tool. What kind of human anxieties can be expressed by the means of employing a telepathic element to a novel? It is also important to use examples taken from various points within the development of science fiction literature to see if old ideas remain, or if they are remodelled to fit new conceptions of human nature and perception.

The primary materials selected include Alfred Bester’s *The Demolished Man*,<sup>1</sup> and J. Gregory Keyes’s Psi Corps Trilogy.<sup>2</sup> These, and other relevant texts, will be used as basis for building an argument and a measure of context to the role of telepathy. *The Demolished Man* will be specifically used as a base text for Keyes’s books, as they share elements central to this thesis.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bester, Alfred. (1953) *The Demolished Man*. London: Millennium, Victor Gollancz. 2004.

<sup>2</sup> The Psi Corps Trilogy is a term used by several sources, classifying the three books under a single heading (e.g. Internet Speculative Fiction DataBase: <http://www.isfdb.org/cgi-bin/ea.cgi?J.%20Gregory%20Keyes>, accessed 08.03.2007.). It includes the following three books in chronological order:  
 Keyes, Gregory J. *Dark Genesis: Birth of the Psi Corps*. New York: Ballantine. 1998.  
 Keyes, Gregory J. *Deadly Relations: Bester Ascendant*. New York: Ballantine. 1999.  
 Keyes, Gregory J. *Final Reckoning: The Fate Of Bester*. New York: Ballantine. 1999.

This basis will then serve as foundation for the close-readings of J. Gregory Keyes's Psi Corps Trilogy. *The Demolished Man* is from an earlier era of the science fiction continuum, and considered to be a classic in that particular field of literature. The reason for selection for analysis in this thesis is the status of Bester's book as an established work in the science fiction canon. The trilogy is more contemporary. It is interesting to deal with telepathy as an expressed term, or in other words, analyze telepathy in novels that particularly use the term 'telepathy' as an integral part of the structure of a novel. Moreover, Keyes and Bester speak of telepathy in their novels using the actual term.

Theodore Sturgeon's *More Than Human*<sup>3</sup> clearly questions the usually assumed positive implications of being a telepath; to some the ability is closer to a curse than to a blessing. In the course of this thesis I will also look at additional texts or works of science fiction (including popular movies) when relevant. In addition, the trilogy is set in the pre-existing science fictional world of J. M. Straczynski's *Babylon 5*.<sup>4</sup> The trilogy is based on Straczynski's original outline. Because the TV-series is connected to the world Keyes sets his story in, some references to the series are inevitable. These examples will be explored in greater detail, but quoting from other works in the field is required to give some context to the widespread adaptation of telepathy into science fiction. To understand current representations of telepathy in science fiction it is important to understand its foundations.

The books all have their own perspectives on telepathy and the society surrounding it. I will deal with telepathy as it is presented in the novels and moreover as an analytic concept that can be probed and interpreted in a theoretical context using selected themes. Although telepathy is not an actual phenomenon but a fictional creation, it can reflect actual reality. It is not the purpose of this thesis in any way to suggest that telepathy is an actual ability, but a manifestation of something else expressed in science fiction. The following sections are to lay groundwork for the

---

<sup>3</sup> Sturgeon, Theodore. (1953) *More Than Human*. London: Millennium, Victor Gollancz.. 2000.

<sup>4</sup> *Babylon 5*, created by J.M. Straczynski: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0105946/>, acquired 17.2.2006.

argumentation. The close-readings in section 4 will elaborate on, or possibly counter, the interpretations set up in previous sections.

### **1-1 Looking At Fictional Telepathy**

Science fiction aims to extrapolate current issues, social or other, into new worlds or time to dissect and analyze them. Although considered a fictional concept, the tool of telepathy can be employed to extrapolate certain issues, like modern anxieties about the loss of privacy, or to illustrate how potentially violent the clashes between ‘the human’ and ‘the other’ can be. In the course of the thesis I will employ certain terms from the novels, sometimes designating non-telepath humans into ‘normals’, or worse yet, ‘mundanes’. Obviously in the novels the viewpoint changes greatly depending if telepathy is viewed from the eyes of a telepath, or from those of a ‘normal’ human being. The othering can go both ways. There is also the interaction, or more often conflict in a society with telepaths and non-telepaths. The threat of evolutionary clashes between telepaths and normal humans is also a point of study in this context.

Introducing *homo superior* as a natural, or possibly unnatural step in the chain of human evolution can be connected with, for example, Nietzsche’s *Übermensch*. This will mean applying a measure of philosophical thought to telepathy in science fiction literature, and seeing whether or not it can be (or is) employed in the field. There are signs of telepathy being used as a method of communication, and community, and even language. A private language that does not need words can bring the telepath considerable power. However, it also becomes apparent that the telepathic *Übermensch* is not really as empowered as one would assume. The telepath is not necessarily a part of the society that has created it, but something that transcends normal human limitations. However, this can also be a monstrous creation in the sense that it is not the salvation, but the potential undoing of humanity. Is it then human at all, or in other words, do the rules and rights we associate with normal humans apply to telepaths? It is curious that people whose minds are

invaded daily by advertising or other forms of persuasion suddenly find an outlet for their anxieties about the loss of privacy through telepaths, a much more tangible entity.

Telepathy is by no means limited to marginalized fiction, but there have been in fact numerous scientific studies that try to delve into the essence and the existence of telepathic abilities. Wishful thinking at best or para-science at its worst,<sup>5</sup> some background to the nature of what can be described as mainstream telepathy will be provided. There are also other forms of perception exceeding normal sensory perception (extra-sensory perception, ESP) attained through technology or other methods, and these will be addressed as possible forms of telepathy in disguise. Restricting telepathy to a single set of concepts is not necessary, even if this thesis aims to focus on telepathy when it is designated as such.

Finally, the goal of this thesis is to give a brief but in-depth look at telepathy employed in the science fiction genre, and its purposes and forms inside the genre through specific, even classic examples. My research questions for this thesis are as follow: 1) How is telepathy depicted in these science fictional settings? Is there organization, community, or some other factor that is central to being a telepath? 2) What powers or limitations are attributed to telepaths in the books? 3) How do the telepaths interact with “normal” society? Are telepaths empowered or subjugated? What kind of power does the mind have over the society it manifests in? Despite its fictional character, telepathy can be linked to the world of the real and used in extrapolation and interpretation of contemporary times or human history in general. The variety of uses and interpretations will be mapped down throughout this thesis, illustrating how telepathy can provoke analysis on multiple levels. The works selected or the interpretations offered are not the only ones available, but are relevant and convincing ones nonetheless.

---

<sup>5</sup> It's worth noting that many of these experiments are still being conducted, and some even claim positive results. See: Ganzfeld Experiment. Luckhurst, Roger. *The Invention of Telepathy: 1870-1901*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 200., p. 277.

## 1-2 Telepathy In Literary Science Fiction

For the purposes of this thesis I will use the term ‘science fiction genre’ for clarity’s sake, although I am aware of the fact that science fiction is yet to be established as a strictly definable genre,<sup>6</sup> and indeed some critics refuse to even try.<sup>7</sup> As this thesis analyzes the concept of telepathy in science fiction, it is curious to note that both share a somewhat infamous reputation in their respective fields; it has taken science fiction some time to receive recognition as a legitimate literary genre in its own right, and likewise the field of psychology still eyes parapsychology or anything related to it, such as telepathy, as a scientific pariah. As such telepathy and science fiction seem to get along splendidly, even supporting each other in the modern media landscape, permeated with “SF imagery”.<sup>8</sup> In this section I will first look into the genre of science fiction and what it is expected to include, and then move on to give further background of the uses of telepathy in general in science fiction, and how it fits into the scientific expectations of the genre, given that it seems to be more an occult phenomenon than a scientific one. Also, looking at the scientific side of telepathy is needed to lend some basis for the argumentation to follow. In a scientific context, telepathy is usually seen as a part of parapsychology.

Science fiction has developed from the chain of literary experimentations ranging onwards from the era of Romanticism. In Europe it spawned scientific romance, which was an effort to incorporate both futuristic ideas but within the frameset of Romanticism.<sup>9</sup> Fantasy and science fiction are both estranged forms of literature, and in traditional terms, romances.<sup>10</sup> To this “American other-worldly exotica” was added, which enabled more extravagant topics.<sup>11</sup> The

---

<sup>6</sup> Mendelsohn, Farah. "Introduction: Reading Science Fiction" in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. James, Edward and Mendlesohn, Farah (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Malmgren, Carl D. "Against Genre/Theory: The State of Science Fiction Criticism" in *Poetics Today*, Vol. 12, No. 1, Spring 1991. p. 132.

<sup>8</sup> Aldiss, Brian W. (with Wingrove, David) *Trillion Year Spree*. London: Victor Gollancz. 1986. p. 276.

<sup>9</sup> Stableford, Brian. "Science fiction before the genre" in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. James, Edward and Mendlesohn, Farah (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003 pp. 23-24.

<sup>10</sup> Malmgren, p. 135.

<sup>11</sup> Stableford, p. 31.

American legacy also helped to boost science fiction into a more visible market and opened the genre to writers a multitude of writers from all avenues of life, with Brian Aldiss even referring to science fiction as an American literary art form.<sup>12</sup> Ursula LeGuin's analysis of American science fiction in relation to the 'other', points out that the 'other' can typically take multiple forms, adapting to what is most pressing at the time.<sup>13</sup> While not prestigious, it certainly helped fuel the dynamics of the genre.

Certain terms also need to be processed and elaborated upon when dealing with science fiction, and one of such terms is cognitive estrangement. Seemingly one of the more graspable entities in science fiction, the main purpose of cognitive estrangement is to use the imaginative device embedded in the author's work to create an alternative world and framework to the one the reader (and the author) is empirically accustomed to.<sup>14</sup> It also strives to help us learn more of the present.<sup>15</sup> Another relevant term is 'othering' in science fiction, how can we look at novels set in different times and spaces and yet find something there that relates to our personal experiences of our own world. The concept of the 'other' and 'othering' have their base in post-colonial studies and in the discourse of power, as the construction of the 'Other' is fundamental to the construction of the Self.<sup>16</sup> The mysteries of the colonial lands made it possible to (fearfully) accept the existence of supernatural features normally considered 'other'. Tinged with a sense of morbid fascination, these features were rarely accepted as fitting traits for any decent man.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, 'Othering' ties itself to our sphere of

---

<sup>12</sup> Aldiss, p. 13. Research on the acceptance of *psi* has been found to be particularly high at American universities. Lowentrou, Peter M. "PsiFi: The Domestication of *Psi* in Science Fiction" in *Extrapolation*, Vol. 30, No. 4. Kent University Press. 1989. p. 389.

<sup>13</sup> LeGuin, Ursula. (1979) "American SF and The Other" in *The Language Of The Night – Essays of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. New York: Berkley Books. 1982. p. 87.

<sup>14</sup> The term 'cognitive estrangement' has been coined by science fiction critic Darko Suvin, who sees estrangement as one of the more major ideas typical of science fiction. See Suvin, Darko. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On The Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979.

<sup>15</sup> Smith, Curtis C. "Olaf Stapledon's Dispassionate Objectivity" in *Voice For the Future: Essays on Major Science Fiction Writers*. Volume 1. Clareson, Thomas D. (ed.). Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1976. pp. 46-47.

<sup>16</sup> Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*. London, New York: Routledge. 1998/1999. p. 172.

<sup>17</sup> Luckhurst, pp. 174-175, 181. Luckhurst in particular mentions the writings of Ruyard Kipling as a fitting example.

understanding. Farah Mendelsohn is quite straightforward in her endorsement and interpretation of the importance of cognitive estrangement:

Cognitive estrangement is tied inextricably to the encoded nature of sf [sic]: to style, lexical invention and embedding. Cognitive estrangement is the sense that something in the fictive world is dissonant with the reader's experienced world.<sup>18</sup>

The essence of extrapolated credibility in science fiction is provided by **science** itself. This expects that the science in science fiction seems credible and viable enough to the reader. The problem arises when telepathy is introduced into this scientific framework. Telepathy is not, despite attempts to scientifically prove otherwise, a viable science in the same sense as space travel. It has a distinctly magical or occult flavour, which some find distasteful in the genre. It is problematic when telepathy more closely resembles magic than technology, because the former seems an element of fantasy, and the latter as the core of science fiction. The hypothesis of telepathy has been so accepted in the genre, however, that it leaves out the lawless occult almost automatically.<sup>19</sup> After all, the attempt of realism in science fiction is more than just fantasy faking realism with a pseudo-scientific frame. Moreover, science fiction cannot be based on mere fantasy. The “discourse of science fiction is firmly grounded in scientific epistemology”.<sup>20</sup> For example, a utopia as well as a dystopia must explain itself in order to immerse the reader into its world.

An immersion into the world is required; estrangement is not the same as alienation. For example a dystopia without hard scientific backing loses its momentum and its effectiveness. This also applies to the science of telepathy in many novels; they have to be sufficiently elaborated or set up for the reader. Although, at the same time it seems that telepathy is one of the more accepted forms even without elaboration; people are willing to accept the existence of telepathy in science fiction relatively easily. The following sections will also consider this; perhaps the multiple facets of telepathy, that are so easily available to us in literature, have subconsciously made it acceptable. The purpose is not to expect to see genuine futures unravel, but to see a

---

<sup>18</sup> Mendelsohn, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Lowentrou, p. 395.

<sup>20</sup> Malmgren, p. 135.

reflection of the reader (or her world). The reader is invited to draw comparisons between the fictional society and her own within a normative framework. It is the world created (as opposed to being merely depicted) that distinguishes science fiction from mere fiction or fantasy: “[...] for sf [sic] to work, there must be rules, there must be consistency and logic”.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the objections of some fans and critics to ‘non-scientific’ futurology, it is common that science fiction always trades in social, cultural and even fantasy futures, whatever its level of ‘scientific realism’. Indeed, the quest for realism in science fiction is often consciously discarded. So if telepathy does not fit well into the perceptions of realistically possible science, it may be all the more significant a component in a science fictional “literature of ideas”.<sup>22</sup> Although science fiction may strive to provide readers with “an understanding of the real possibilities of the future”, it is still something more than simple “imaginative futurology”.<sup>23</sup> Science fiction’s admission to mainstream literature has not made it realistic, but at least respectable.<sup>24</sup> It should be noted, however, that it is illogical to criticize science fiction and the themes it produces on the bases of realism: “by definition, science fiction has less to do with the here and now than with that other, longed-for or dreaded future world [...]”.<sup>25</sup> Still, the intention of science fiction is to produce something that can be linked to the “here and now” through extrapolation or other means. Dismissing the argument as “unreal” is counterproductive to the analysis. Telepathy has the distinct advantage of being widely used in literature. Even Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* (1980) can be considered telepathic, as exemplified by the following passage:

By sunrise I had discovered that the voices could be controlled – I was a radio receiver, and could turn the volume down or up; I could select

---

<sup>21</sup> Straczynski, Michael J. ” The Profession of Science Fiction, 48: Approaching Babylon” in *Foundation: The Review of Science Fiction*. Vol. 64, Summer 1995. p. 7 and Malmgren 134, 139.

<sup>22</sup> Malmgren, p. 128. Carl Malmgren quotes John J. Pierce’s *Great Themes of Science Fiction: A Study in Imagination and Evolution*. New York: Greenwood Press. 1987.

<sup>23</sup> Malmgren, p. 129.

<sup>24</sup> Brantlinger, Patrick. “The Gothic Origins of Science Fiction” in *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, Vol. 14, No. 1, Autumn 1980. p. 30.

<sup>25</sup> Brantlinger, p. 43.

individual voices; I could even, by an effort of will, switch off my newly-discovered inner ear.<sup>26</sup>

The main problem in science fiction is the difficulty of drawing boundaries or of containing the genre inside set categories. In science fiction telepathy is often set up as the encounter between the “normal-human self and the superhuman other”.<sup>27</sup> This can be sometimes circumvented by using technological metaphors, like in Rushdie’s text above. Nevertheless the alien ‘other’ can be a sentient computer or a monster, but in human form the boundary blurs. With telepathy the whole idea of reality becomes compromised. On the other hand this enables philosophical discussions on the nature of reality, and how we can know what is real.<sup>28</sup> When it comes to representations of telepathy in science fiction, the question of what is real becomes evident, especially when considering that the mind is vulnerable.

### **1-3 First Appearances and Mainstream**

The so-called New Wave of science fiction incorporates both Theodore Sturgeon and Alfred Bester as modern writers of science fiction.<sup>29</sup> It seems that there is a slight dominance in this field by American writers, who had quite a momentum behind them at this point.<sup>30</sup> The era, spanning from 1950s to early 1960s, is also the era of television, the expansion of communication technology and, cynically enough, also the beginning of the loss of the private mind under the onslaught of mass communication. All this was spurred on by the fears of a dystopian tomorrow only narrowly averted during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. At the moment a contemporary argument is at the moment taking place in the United States regarding ‘phone-tapping’, and how this features another form of communication technology that

---

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Royle, p. 1 Royle, Nicholas. *Telepathy and Literature – Essays on the Reading Mind*. Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell. 1991.

<sup>27</sup> Malmgren, p. 128.

<sup>28</sup> Malmgren, p. 142.

<sup>29</sup> Broderick, Damien. “New Wave and backwash: 1960-1980” in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. James, Edward and Mendlesohn, Farah (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. p. 48.

<sup>30</sup> As such telepathy is most vulnerable to the anxieties experienced by those authors who use it; telepathic collectivity arguably contradicts American individualism, which Aldiss connects specifically to science fiction. Aldiss, p. 278.

actually makes people more and more susceptible to breaches in their privacy. These perceived threats to privacy were as real in the 1950s when Bester wrote during the McCarthy era as they are today. Not only did the risks to privacy bloom, but also the spectre of insidious infiltrators hidden underneath the calm surface of society became popularly accepted. From this it was a short leap to a (monstrous) telepath, embodying the abstract dystopian fear.

Human achievements such as space flight and the moon landing in 1969 stimulated the imagination to ponder the limits of human capabilities in both technological and spiritual realms. Further boosted by the New Age and the so called hippie-era, the idea of expanding human sensory perception (concretely through drugs, as exemplified by Timothy Leary) seemed quite appealing also in New Wave science fiction. This intensified the quest for transcendence, of reaching beyond the current physical limitations. Certainly the perceived transcendence of the children in the process of evolving into something greater, as a salvation of humanity, is visible at the end of Arthur C. Clarke's *Childhood's End*.<sup>31</sup> Matti Savolainen comments that the New Wave incorporated a form of new literary self-consciousness combined with a new social awareness.<sup>32</sup> Bester was more cynical in his approach, while others, like Frank Herbert, grafted a world where heroes, through a "preternatural blend of bravery, genius and psi", triumph.<sup>33</sup> Yet even in Herbert's work the atmosphere changed from positive superheroes to potentially destructive supernatural people.

Telepathy can be first spotted for what it is in the popular mainstream of science fiction literature in the 1950s. It is estimated even that stories including telepathy rank second in popularity among science fiction fans only after stories of "alien cultures".<sup>34</sup> Earlier the works of

---

<sup>31</sup> Referred to as the "overmind" in Aldiss, p. 249 and Clark, Arthur C. (1953) *Childhood's End*. London: Pan Macmillan. 2001. Although, even this begs the interesting question that from whose perspective is the birth of an "overmind" considered a good thing? Lowentrou, p. 396.

<sup>32</sup> Savolainen, Matti. "The New Wave of Science Fiction as Postmodern Literature: J.G. Ballard as a Test Case" in *Criticism in the Twilight Zone: Postmodern Perspectives on Literature and Politics*. Zadworna-Fjellestad and Björk, Lennart (eds.). Stockholm. 1990. p. 121.

<sup>33</sup> Herbert, Frank. *Dune*. (1965) London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, NEL Paperback Edition, 1968. In fact, Herbert's hero was helped out by the drug spice melange, in *Dune*, Broderick, p. 51.

<sup>34</sup> Lowentrou, p. 389.

Olaf Stabledon had made the term familiar in the field as early as the 1930s. There were several works available at that time that started to show distinct telepathic abilities on the part of their protagonists. It fits nicely into the idea of men transcending human boundaries “either through mutation, gradual evolution, alien intervention, or technological breakthrough”,<sup>35</sup> and almost all of these methods are indeed used by different novelists. Although in this thesis I will be mainly dealing with human telepathy, it bears noting that just as often the alien ‘other’ might be the telepathic threat to humanity.<sup>36</sup> It is furthermore noteworthy that most novels with telepaths are set in the future, not the contemporary world. People of extraordinary mental abilities have become a staple within the genre itself. Some of these literary works have been dubbed “legacy texts”<sup>37</sup> for their vital role in the development of science fiction.<sup>38</sup>

Other works in that same period of time similarly showed psychic powers; the screen-adapted version *Starship Troopers*<sup>39</sup> by Robert Heinlein featured “psychics”, whose abilities were remarkably close to telepathy as seen in modern popular culture. Curiously, however, in the original book these telepaths/psychics have considerably less visibility.<sup>40</sup> They are mentioned only briefly as a part of society and the futuristic world, but even the protagonist of the novel views them with mistrust, calling their abilities “black magic”.<sup>41</sup> The movie, on the other hand, designates the best friend of the protagonist as a psychic, and displays a measure of guarded respect for his abilities. Furthermore, the screen-adapted version used a pack of cards to find psychics, possibly to simulate the Zener Card test, discussed later in section 2-1. Perhaps telepathy is such a regular feature in contemporary science fiction that it can be added into adapted works with apparently very little effort.

---

<sup>35</sup> Malmgren, p. 128.

<sup>36</sup> This is seen for example in Ray Bradbury's story "The Third Expedition" in *The Martian Chronicles*, 1951. Hienger, Jörg. "The Uncanny and Science Fiction" in *Science Fiction Studies*. Vol. 6, Part 2 (July) 1979. DePauw University. Accessed at: <http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/18/hienger18art.htm>, acquired 20.04.2007.

<sup>37</sup> Mendelshon, p. 6.

<sup>38</sup> *The Demolished Man* was the first winner of the prestigious Hugo Award (best novel) when it was awarded in 1953.

<sup>39</sup> *Starship Troopers* (1997). Directed by Paul Verhoeven. Writing credits: Robert A. Heinlein (book), Edward Neumeier (screenplay). <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120201/>, acquired 13.5.2006.

<sup>40</sup> Heinlein, Robert A. *Starship Troopers*. (1959) London: New English Library. 1970

<sup>41</sup> Heinlein, p. 176, 200.

In another novel, *Stranger In a Strange Land* Heinlein continues to explore the idea of transcendence through the mind, peeling away supreme scientific competence as the only key.<sup>42</sup> Heinlein also introduces a term, “grokking”, that can be used to signify variation actions, including extrasensory perception and a variety of other similar talents (e.g. “You grok God”).<sup>43</sup> Those who can “grok” can join into a new kind of community. On the other hand, the telepath can also be nullified by the existence of “psi-immunes”, individuals immune to telepathic or other *psi* powers, in Philip K. Dick’s “A World of Talent” published in *Galaxy Science Fiction* magazine (1954).<sup>44</sup> Taking a slightly more cynical tone, John Christopher's *The New Wine*, features a human race suddenly made fully proficient in telepathy, but a hundred years later life is almost over, “for when people can see and know each other as they really are, they prefer to die”.<sup>45</sup>

Uncanny situations in science fiction became acceptable settings.<sup>46</sup> Mainstream science fiction incorporated highly successful movies such as *Star Wars* (1977)<sup>47</sup> and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977).<sup>48</sup> These movies raised the profile of science fiction ever higher into mainstream popular culture. At the same time, however, it is noteworthy that both of these movies displayed occasional telepathic features. There are several other examples of individuals with extraordinary abilities in popular culture television series and movies, but the powers are usually dubbed something else. The Jedi powers manipulating physical objects (telekinesis) or sensing beyond the normal senses in *Star Wars* and the shared obsession of those touched by the benevolent aliens in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* both feature powers of the mind.<sup>49</sup> Because it is so broad in scope, many telepathic abilities are renamed and used as elements in the

---

<sup>42</sup> Aldiss, pp. 288-289.

<sup>43</sup> Heinlein, Robert A. *Stranger In a Strange Land* (1961) Hodder and Stoughton. 2005. p. 448. Lowentroun expands on the discussion by adding another quote, “I am all that I grok”. Lowentroun, p. 396.

<sup>44</sup> Nicholls, p. 171.

<sup>45</sup> Williams, Raymond. “Science Fiction” in *Science Fiction Studies*. Volume 15, Part 3 (November) 1988. DePauw University. Accessed at <http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/documents/williams.htm>, acquired 21.04.2007.

<sup>46</sup> Hienger, webservice.

<sup>47</sup> *Star Wars*. (1977). Directed and written by George Lucas. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0076759/>, acquired 26.2.2006.

<sup>48</sup> *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977). Directed and written by Steven Spielberg.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0075860/>, acquired 26.2.2006.

<sup>49</sup> The shared compulsion as an example, mentioned in Aldiss, p. 272.

storytelling. More visible form of telepathy was delivered by the movie *Scanners* (1980),<sup>50</sup> which features telepaths and relating to them, exploding heads.

It can be argued that telepathy deals more with what can be called inner space also propagated by the New Wave mentality; the inside of a person, and the multitudes of facets within. It would often follow that the outer becomes a projection of the inner, especially in J.G. Ballard's take on New Wave science fiction.<sup>51</sup> The inner space can access the realm of the psychic, allowing for the inner world of the mind and the outer world of reality to meet and fuse together. Exploring this aspect was a new form of reproducing the previous romantic fascination with space travel, turning more often to the human mind than to technology as the vehicle of choice to convey new ideas.<sup>52</sup> Undiscovered power and complexity fed upon new theories detached from pure scientific reason that fit in with New Wave, such as telepathy.

---

<sup>50</sup> Aldiss, p. 274. However, the Internet Movie Database gives the 1981 as the year the movie came out. *Scanners* (1980/1) Directed and written by David Cronenberg. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0081455/>, acquired 02.04.2007. Nicholls also provides a graphic picture of aforementioned exploding head: Nicholls, p. 171.

<sup>51</sup> Savolainen, p. 122.

<sup>52</sup> Jones, Gwyneth. "The Icons of Science Fiction" in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. James, Edward and Mendlesohn, Farah (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003 p. 166

## 2 – Exploring Telepathy

To find some reason to the popularity and rather easy acceptance of telepathic attributes in mainstream science fiction, one must first investigate telepathy itself. Telepathy is not only a fictional creation, but has its roots in several human conceptions according to which Extra Sensory Perception (ESP) is possible. The concept of telepathy has been around in human history and literature for quite some time; it has not simply spontaneously erupted into consciousness. This is possibly the reason why it is also so readily accepted in science fiction. Telepathy can stereotypically be seen as ranging from nothing more than good intuition to physical manifestations of one's willpower. First, however, I will review the origins of telepathy as a concept.

Scientific investigation of telepathy is generally recognized as having begun with the initial program or research of the Society for Psychical Research (abbreviated as S.P.R. from now on).<sup>53</sup> The apex of their early investigations was the report published in 1886 and it was with this work that the term “telepathy” was introduced into the scientific community. It is proposed that the word telepathy has its roots in Greek: τηλε, *tele*, “distant”; and πάθεια, *patheia*, “feeling”.<sup>54</sup> However, it is doubtful that the word originated there. The concept of telepathy has spawned several terms to supplement it, such as metasensory, or extra-sensory perception. Perception was also extended to include forms of communication. The S.P.R. attempted to contribute to a wider reconceptualization of the borders of the individual as well as discover what were considered to be so far unexplored regions of the mind.<sup>55</sup> However, most tests (or closer to none, depending on your viewpoint) on telepathy have been considered less than scientific. In addition, many of the results have not been successfully reproduced. I will return to parapsychology as a science investigating telepathy in the following section.

---

<sup>53</sup> The society was originally founded in Trinity College in 1882, Cambridge, England, due to an interest in spiritualism. It still exists today. <http://www.spr.ac.uk/>, acquired 27.02.2007.

<sup>54</sup> Luckhurst, p. 1.

<sup>55</sup> Thurschwell, Pamela. *Literature, Technology and Magical Thinking, 1880-1920*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2001. pp. 2, 15.

Nicholas Royle traces the first use of telepathic abilities and the word ‘telepathy’ to the entry written by S.P.R. member F.W.H. Myers in *The Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) in 1882.<sup>56</sup> Myers was “the first psychologist to have attempted a synthesis of the facts of psychical research”, and added it into the official lexicon with references to the subliminal self, and the superior or invisible part of the sensory spectrum.<sup>57</sup> Myers was a very notable figure for the invention of telepathy, as he first combined diverse elements of psychic research under a single term. Shortly thereafter telepathy had become a term to be taken as a given concept especially by the S.P.R, and from thereon into mass awareness during the 1890s.<sup>58</sup> Royle notes that even from the start telepathy has been, perhaps consciously, a very flexible term to “emphasize the importance of multiplicity and diversity”.<sup>59</sup> In literature, Royle binds the emergence of telepathy to the general increase of spirituality and psychology in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Furthermore, Royle links the popularity of telepathy to the “crisis of Christianity of the Victorian Age”.<sup>60</sup> Telepathy then could perhaps be better explained as a countering force to science, which had started to threaten the dominance of religion since the Enlightenment. Charles Darwin’s evolutionary theories furthered the idea of evolutionary progress still taking place, giving room for new interpretation of human capabilities. When tackling old authorities, the idea of telepathy was also challenging the traditional fields of science as well, which were not at all inclusive.<sup>61</sup> One of the biggest changes ushered in by the S.P.R. was to exclude spiritualism slowly from the concept of telepathy, because it was considered too anti-science in favour of extraordinary sensory powers and thought transfer.<sup>62</sup>

Telepathy would provide a foundation for a belief that originates from the people themselves and yet grants the possibility of spiritual communion. Telepathy can produce a sense of

---

<sup>56</sup> Royle, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> Sudre, René. *Treatise on Parapsychology*. Trans. Green, C.E. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1960. p. 396. Also, Luckhurst, p. 109.

<sup>58</sup> Thurschwell, p. 8, and Luckhurst p. 121.

<sup>59</sup> Royle, p. 2.

<sup>60</sup> Royle, p. 3.

<sup>61</sup> Luckhurst, p. 14.

<sup>62</sup> Luckhurst, pp. 58, 65, 70-71. Luckhurst phrases the new framework as “occluded but terrestrial”.

community (often between telepaths only), that has been lost in the modern individualistic world. Actual expressed anxieties about loneliness in this global era make telepathy in science fiction worth studying as an outlet for these anxieties. Furthermore, even from the onset of psychic research, mental deviance, insanity or claimed extrasensory powers, were viewed with a sense of morbid fascination, seeing it as a rather frightening and potentially dangerous concept.<sup>63</sup> However if telepathy is considered a deviancy, it very rarely is a visible one. In a society that defines normality by outlook, this kind of unseen deviance can be considered even more threatening.<sup>64</sup> This basic mindset no doubt affected how ‘other’ the people associated with it seemed. Luckhurst notes that if anything, telepathy is subjected to the same basic anxieties already voiced when the field of study was conceived.<sup>65</sup>

During this religious recession telepathy and other extraordinary abilities became easier to talk about or deal with. In religious terms, one might consider prophets a type of telepath; certainly the claimed ability to communicate with powers beyond the range of our senses fits the description. A relationship with the transcendent has been a defining factor in the foundation of a perceived true community.<sup>66</sup> However, it is prudent to point out that in many cases abilities such as telepathy have been considered by religious conservatives as unnatural, and potentially linked to satanic powers. The symptoms of telepathic abilities are not always considered positive, especially when the church considered all things related to the spiritual world as its domain. It was potentially dangerous for others to express supernatural abilities and especially so when they were not clearly those bestowed by God. Clairvoyance that did not credit God had only one possible other source. Curiously enough issues like these were the ones where clergy and scientists could strike a

---

<sup>63</sup> Luckhurst, p. 102.

<sup>64</sup> The idea of seen and unseen deviancy and its relation to telepathy is explored very extensively in Wyndham, John. *The Chrysalids*. (1955) Penguin Books. 1958. pp. 18-19.

<sup>65</sup> Luckhurst, p. 11.

<sup>66</sup> Lowentrou, p. 395. For an early example of true community linked with their special relationship with the transcendent, see John Winthrop’s covenant with God when arriving in America. Winthrop, John. (1630) *A Modell of Christian Charity*. <http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap1/winthrop.html> Acquired 10.04.2007.

common chord of perceived fraudulence.<sup>67</sup> Later in the novels we shall see that these aspects, fear and envy, seem to be a permanent part of human nature.

Many of the accusations levelled against witches, for example, were based on the assumption that they are capable of actions that could be classified in later times as telepathic.<sup>68</sup> At best the person in question would become a social pariah. In several cases people accused of witchcraft were condemned to death as a punishment for meddling with such powers. However in the case of the infamous Salem Witch trials (1692) for example, some of the convicted were considered to be innocent after the judgment had already been carried out, and this caused considerable soul searching.<sup>69</sup> Perhaps any ability that is considered limited in nature (i.e. gifts of God) cannot be allowed by the dominating users (i.e. clergy) to spread to those who are not considered responsible. Although theoretically there would be no clearer indication of guilt or intent, other than what is found inside a person's head, the example of the Salem trials showed that 'spectral evidence'<sup>70</sup> can be distorted easily. Even if the witch hunts were not as extensive or brutal as popularly imagined, the images associated with it still live strong.

In literature telepathy was preceded by conceptions of 'sympathy', according to Royle. He points out that in Milton's "Argument to Book X" of *Paradise Lost* (1667) the passage "Sin and Death sitting till then at the gates of hell, by wondrous sympathy feeling the success of Satan in this new world [...]" Milton's 'wondrous sympathy' could be translated into 'telepathy'.<sup>71</sup> This is, according to Royle, the legacy of human sympathy in Romanticism in general<sup>72</sup> and the gothic romance in particular. Having roots this deep, it would be meaningless to try and separate telepathy from literature; it is an interdependent element within it.

---

<sup>67</sup> Thurschwell, p. 15.

<sup>68</sup> For a popular reference on the powers of witchcraft, consider the capabilities of the witches in Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* novels. For example, Granny Weatherwax displays markedly telepathic powers, controlling wildlife with her thoughts. See: Pratchett, Terry. (1992) *Lords And Ladies*. London: Corgi. 1993.

<sup>69</sup> Samuel Sewall, one of the presiding judges at the Trials questions their previously righteous cause in his diary. "The Diary of Samuel Sewall", in *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. New York : Norton, 1989. p. 206.

<sup>70</sup> Spectral evidence refers to evidence of the spiritual realm, referring to concepts such as the "Evil Eye". "The Tryal [sic] of Elizabeth How. [www.curriculumunits.com/crucible/background/1692-How.htm](http://www.curriculumunits.com/crucible/background/1692-How.htm), acquired 20.3.2006.

<sup>71</sup> Royle, p. 4.

<sup>72</sup> In his book Royle uses Henry James and Jane Austen among others to illustrate his points.

However, telepathy is difficult to categorize sufficiently. Even Royle considers “empathy” or “sympathy” as types of pre-telepathy; abilities that resemble telepathy but are not quite enough to earn them the name. Stereotypically telepathy is expected to be something more than sympathy. That being said, telepathy frequently excludes other forms of extraordinary powers usually associated with it, such as prescience. In the novels I will analyze in this thesis, the telepath cannot predict the future, but he can peek into the memories of other people. Even telekinesis, the more physical manifestation of telepathy, is often distinguished as a separate entity. Usually different science fiction authors define the range of telepathic abilities themselves according to the needs of their fictional worlds.

In contemporary times, telepathy has become, in scientific terms, one of the indicators of neurotic personality. Admittance of clairvoyance or sensing the thoughts of others (or respectively feeling that others can sense yours) is considered one of the major symptoms of schizotypal disorders, although they are, as Royle points out, telepathic in nature.<sup>73</sup> For many people, their mind is the final fortress and sanctuary. Even the possibility of this sanctuary being compromised threatens our perception of what is real, or what sensory feedback we can trust. In clinical terms, this results in neurotic disorders. In the rationalized system of the mind, there is little serious room for actual telepathic powers. Normally exceptional intuition is accepted as normal, even laudable, but not when it is considered telepathic. What is normal and what is real become blurred, when the hypothetical telepaths can influence cognitive processes. This aspect will also be explored further in the close readings of the material.

## **2-1 Parapsychology**

This section explores the scientific perception of telepathy in the field of parapsychology. Some studies coincided with the rise of perception expansion and the conception of a freer mind brought

---

<sup>73</sup> Royle, p. 3.

about by the 1960s, but the study in this field has roots much further back in history. The field of study is contradictory especially within the academia, yet despite the scorn scholars have published studies that do not deal with telepathy exclusively, but rather with parapsychological manifestations as a whole.<sup>74</sup> René Sudre argues that statistical and physical evidence do not in his opinion apply to this exceptional field, further claiming that cold science discourages exceptional studies due to preconceptions of fraud. Ever since the idea of perception of outside powers and the paranormal was first approached, the world of academia responded by fear and refusal of the supernatural.<sup>75</sup> Sudre quotes Focault: “If I saw a straw moved by the action of my will [...] I should be terrified. If the influence of mind upon matter does not cease at the surface of the skin, there is no safety left in the world for anyone.”<sup>76</sup>

The matter of parapsychology being a scorned field of science then has possibly as much to do with human fears and anxieties as it does with actual lack of scientific, empirical evidence. However, despite his objections about the casual dismissal of parapsychology, Sudre seeks a more reasoned approach. He thinks that parapsychology has been subjected to unreasonable expectations of “heights of human development to which the human race is destined”.<sup>77</sup> According to Sudre, the expectations of telepathic abilities and their range have fuelled the sceptics to demand similar feats before they are convinced. Sudre rather seeks common ground with other sciences to reduce the extraordinariness of parapsychology and to gain legitimacy to the field of study. There are several classifications for different psychic phenomena, and telepathy is only one of them.

Tracing the existence of psychical manifestations to religion and to the Bible even, there are signs of religion linking with psychic abilities. In this context, there are less problems with the

---

<sup>74</sup> For example, Pamela Thurschwell refers to the founders of S.P.R. as “too-gullible”. Thurschwell, p. 14, whereas Theodor Adorno is quoted by Luckhurst as saying “occultism is the metaphysics of dunces”, Luckhurst, p. 256. Even J.B. Rhine was aware of the hostility and controversy surrounding the field during his experiments. McVaugh, Michael. “J-B-Rhine’s Extra-Sensory Perception and Its Background in Psychical Research” in *Isis*, Vol. 67, No. 2, June 1976. p. 162.

<sup>75</sup> Sudre, René. *Treatise on Parapsychology*. Trans. Green, C.E. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1960. p. 32.

<sup>76</sup> Sudre, p. 33.

<sup>77</sup> Sudre, p. 10.

issue, as it is not considered to be in the realm of science. However tests conducted in spiritual rituals showed signs of spiritualism before its actual advent.<sup>78</sup> It seems also clear that these are experiences common to all cultural contexts, merely varying in its interpretation according to the surroundings and the era in which they are discovered. Sudre discusses hysterical disorders as a symptom of higher thought-patterns underneath.<sup>79</sup> In this Sudre seems to link mental disabilities with hidden, or not yet understood mental capabilities.

The idea emerges that emotionally instable people could have psychic powers, but they too would be similarly unstable. In Sudre's view, the individual is given more credence than any actions by several people (i.e. a collective) in parapsychological experimenting. This concept is however countered in Keys's novels, where greater numbers of telepaths concentrating brings stronger results. The onset of telepathy may find expression through mental disorders that are not understood correctly. On the other hand, a mentally disadvantaged person might be more prone to manifest psychic powers.<sup>80</sup> However the religious wave of cleansing, as Sudre calls it, deprived Europe of many of its likely candidates.<sup>81</sup> This suggests that in Sudre's thinking psychic powers are a common factor in humanity, but more or less a dormant one. He is supported in this estimate also by Sigmund Freud to some extent.<sup>82</sup>

In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century this controversy and increased interest spilled over to the United States, creating a consensus on the "existence of all forms of telepathy".<sup>83</sup> The United States' scientific community saw the foundation of the S.P.R.'s American branch already in 1884.<sup>84</sup> After the Second World War, the Americans took the lead in initiatives in conferences and studies conducted, which indicated an increase of the popularity of psychic phenomena, perhaps partially

---

<sup>78</sup> Sudre, p. 24. Many of Sudre's arguments are also supported by an earlier study he seems to rely on. This was one of the first studies conducted into the field in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century: Willian Crookes & London Dialectical Society: *Report on Spiritualism of the Committee of the London Dialectical Society*. London: Longmans. 1871. On the other hand, McVaugh notes that Sudré and J.B. Rhine didn't agree on the feasibility of Rhine's methods, McVaugh, p. 168.

<sup>79</sup> Sudre, p. 29.

<sup>80</sup> Sudre, p. 58.

<sup>81</sup> Sudre, p. 56.

<sup>82</sup> Lowentrou, p. 392.

<sup>83</sup> Sudre, p. 40.

<sup>84</sup> Luckhurst, p. 55.

explaining its imminent appearance in the 20<sup>th</sup> century American science fiction as well. J.B. Rhine at Duke University is credited for the coining of ESP as a term and the form of testing known as Zener Cards.<sup>85</sup> At this point the study of telepathy and parapsychology had moved away from the supernatural. However, the methods used to attain a “receptive state of mind” included the use of drugs as one of the “most obvious means”.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, the need for physical contact or even direct line of sight as a prerequisite for a psychological one between two subjects has been speculated. Indeed, a physical link is often seen as the easiest access point to a telepath in science fiction as well, although it is not necessary. In the case of line of sight, however, there is some variation in the novels. In science fiction this is often explained as a metaphoric mental path that makes connecting minds easier once the link has first been established.

Regarding telepathy itself, Sudre defines the term. Telepathy is not, for example, the same as possession witnessed in spiritualism. Telepathy is interaction, generalized as *psi*, not only cognition.<sup>87</sup> It can be condensed into “communication of ideas between two individuals without sensory means”.<sup>88</sup> Sudre’s examples, however, conflict with J.B. Rhine’s classic single faculty of telepathy in ESP, because Sudre sets much in store for the subconscious in telepathy (e.g. dreaming), or chance (e.g. A and B are thinking the same thing at the same moment constitutes an act of telepathy in Sudre’s opinion).<sup>89</sup> These low-level contacts are hard to distinguish from sympathy or intuition. While this does not fit the perception of telepathy in many science fiction novels in this thesis, Sudre has other relevant points: He divides telepathy into passive and active actions, in which the latter actually obtains information instead of being informed.<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> Sudre, p. 46, 141-142 and Luckhurst pp. 252-253. The Zener Pack consists of five different cards; a rectangle, a cross, a circle and a wavy line. In the test five packs are used, and the subject is supposed to guess which card the examiner is holding without viewing it him/herself. The results with the Pack tend to decline in prolonged testing. Further explored by McVaugh, p. 170. See also, Rhine, J.B. (1934) *Extra-sensory Perception*. Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing. 2003.

<sup>86</sup> Sudre, p. 57.

<sup>87</sup> Braude, Stephen. “Telepathy” in *Noûs*. Vol. 12, No. 3, September 1978. Blackwell Publishing. p. 270.

<sup>88</sup> Sudre, p. 123-124 and Braude, p. 268, 271.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.* Further, Sudre makes a rather controversial statement that “when two persons have the same dream, it is absurd to suggest any other explanation than telepathic communication”. Sudre, p. 145.

<sup>90</sup> Sudre, p. 125.

Usually the telepath not only sends, but also receives with little or no effort. The sender (agent) and receiver (percipient) are interchangeable.<sup>91</sup> If everyone is capable of receiving, the capability to send creates the telepath. The forefront of the mind, i.e. surface thoughts, is considered both in science fiction and in parapsychological study an easily accessible area. In Keyes's books a telepath with only passive reception would still be able to listen in on the surface thoughts of the people he meets. Sudre does not view telepathy as an evolutionary culmination, but as a rather universal feature which could be allowed to bloom only if its existence is admitted.<sup>92</sup>

Sudre does not even see the manifestation of telepathic capabilities as purely human prerogative (he notes that the animal world also has telepathic features<sup>93</sup>) and not as a promise of ascension, but simply as a slow development based on the vast legacy of human experience.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, the birth and development of tele-culture is also noted. Telepathy is also linked to the more modern idea of communication from afar,<sup>95</sup> a kind of next step after telephones and webphones. The spread of the telephone and later wireless communication through the radio into common households replaced previous theories of telepathic communication considered now too archaic.<sup>96</sup> The technological change in previous decades has been significant enough to warrant it to be called "slow-motion telepathy".<sup>97</sup> However, they also share the purpose of disappearing bodily distances in communication; in this utopian understanding distances are theoretically of no importance to the power of the mind.<sup>98</sup>

The idea of a "channel of telepathy" and studies into the activity of the cerebral cortex and brainwaves have further expanded the realm of parapsychology.<sup>99</sup> In the novels there is this

---

<sup>91</sup> Braude, p. 284.

<sup>92</sup> Sudre, p. 128.

<sup>93</sup> Such as the dance of the bees and a hive-mind, and the dog who howls when it senses its master has passed away.

<sup>94</sup> Sudre, p. 400.

<sup>95</sup> Royle p. 5.

<sup>96</sup> An interesting detail: The person Alexander Bell called the first telephone call to, Thomas Watson, was also a medium by trade. Luckhurst, p. 135.

<sup>97</sup> Barry Schwartz, quoted in Hassan, Ihab. "The New Gnosticism: Speculations on an Aspect of the Postmodern Mind" in *Paracriticisms – Seven Speculations of the Times*. Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press. 1975. p. 135.

<sup>98</sup> Thurschwell, p. 6, 8.

<sup>99</sup> Sudre, p. 154, 157 and Braude p. 287.

additional “channel” of communication present. Studies done into the nature of telepathy end up contradicting the popular definition displayed in science fiction and reinforcing it in other aspects. Sudre’s interpretations are consistent with Keyes’s representation of telepathy in several aspects, and where it seems they clash, Sudre has chosen a different path from J.B Rhine’s findings. Rhine managed to incorporate the past discoveries of psychic research in his studies in a coherent fashion; Rhine did not bring much new into the field but he drew the conclusions together while at the same time distinguishing between clairvoyant perception and telepathic perception.<sup>100</sup> This and other classifications were adapted readily in science fiction, especially in the magazine *Astounding Science Fiction* under the editorship of John W. Campbell.<sup>101</sup> It seems that to American science fiction dealing with telepathy, Rhine’s arguably scientific studies have provided more foundation to the science of telepathy in American science fiction.<sup>102</sup>

## 2-2 The Telepath Homo Superior

As stated before, telepaths have not been restrained to their name only, or that is to say, telepaths do not need to be called/labelled as such to exist. There are other interpretations of manifestations that can be linked to telepathy. For example Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and his conception of the *Übermensch*, a being that surpasses normal human boundaries is readily available. In one of his more famous pieces, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*,<sup>103</sup> the *Übermensch* is further introduced. Nietzsche did not necessarily attribute any superhuman or extraordinary powers to *Übermensch* as such, but instead claimed that the *Übermensch* is simply more human, above the pettiest of emotions and desires.<sup>104</sup> Taken to the extreme, the *Übermensch* is the master of its humanity. And as such, it is indeed a worthy goal and motive for striving forward for a telepath constrained in the

---

<sup>100</sup> McVaugh, p. 163 and Nicholls, pp. 172-173.

<sup>101</sup> *The Science in Science Fiction*. Nicholls, Peter (ed). London: Roxby Science Fiction Limited. 1982, p. 170.

<sup>102</sup> Nicholls, p. 137 and Aldiss, p. 68. Elsewhere, Rhine’s results have a mixed reception. McVaugh, p. 189.

<sup>103</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich. (1885) *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Trans. Hollingdale, R. J. Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1961.

<sup>104</sup> Ansell-Pearson., Keith. *An Introduction to Nietzsche as a Political Thinker*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1994. p. 7. A curious link here to the title of Theodore Sturgeon’s *More Than Human* can be made.

society by normal humans. Or depending on the interpretation, it can also offer a telepath an ideal to pursue while retaining their humanity, since transcendence is possible, but not required.<sup>105</sup>

Nonetheless, it often gives voice to a distress over the impotence of suffering and desire to change that state of affairs. It is a yearning to redeem the perceivably deplorable human condition.<sup>106</sup>

The connection with tremendous power of “Will” and the *Übermensch* was first made by A.R. Orange in the early 1900s.<sup>107</sup> Later, Olaf Stapledon extrapolated it to science fiction in *Odd John* (1935). “Telepathy is, commonly, the super in superman”, as is noted by Curtis Smith.<sup>108</sup> Often the superman (also an often-used translation for *Übermensch*<sup>109</sup>) is viewed as a one of a kind, rugged individualist as would be befitting the American tradition, the telepath can break this formula. Therefore it is curious why telepathy is so well received in the United States, as it does have the potential to undermine individualism. There are examples of novels that feature only a single telepath, or a limited group like Sturgeon’s *homo gestalt*, but telepaths can also make up a considerable portion of the population. Smith draws on Stapledon, commenting that despite its communistic elements the [telepathic] community transcends Marxian communism in that it attains a new level of individualism”.<sup>110</sup>

For the purposes of this argument, I will rather rename the *Übermensch* as *homo superior*, since the form of the telepath does not accurately follow the one of the *Übermensch*. Similarly to the *Übermensch*, the *homo superior* is willing and able to cross the set boundaries of society and create his own values to replace those the society attempts to enforce. It can be proposed that the quest for the truth beyond those boundaries transforms into a grasp for power: It is better to create one’s own morals instead of allowing oneself to be enslaved by fixed systems of values, since there can be no universal base for these values. The progress of the *homo superior* is legitimized

---

<sup>105</sup> Ansell-Pearson, pp. 106-107.

<sup>106</sup> Ansell-Pearson, p. 120.

<sup>107</sup> Luckhurst, p. 257.

<sup>108</sup> Smith, p. 54.

<sup>109</sup> The actual translation of the word has much to do on how one reads the *Übermensch* itself, and thus often contested. The term does not automatically claim evolutionary connotations, for example. Ansell-Pearson, p. 106.

<sup>110</sup> Smith, p. 56.

by the progress of humanity. Transcendence as a whole is more of a learning process.<sup>111</sup> Still, the most common way of interpretation is to expect that the *homo superior* will replace *homo sapiens*, this scenario being approached already by John Beresford's *The Hampshire Wonder* (1911).<sup>112</sup>

It is not always certain that the *homo superior* will prevail, especially if he is faced with a great majority of normal people, unwilling to allow such dominance over them. Although Nietzsche did not expect such a conflict, taking the setting out of the theoretical context and imagining this superiority as concrete abilities, it is possible to discover the *homo superior*, the suggested step after the *homo sapiens* propagated by science fiction literature. The material remains, but the mental and the abstract become more pronounced. One of the first authors to embrace this transcendence of the material was Olaf Stapledon and his novel *Star Maker* (1937). Whether or not the *homo superior* is a product of human development, evolutionary or not, is debatable. Certainly the thought would appear to be pleasant to the *homo superior* themselves, as it would also legitimize their potential claim to rule over the "normals". Similarly to normals an emergence of *homo superior* is a clear threat, that in the spirit of evolutionary struggle should annihilated before it can grow.<sup>113</sup>

It is not clear whether or not all people have the ability to become the *homo superior*, and become something greater, or if they are forever condemned to be aware of their own fallibilities in comparison. How are these incomplete *homo sapiens*, or *Untermenschen*, then to be treated? This begs the question of the distribution of telepathic abilities: It is more likely that the majority will not have telepathic powers, since very rarely has the whole population been granted telepathic abilities in science fiction novels? Since humanity and normality are usually defined by the majority, they can easily exclude minorities, such as telepaths. In essence, with the power of the majority the *Untermenschen* can dictate the life of the *Übermenschen*, and in so doing become a potential monsters themselves. On the other hand, not every telepath has all the capabilities of a

---

<sup>111</sup> Smith, p. 55.

<sup>112</sup> Nicholls, p. 136.

<sup>113</sup> Wyndham, p. 132.

*homo superior* (i.e.. the telepathic powers may vary wildly depending on the individual<sup>114</sup>), but they still belong to that same community. In that case it tends to become the responsibility of the community to protect their weaker members against outsiders.

The question of language is not as prevalent as the other manifestations of the telepathic *homo superior*, but surely the concept of telepathy is detrimental to the need of a suitable language to be mastered. A telepath can speak readily through his or her mind, with apparent ease, suggesting that through the mind people of different ethnicities can be linked by this common language, or rather the lack thereof. The existence of the *homo superior* as an interpretation of telepaths in the novels brings out several questions of community, but also clearly those of persecution. The existence of a *homo superior* as a separate entity from the general population also reflects on notions of race, conflict and identity visible in the novels. It also connects telepathy into a larger framework of society and community, instead of being just a collection of peculiar powers.

### **2-3 Gothic Monster**

There is also the possibility of reading the telepath as a gothic monster, being inhuman instead of superhuman. Certainly this is a possible interpretation, because ‘othering’ telepaths as nonhuman due to their nature would not be hard from a historical point of view; humans seem to be quite adept at distinguishing themselves from someone else. The consequences of this ‘othering’ is explored here, and seen later in the novels as well. The central message of the Gothic romance allows for the irrational to overpower the rational.<sup>115</sup> Similarly, the Gothic tradition often allows for being possessed or plagued by extraordinary forces.<sup>116</sup> Since Gothic fiction usually is set to take place in distant times and places, it fits science fiction well. In addition, Gothic fiction and the Gothic monster can be used to depict the decline of traditional values and beliefs; they can be seen as agents questioning the current social status and a yearning to change it. Brian Aldiss

---

<sup>114</sup> Nicholls, p. 171.

<sup>115</sup> Brantlinger, pp. 31.

<sup>116</sup> Thurschwell, p. 13.

defines science fiction as “the search for a definition of mankind and his status in the universe which will stand in our advanced but confused state of knowledge and is characteristically cast in the Gothic or post-Gothic mode”.<sup>117</sup>

Traditionally Gothic fiction deals with negative, irrational and even immoral aspects, in the end makes an attempt to ensure the victory of good over evil.<sup>118</sup> The conceptual foreignness of the ‘other’, which is excluded by most social structures, is often implicitly connected with evil.<sup>119</sup> Often the concept of evil is portraying shifts in cultural fears, so it is not unchanging. However in science fiction, Gothic elements tend to lean towards dystopias, which excludes the need for a happy ending or a lesson learned (although arguably it can serve as a warning), but does not expect actual evil, as such. The telepath is viewed as potentially evil, especially by those who see him as the ‘other’. Tolerating difference has never been a strong trait in human societies, and worse yet the telepaths are a clear threat to those who do not share their abilities. Normal is natural, deviance is unnatural.

Since telepaths rely on their cognitive process, it would be easy to expect them to be cold, calculative and disconnected from humanity. On the other hand, telepaths put the power back into the hands of humans and away from industrial technology, which would enforce the Romantic ideal. The focus returns to man and his spiritual realm after materialism. Many writers since the Industrial Revolution have lamented the cost to nature and humanity of technological progress. Patrick Brantlinger claims that “the subjective imagery of lunacy and nightmare becomes the imagery of the external world of machines and mass society” in his argument for the gothic base of science fiction.<sup>120</sup> It is in this context that the idea of the mind triumphing over matter is revived, giving telepathy an almost romantic foundation. In its most idealistic form, Nietzsche’s *Übermensch*, the telepath is not bound to the mass society or restricted by technology, but can

---

<sup>117</sup> Aldiss, p. 25.

<sup>118</sup> Botting, Fred. *Gothic*. London: Routledge, 1999. p. 2

<sup>119</sup> For discussions on evil and otherness, see for example: Jackson, Rosemary. *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*. London, New York: Methuen. 1981. p. 52.

<sup>120</sup> Brantlinger, p. 31.

through his own actions transcend it. The difference here is that in Gothic romance the protagonist and the context both tend to be on a smaller scale (in only one mad scientist and one monster<sup>121</sup>), whereas science fiction often seeks the larger social framework.<sup>122</sup> As *Frankenstein* is also referred to as *The Modern Prometheus*, the concept of a promethian protagonist is also extendable to the telepath as the transgressor and the transcender, albeit a flawed one.<sup>123</sup>

This follows the expectation that telepaths must conform to the rules of the society around them instead of creating their own. Society is not required to accommodate the telepath any more than it is required to accommodate Frankenstein's monster. More accurately, as Keyes illustrates in his novels, the telepath/monster can enter the society only on the terms the dominant forces of society have set. If one accepts the ascension of the monster (through evolution, for example), then the acceptance also entails a *de facto* degeneration of the dominant population (or at least the degeneration of their powers in society) up until that point.<sup>124</sup> This is another anxiety or a downright fear invoked by the Gothic monster. The monster can take many forms; Thurschwell notes that after ingesting his victim's blood, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) gains something resembling a telepathic connection with the victim.<sup>125</sup> On the side of artificially created monsters, *Frankenstein* featured the first, but by no means the last, depiction of a man-made construction gone horribly wrong.<sup>126</sup>

However, Frankenstein's creation is not merely a monster, but is also something designated monstrous by society. 'Othering' is not an objective process. The *Untermensch*-like impotence of the monster is realized in its inability to reproduce without the help of Victor, affirming the necessary link between them. As a single actor he is doomed to fail. *Frankenstein* can also be

---

<sup>121</sup> Shelley, Mary (1818) *Frankenstein*. London and New York: Penguin, 1994.

<sup>122</sup> Brantlinger, p. 35.

<sup>123</sup> Hassan, pp. 127, 130.

<sup>124</sup> Luckhurst, p. 183.

<sup>125</sup> Thurschwell, p. 12.

<sup>126</sup> Brantlinger, p. 35.

linked to a breach of privacy, as the monster appears unexpectedly to torment Victor.<sup>127</sup> The telepaths in the novels fall under the same category. In general, the gothic element of science fiction emerges quite often. The gothic monster has been so well integrated to popular culture that it can be reproduced in science fiction rather freely, much like telepathy. Aldiss claims that gothic fantasy was boosted by the emergence of evolution theory.<sup>128</sup> Instead of positive evolution of humanity into something better, it often shows no progress or, worse yet, a reversion to a more deplorable condition. Science fiction with telepathic elements is usually dominantly dystopian.

Dystopian science fiction offers numerous examples of the theme of transcendence by a chosen few. One of the more prominent authors of the cyber-era, William Gibson, looks at different forms of modern dystopian creations, such as artificial intelligence, and the expanded world of the Net. In Gibson's *Neuromancer*,<sup>129</sup> the wealthy may escape from dirty terrestrial life into orbit, where they rule supreme. This comparison could be extended to a fictional society where not money but telepathic ability becomes the separating element between humans and superhumans, or humans and monsters. One could claim that the protagonist of *Neuromancer*, a computer hacker named Case, has near-telepathic abilities when he is submerged in the world of the Net. Case feels that his body is rather a hindrance with its physical needs compared to the Net, where he can completely mentally immerse himself.<sup>130</sup> The theme of escapism seems to be strong for the superior being as well as for the monster; a sense of anxiety that from their viewpoint seems to make joining society impossible. The positive aspect of telepathy is usually only found in the end, while the road to his utopian transcendence is filled with misery. Dystopian interpretations in science fiction have proven to be more durable even in general.<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>127</sup> The "monster" sneaks into the bedroom of Victor's betrothed, and kills her. Shelley, p. 189.

<sup>128</sup> Aldiss, p. 17.

<sup>129</sup> Gibson, William. (1984) *Neuromancer*. London: Voyager, HarperCollins Publishers, 1995.

<sup>130</sup> Gibson, pp. 12, 76.

<sup>131</sup> Aldiss, p. 53.

Brantlinger claims that the gothic tradition of science fiction will see to it that the hero will never be empowered unless “he is in league with the devil”.<sup>132</sup> This would set the telepath squarely on the “dark side”. There is a purpose to this categorization: the monsters are supposed to be repulsive or inhuman to us, which should trigger the “reaction against the secularization and rationalization of life”, thus turning science fiction into “anti-science fiction, a form of apocalyptic fantasy”, an extrapolated warning of losing control.<sup>133</sup> There can be a kind of trade-off, meaning that when receiving telepathic abilities one has to trade away something else. In the novels there are cases of mental deviancy; an onset of telepathy would drive a person mad.<sup>134</sup>

Physical deformity or other such physical markings can be associated with this, as if the unconscious is reflected on the physical form. These aspects are also employed by Theodore Sturgeon in *More Than Human*. Sturgeon’s cast of protagonists are all notably mixed and more or less bodily damaged. They are not inhuman as such, but they are severely ‘othered’ by their capabilities and their circumstances. For example, in the case of the teleporting twins, they are also African American in 1950s America.<sup>135</sup> Simply being different almost immediately gets assigned additional, derogative terms by those who view it and dictate what is considered normal. Being so forcefully rejected naturally creates an angry response, one which can make an ‘other’ into a monster. When their individual strengths are pooled into their own small community, they form a new kind of intelligent identity referred to in the text as the *homo gestalt*. They become more powerful and so potentially even more menacing.<sup>136</sup>

Even as such this new creation is not completely free and independent from the normal *homo sapiens*, linking the telepath community to the normal one. The *homo gestalt* is also linked to yet a wider tapestry of other similar telepathic cells, revealed to Gerry in the end.<sup>137</sup> This way a larger

---

<sup>132</sup> Brantlinger, p. 41.

<sup>133</sup> Brantlinger, p. 31.

<sup>134</sup> In Sturgeon’s *More Than Human* one of the main characters is referred to as “the idiot”. Sturgeon, p. 3.

<sup>135</sup> Sturgeon, p. 41.

<sup>136</sup> Hassan, p. 143.

<sup>137</sup> Sturgeon, p. 232.

community than the physical one is opened to telepaths. Technically one could argue that hidden cells such as these bring out again the subversive nature of the telepath monster who hides underneath the society, much like modern anxieties about the so called terrorist sleeper cells. Nevertheless, the sense of community as the source of the telepath's true strength is established, as well as the idea that a community is also defined by those not belonging to it as much as by those who do. This is further strengthened in *The Chrysalids* in which telepaths can only converse amongst themselves without affecting the normal population, which persecutes them regardless.

The telepathic *homo superior* is undermined by forcing him/her to balance extraordinary abilities within what is considered an ordinary body. Furthermore, the *homo superior* often needs to fit itself into a society usually controlled by a non-telepath majority, who can dictate terms of normality and hierarchy. In effect, the telepath becomes unnatural partially through sacrificing, by volition or not, some measure of its rights as a human being. In cases of artificial telepathy the choice may be conscious; a price to pay for the power received. The balance of the trade-off is quite a subjective matter, but it does suggest that to be a telepath by default means becoming 'other'. The telepath is not then necessarily a monster, but a victim. Born telepaths have no choice in the matter.

The gothic monster offers an available interpretation of telepaths, and even more so it is an interpretation that makes it easier to 'other' telepaths as potential monsters. This perception of the 'other' here is a manifestation of the basic human distrust of abnormalities that is possible to extrapolate into science fiction. Even if the gothic monster were artificial, and this way more damnable, its artificiality is not necessary to provoke a hostile response. Similarly, the telepath should be aware of this response, and be discouraged from even trying to join the society or to prove the general opinion wrong. This 'othering' may serve as a wedge, driving telepaths and 'normals' even further apart as an act of alienation. If telepaths were to assume the mantle of the *homo superior*, they would have little reason to try to bridge the gap. In Keyes's novels, telepaths

make individual choices; others try to live in society, while others see no reason to do so. One of the arguments is that a telepath need not to accept restrictions, because as outside creations they are designed to restrict him/her.

In Keyes's novels it is made clear that there is the possibility of telepaths being artificial, products of genetic or technological manipulation. They can be enhanced through technological means and surgery.<sup>138</sup> This of course raises the question of what is the motive behind, or the purpose of, such a creation? The likely answer has both dystopian and gothic implications. Furthermore, this line of reasoning gives us a few unorthodox conceptions of telepaths. Since telepathic abilities are what define a telepath, are not similar abilities in different contexts also viable for analysis? The society rarely even considers that an artificial creation has any rights to be accepted into the general population, let alone life. The same issue could be extended to artificial intelligence. If a human telepath is created through artificial means, how clear is the line between it and a machine with similar abilities? And how much easier does this comparison make the acceptance of both as gothic monsters of science fiction? Gibson introduces Armitage, a human reprogrammed by an artificial intelligence called Wintermute, proposing that a man can be programmed like a computer. Wintermute sees humans as tools, and cares for them slightly less.<sup>139</sup> One might consider then whether this is the way a telepath views normals around him?

Recent popular culture has also investigated the inner space through technological means, as the protagonist of the *Matrix* trilogy is through the progress of the movies able to transcend his mortal coil and assume powers beyond human and technological.<sup>140</sup> However, it becomes evident that artificiality, while strengthening man, also makes him weaker. Although technological enhancements, such as a cybernetic brain, enable one to see and analyze situations more clearly or communicate with others across great distances without any outer-body attachments, it is also

---

<sup>138</sup> The idea of genetic engineering was taken up by science fiction usually with a dystopian viewpoint, Nicholls, p. 152.

<sup>139</sup> Gibson, pp. 238-239.

<sup>140</sup> *The Matrix* (1999). <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0133093/>. *The Matrix Reloaded* (2003).

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0234215/>. *The Matrix Revolutions* (2003). <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0242653/>. Directed by Andy Wachowski, Larry Wachowski.

vulnerable to futuristic “brain-hacking” by others. This means that one can control the sensory feed of an individual, making him or her in effect blind or immobile.<sup>141</sup> Curiously this applies to telepaths, who are in their minds vulnerable only to each other.<sup>142</sup>

To perhaps overly rationalize the concept, even telepathy could be classified as a type of software of the mind, another piece of a rational human construct. Usually we strive to control artificial intelligences with codes of conduct, or laws (see, for example the three laws of robotics introduced by Isaac Asimov<sup>143</sup>). However, in modern science fiction natural telepathy and technological capabilities such as hacking are usually separated. Despite the tempting bipolar opposites of archaic mind and technology, technology and artificial intelligence can still find a place even in a world that has telepaths, as is shown in the text dealt with in the following sections. In addition, hacking is something that has been shown to exist in reality in our time, while telepathy arguably has not.

Finally it is prudent to note that not all “human computers” require an outside interface or technology. Normal human beings indoctrinated to logical thought and deduction are not unheard of in science fiction. A ready example is available in Frank Herbert’s *Dune*, the glossary of which includes the *mentat*: “that class of imperial citizens trained for supreme accomplishments of logic”, as “Human Computers”.<sup>144</sup> Mentats, however, should not be confused with telepaths.<sup>145</sup> Mentats are capable of fast and accurate deduction, but they are trained to their tasks, whereas a telepath is usually born with his abilities. Of course, if one considers a telepath as an artificial creation, their abilities are still different. Despite his scientific approach to a futuristic world, Herbert still incorporated several themes of inner space and extraordinary human powers into

---

<sup>141</sup> See, for example: *Ghost In The Shell* (Japanese title: *Kôkaku kidôtai*), 1994. Director: Mamoru Oshii. Writing credits: Masamune Shirow & Kazunori Itô. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0113568/>, acquired 22.2.2006.

<sup>142</sup> An interesting reference to this can be found also in Ursula LeGuin’s *Tales of Earthsea*: “One of the gifts of power is to know power. Wizard knows wizard unless the concealment is very skilful.” p. 7.

<sup>143</sup> <http://www.auburn.edu/~vestmon/robotics.html>, acquired 1.5.11.2005, and Jones, p. 166.

<sup>144</sup> Herbert, p. 595.

<sup>145</sup> This opinion is also put forth by Nicholls, p. 169.

*Dune*.<sup>146</sup> This suggests that science and powers like telepathy are not mutually exclusive in science fiction writing. More than anything, the gothic monster embodies the anxieties and the fears, the *zeitgeist* when employed in literature and in particular in science fiction.<sup>147</sup>

---

<sup>146</sup> Joan Sloanczewski and Michael Levy. "Science Fiction and the life sciences" in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. James, Edward and Mendlesohn, Farah (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003 p. 176.

<sup>147</sup> Aldiss, p. 18.

### 3 – *The Demolished Man* by Alfred Bester: Espers and Men

“When will you people learn you can’t surprise a peeper?”<sup>148</sup>

The novel *The Demolished Man* is an accepted piece of the science fiction literary canon,<sup>149</sup> and as such a very good example to set a basis for telepathy in society, and the anxieties and tensions which it will in Bester’s opinion bring about. Furthermore, since Keyes admittedly borrows elements from Bester in his own books, it is important to understand the work he is borrowing from. In the 1950s science fiction readership had grown to expect and accept the unexpected, giving room to telepathy.<sup>150</sup> It is prudent to recognize that Bester’s other significant work, *The Stars My Destination* (1956) also includes a theme of will and mind powers and offers another strongly driven superman who “brings progress in the wake of destruction”.<sup>151</sup> However, for the purposes of this thesis *The Demolished Man* has more explicit organizational telepathy as opposed to teleportation, or “jaunting” as it is referred in *The Stars My Destination*.<sup>152</sup>

The summarized plotline for *The Demolished Man* pits a powerful normal, Ben Reich, and a telepathic police officer, Lincoln Powell, against each other. Given the amount of telepaths in Bester’s society, premeditated murder is impossible to commit before one “leaks” the intention to do so. The sentence is known as “Demolition”, an effective erasure of the subject’s psyche through a telepathic and neurotic regiment, and then rebuilding it to serve the society.<sup>153</sup> Reich is aware of his situation, but is desperately drawn to murder nonetheless, trying to avoid conviction to the last. In a way this struggle could be read as an evolutionary struggle between a normal who is as powerful as he can be in the society, and a very strong telepath backed by his community.

For the purposes of this thesis it is interesting to uncover what kind of power telepaths wield in

---

<sup>148</sup> Bester, p. 197.

<sup>149</sup> Aldiss, p. 236.

<sup>150</sup> Aldiss, p. 234.

<sup>151</sup> Riggenschach, Jeff. “Science Fiction as Will and Idea: The World of Alfred Bester” in *Riverside Quarterly*, Vol. 5. 1972. Gainesville (FL). p. 170.

<sup>152</sup> *The Stars My Destination*, p. 9. In the course of this thesis, I am referring to *The Demolished Man* as the primary work of Alfred Bester, and as such it is quoted as “Bester” in the footnotes. In the case of other works by him quoted in this thesis, I will provide the title of the book as the case of reference in the footnote. Bester, Alfred. (1956) *The Stars My Destination*. London: Millennium, Victor Gollancz. 1999.

<sup>153</sup> Bester, pp. 27, 248-249.

the novel's society both telepathically and politically. Reich can be interpreted as the last free mind, a force of active change and a challenger of the society. He relies on planning and instinct to outwit his telepathic adversaries who naturally rely on rational approaches. It is Reich's bid as a normal human to show he can still outmanoeuvre a telepath. Reich is by no means inept, but he is capable of corrupting telepaths to his ends by regular manipulation. In effect this means that he managed to get telepaths to go against the rules of the Esper Guild, which could be also read as an act of (questionable) liberation. Bester does not explain the birth of telepathy, and does not make the claim clearly that it would be the next natural step for all of humanity.

*The Demolished Man* is set on Earth, in the year 2301 AD and the solar system has been colonized. To this futuristic setting are telepaths then added. The protagonist, Ben Reich, muses: "E for Esper. [...] Esper for Extra Sensory Perception".<sup>154</sup> By using recognizable labels Bester wishes to create some measure of credibility to his telepathic society. Reich is clearly bitter about the existence of telepaths, seeing them more as hindrances to his own ambitions. He juxtaposes the telepathic self-concept of "E for Evolution" with his own "E for Exploitation".<sup>155</sup> It is later made clear that Reich is not alone in expressing his anxieties about the state of their society. The novel not only explores these anxieties, but it also provides a very interesting depiction of how a fictional telepathic community would conduct itself in a society in which being non-telepathic is considered "normal". Bester provides an additional reading, leading back to the previous discussion on the potential power the telepath holds through his abilities, and to how they are bound by the society around them.<sup>156</sup> Telepaths are empowered by their abilities, yet made powerless by the society, forcing them to abide by a certain set of rules and code of conduct.

Lincoln Powell sums up the telepathic experience in a very interesting way, describing that all telepaths live permanently in the psychiatric ward of a hospital without any real escape or refuge,

---

<sup>154</sup> Bester, p. 13.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> While recognizing there are both female and male telepaths, the consistent use of the male pronoun is easier as nearly all the protagonists of the novels dealt with in this thesis are male.

having to cope with it daily. Non-telepaths should be happy and thankful that they do not have to come into contact with the raw inner being of their fellow man, and that they do not see “the frightening truth in people”.<sup>157</sup> Bester seems to be almost a Hobbesian cynicist<sup>158</sup> if this statement can be used as reference. It is unclear whether or not telepaths are excluded from this grim assessment, or if they are even worse off for it. Bester is willing to show both the best and worst facets of humanity, but leaves the conclusion open. On the other hand, William Godshalk proposes that Bester in fact utilizes black humour and parody throughout the novel to criticize the bulk of science fiction relying on gadgetry rather than serious discourse.<sup>159</sup> Still, even if this is the case, Godshalk excludes *psi* from the themes of potential parody.

### 3-1 Representation of Telepathy

Bester crafts a society in which telepathy has been accepted as a given trait in some people. It is a fact of life and human capabilities and the society has to adapt to this development. Already in Bester’s day the knowledge and acceptance of telepathy is so widespread that it can be employed in a story with little or not explanation needed.<sup>160</sup> *The Demolished Man* omits the discovery of telepathy as well as the changes the society had to go through to arrive at the current status quo with established societal structures already in place. Keyes will depict this transitional phase in greater detail, whereas Bester provides an example of how a society with telepaths functions more or less normally. There are new sets of rules that have to be taken into account, for telepaths and non-telepaths alike. What makes a telepath so potentially dangerous to a regular society is not telepathy itself, but their potential, the way telepathic abilities can be used is what makes them dangerous, or at the very least feared.

---

<sup>157</sup> Bester, p. 243.

<sup>158</sup> “Hobbesian cynicist” here denotes a person who believes in the internal warfare of any societal structure which is barely held in check. In this thinking the strong survive, and that this is something intrinsically human. See for reference e.g. Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan* (1651). Nietzsche is also often quoted as another political thinker who thinks suffering and sin are ineradicably human traits. Ansell-Pearson, p. 4.

<sup>159</sup> Godshalk, William L. “Alfred Bester: Science Fiction or Fantasy?” in *Extrapolation: A Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy*. Vol. 16. 1975. Wooster: University of Ohio. p. 151-152.

<sup>160</sup> Lowentrou, p. 398.

It is that fear of the unknown, of the ‘other’, that often fuels the division between a telepath and a human. In effect, a non-telepath would simply have to trust the telepath not to (ab)use their special powers. It follows that the only way a telepath, a person profoundly different from his fellow men, can be accepted into a society comprised of a majority of non-telepaths, is to allow regulation. The telepath has to submit to authority, that will safeguard the status quo of society by showing that the telepaths are recognizable and accountable for their actions. Simultaneously this control provides safety to telepaths who might face persecution. This is the form of societal control imposed upon the telepath populace in Bester’s novel.

In Bester’s vision, being a telepath is something one can measure and grade. This is by no means unique, but almost a standard in many telepathic societies of science fiction. Some telepaths are stronger than others, and the ranking system can be seen as a class-based system within the telepathic community. The telepathic community is almost like a second society within the larger, “normal” one. This means that being telepathic is no liberation, but rather ties you to another community with stricter rules. The strongest telepaths dominate the hierarchy because their talents ensure them the best jobs in the society. For example, an Esper MD is considered a prestigious post.<sup>161</sup> The class system works by numbers, where the 1<sup>st</sup> Class telepaths are both famous and upper-class in both societies. This official label also serves the telepaths in making them concretely useful to the general populace. This seems to be a far cry from *homo superior*, let alone the *Übermensch*. Moreover, the main reason why someone would hire a telepath is two-fold: they are efficient workers in the tasks allowed to them, and only a telepath can detect and thwart another telepath. The idea of the majority pitting the minority against itself would otherwise be described as a form of divide and conquer.

Considering the need for companies to make money, the use of commercial telepaths is normal in Bester’s society. If the use of telepathy is made legal and regulated, then no one has to fear that

---

<sup>161</sup> Bester, p. 13. Apparently it is a degree, as is Doctor of Medicine (also MD), from the Latin *Medicinae Doctorem*.

their commercial interests are being undermined by a rival's use of illegal telepaths. Being a minority within the society of the majority, the telepaths cannot afford to become enemies to that society. It is beneficial for the telepaths to play along with the rules, and enforce them strictly on themselves. This is why an organization is required, the hierarchical authority that can handle the affairs of the telepaths without becoming a threat to the ruling (yet individually weaker) majority of normals. In *The Demolished Man* this authority is the Esper Guild, led by the 1<sup>st</sup> Class telepaths. Since the distribution of telepathic ability is not equal, it also stands to reason that there are not as many 1<sup>st</sup> Class telepaths as lower class ones, extending telepathic class in part to a social class.

The Guild is the central pillar of the existence of a telepath from the cradle to the grave, nurturing the use and ethics of telepathy. The strictest punishment is being ostracized from the telepathic community. To a telepath, the "mind is the reality", while the external body is severely 'othered' often by reckless overuse when bending energy for the use of the mind.<sup>162</sup> The intimacy shared by telepaths by the process of directly sharing thoughts instead of merely saying words seems to be one of the building blocks of their society. The description stresses a high sense of community, a fabric of shared telepathy as ideal. Being cut off from the society is a punishment that relegates a telepath into the position of a normal, a natural deaf-mute (the condescending tone should not be overlooked), but with the knowledge of *psi* speech and sound and the profound sense of community it entails to make the loss feel more poignant.<sup>163</sup> The ostracized Jerry Church seems to be physically starved for a telepathic contact with his people; Bester seems to suggest that to a telepath the normals are never as close as another telepath, despite mistreatment.<sup>164</sup>

The outside is more important for the Guild to uphold than the inside. There are some open anti-telepathic sentiments in the society, which force the Guild to maintain appearances. There are also problems within. For example, one could seriously question the arranged, often loveless marriages within the Guild between telepaths to breed more, and hopefully more powerful ones.

---

<sup>162</sup> Bester, p. 33.

<sup>163</sup> Bester, pp. 22-23.

<sup>164</sup> Bester, p. 36.

The Guild is also actively participating in finding latent Espers so they can be properly indoctrinated to the values of the Guild, with the question of consent left open. The affairs of telepaths are often left to them to be kept quietly in-house. The whole evolutionary issue is also mentioned in the novel: educating current telepaths is not enough. A high level telepath Sam @tkins tries to awaken the Esper trait in normals, confident that telepathy is a latent trait in everybody and merely needs to be coaxed out.<sup>165</sup> When all are telepaths, the anxieties between normals and telepaths would theoretically seize to be (with the disappearance of normals). Again, @atkins gives little thought if this is the right thing to do; he simply assumes everyone would be happier as Espers. Certain arrogance seems to be intrinsic to the telepath psyche.

The general consensus among telepaths is, nonetheless, that despite the negative aspects of the Guild, those are still easily outweighed by the protection and education it provides. This is why a betrayal within the highest strata of the Guild is so potentially dangerous: “The idea of a 1<sup>st</sup> class Esper, a pillar of the Guild, participating in murder was unthinkable [...]”.<sup>166</sup> To the telepaths, the Guild is the most important authority to follow. The mix of the fulfilment of a fantasy of superiority combined with heavy restrictions and duties is exemplified in the Esper Pledge:

The Regimen I adopt shall be for the benefit of mankind according to my ability and judgment, and not for hurt or wrong. I will give no deadly thought to any, though it be asked of me. Whatsoever mind I enter, there will I go for the benefit of man, refraining from all wrong-doing and corruption. Whatsoever thoughts I see or hear in the mind of man which not to be made known, I will keep silence thereon, counting such things to be as sacred secrets.<sup>167</sup>

The Pledge is both problematic and likely made to be recited for the benefit of the normals, considering that telepaths share nearly everything in their mind with each other anyway. When the Guild calls, it is the duty of all telepaths who hear that call to heed it.<sup>168</sup> A few feats of telepathy exemplified in the book deserve to be mentioned, because they illustrate the power of the telepath

---

<sup>165</sup> Bester, p. 136.

<sup>166</sup> Bester, p. 90.

<sup>167</sup> Bester, p. 98.

<sup>168</sup> For example, the Guild demanded that all telepaths employed by Reich’s company quit immediately, all left unconditionally. Bester, p. 186.

and of the telepathic community. Such examples are the human radar chain to locate Reich, or the channelling of latent mind power to a single telepath to bend the mind of a single individual completely, as Powell did to Reich as a last resort to thwart him.<sup>169</sup> Bester stresses the significance of the combined effort of the telepath community to show their true potential.

Prominently claiming to be working for the benefit of man, the Pledge makes a telepath seem close to a holy entity, despite Bester's depiction of telepaths as very human with extraordinary abilities. Powell himself is angered by "the relentless force of evolution that insisted on endowing man with increased powers without removing the vestigial vices that prevented him from using them" for any beneficial purposes.<sup>170</sup> Then again, Powell is not above using his powers to get his own will through, apparently figuring that ends justify the means. Powell is by no means a saint, as is seen by his willingness to telepathically force a young girl to relive traumatic memories to procure testimony against Reich, which makes clearly juxtaposing him with Reich as good or evil problematic.<sup>171</sup> In Bester's view absolute power is corruptive, and frightening "in the hands of Powell as it is in the hands of Reich", as only their ways of implementation range from an antiquated gun to potential "psychic overkill".<sup>172</sup>

The telepathic community, or the Guild, is not, then, altruistic; telepaths are very much like normal humans in the sense that they are able to fight amongst themselves, although knowledge of the divisions rarely reach the ears of an average normal as not to create mistrust.<sup>173</sup> The 'othering' is being done mainly between the societies, but also within; it seems that the telepathic community, which enforces a much more rigorous group discipline, is prone to distinguish between good, Guild-abiding telepaths and bad ones. Reich supports both anti-telepath movements and the insider factions financially to make life for the Guild difficult, since organized

---

<sup>169</sup> Known in the novel as "Mass Cathexis". Bester, pp. 168, 206, 242. This also links to Sudre's previous concept of a special telepathic "channel", in section 2-1.

<sup>170</sup> Bester, p. 119.

<sup>171</sup> Riggerbach, p. 173.

<sup>172</sup> Godshalk, p. 154.

<sup>173</sup> The Esper Guild is opposed by "The Esper League of Patriots", who wish to preserve a higher autocracy and stop using their resources to pamper lower class telepaths. Bester p. 26, 99.

telepathy seems to be his main antagonist in the novel, personified by Powell. The Guild has to appear functional or it could spell chaos for both societies with unrestricted, uncontrolled telepaths marauding through the society. The instability could even lead to a civil war among telepaths, which is again something that Keyes delves deeper into. It is important to note that these fears are shared by telepaths and normals alike.

Even Powell uses curious irony to put normals he encounters at ease: “You imagine I’m standing here like some mind-peeping monster, probing your mental plumbing. [...] If I could [do that], I wouldn’t be standing here. I’d be standing on the throne of the universe practically indistinguishable from God”.<sup>174</sup> This statement is ambiguous: while it distinguishes between telepaths and godly ability in order to calm people, the evidence the novel gives shows that he actually *could*. The same idea was also expressed by Sturgeon when the budding *homo gestalt* comes to realize that “we can do practically anything, but we most likely won’t”.<sup>175</sup> One of Powell’s later statements, one following the description of telepaths metaphorically living in the psychiatric ward of the world dominated by normals, leaves an eerie question of what the telepaths’ final goal is: “The world will be a wonderful place when *everyone’s a peeper* and *everyone’s adjusted*... But until then, be grateful that you’re blind [My emphasis added]”.<sup>176</sup> It does not bode well for the normal population, since clearly this indicates that telepathy is the future. Curtis Smith brings an even more foreboding turn of a phrase out when he quotes from *Odd John*: “if they were all like you, domestic, there’d be no trouble”, relegating the idea of evolutionary cleansing to a matter of inconvenience.<sup>177</sup>

It may explain the vehemence why Powell simply has to capture Reich and bring him to Demolition: If the unstated consensus of all telepaths is that they are indeed an evolutionary step

---

<sup>174</sup> Bester, p. 82.

<sup>175</sup> Sturgeon, p. 76.

<sup>176</sup> Bester, p. 243.

<sup>177</sup> Smith, p. 58.

forward, it is vital for them not to allow normal people like Reich (though given Reich's resources he is not an average normal) to achieve the level of untouchability as Reich was about to reach:

Reich is one of the rare Universe-shakers... a child as yet but about to mature. And all reality... Espers, Normals, Life, the earth, the solar system, the universe itself... all reality hangs recariously on his awakening.<sup>178</sup>

Reich could be interpreted as an offshoot of the *Übermensch*, a normal who is almost capable of becoming a *homo superior*, and is not a telepath. That it is Reich ascending to this level and not a telepath is very interesting as it seems to counter the status of telepaths as symbols for evolutionary progress.<sup>179</sup> In that sense the battle or contest between Reich and Powell can be seen as a masked evolutionary conflict.<sup>180</sup> Since studying cultural interaction can also be looked from the perspective of a clash of civilizations<sup>181</sup>, the normal and telepath cultures succinctly battle for the dominant position. It is noteworthy to differentiate that to telepaths they are the next evolutionary step, but Bester suggests that it is their opinion and not a scientific fact in his world. What Bester may be projecting instead is the assumption of the fact of telepathy in the future without giving it much background: in the evolutionary sense Bester may be expressing even unconscious hopes of "improvement" to be made in the human psyche, and telepathy is the most widely recognized form of it.<sup>182</sup>

### 3-2 Issues of Privacy

The issues of privacy have been very prevalent in science fiction, fittingly exemplified by George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) which expanded anxieties about privacy from the private to state level.<sup>183</sup> The concept of the inviolable rights of an individual to be free to make his own decisions applies also to freedom of speech and a right to privacy. None of these ideals are

---

<sup>178</sup> Bester, p. 208 and Riggenbach, p. 168.

<sup>179</sup> Hassan, p. 143.

<sup>180</sup> Godshalk refers to it as a "game". Godshalk, p. 152.

<sup>181</sup> Most notably by Samuel Huntington in his book by the same name: Huntington, Samuel. *The Clash of Civilizations*. Simon & Schuster, 1998.

<sup>182</sup> Lowentrou, p. 394.

<sup>183</sup> Nicholls, p. 165.

exclusively American, but given the state of science fiction we can speculate they are most prevalent and thus most cause for anxiety in the United States. The problem seems to come down to trading away some freedom for some safety, but the social contract falls short in a telepathic one as the inability to do something (e.g. eavesdrop) becomes a matter of morals only.

In privacy matters, the term used by telepaths and normals alike for their abilities is in *The Demolished Man* is “peeping”, which hardly has very positive connotations. Bester divides telepathic ability to passive and active. As such, telepathic ability can be, in a manner of speaking, voluntarily limited or actively extended, but never completely shut off.<sup>184</sup> This approach is common in modern science fiction representations of telepathy, most notably for the purposes of this thesis in Keyes’s books. Passive telepathy could be reduced to the background noise one hears in a crowded area. It can be ignored, but it can also be “peeped”. Since the background noise is inconvenient to constantly block out, many Espers seem to prefer private houses to avoid mental cacophony. In short, their ability to breach privacy can also cause them severe distress.

In the world depicted in *The Demolished Man*, there has been no premeditated murder in 79 years. This passive listening is what has made premeditated murder so difficult; a person walking around with murderous intent would inadvertently “leak” his intent all around him. Especially strong emotions are easily picked up even unintentionally, as exemplified by Reich’s Esper secretary, or later by Reich’s telepath accomplice who exasperates that Reich is “broadcasting bloodlust on every wavelength of the TP [telepathic] band”.<sup>185</sup> Reich needs a telepath willing to go against his own community to help hide his intention to commit murder. Bester’s view of active telepathy, on the other hand, can include actively listening in on someone’s thoughts, performing psychiatric scans (many Esper MDs are in fact psychiatrists) or blocking another telepaths from scanning you. It is ironic that in the tightly knit community of telepaths, the use of

---

<sup>184</sup> Bester gives a different form of telepathy in *The Stars My Destination*, in which a young woman has “one-sided” telepathy, capable of only sending. She is also unable to suppress this talent. *The Stars My Destination*, p. 35. This differs from the usual form of telepathy in parapsychology (see section and science fiction.

<sup>185</sup> Bester, pp. 18, 61.

blocks (invoking a right to privacy) is often viewed with displeasure, and almost open admission to guilt in case of breaches of conduct. The telepath, while capable of breaching the privacy of others, is not expected to have any actual privacy of his own within the Guild.

The powers of mind attributed to the strongest of telepaths, the 1<sup>st</sup> Class, clearly show the threat to privacy: “The 1<sup>st</sup>s are capable of deep peeping, through the conscious and preconscious layers down to the unconscious”.<sup>186</sup> Similarly, the protection of privacy through telepaths means that a higher rank telepath can always bypass one of a lower rank. Telepathic discourse is, in addition to words, often flavoured with images, smells, and other sensory material, which can also be “peeped” by another.<sup>187</sup> More often depicted in popular characterizations of telepaths is the idea of using brutal, even physical mind power to overwhelm opponents; Powell downs an opponent with disconcerting ease (though apparently learning this requires some training).<sup>188</sup> Again the question of the motives of the Guild becomes important as they monopolize information on how to train and educate telepaths in aggressive uses of their skills as well.

Considering that the services of telepaths are expensive, Reich’s previously quoted frustration between the apex of evolution and the apex of exploitation are both true in a sense. In the justice system telepathic evidence is not allowed as primary evidence, but it can be used to cipher out guilt and circumstantial evidence then to be supported by other concrete evidence. Everyone has the right by law to refuse to be scanned/peeped “on the record”, but few expect that when denied, the telepath would not scan them nonetheless for information to be used “off the record”.<sup>189</sup> In the rare cases that a telepath needs to put on trial, it is again handled in-house with little or no regard to privacy. The culprit is expected to open for scrutiny, and if he refuses, then his mind is pried open. To use a vulgar term, the proceedings are an effectual mind-rape, with a clear warning to others who would endanger the reputation of the Guild added to the morbid satisfaction that

---

<sup>186</sup> Bester, p. 20.

<sup>187</sup> Bester uses a literary tool of flowing text to exemplify telepathic discourse, e.g. p. 35.

<sup>188</sup> Bester p. 125.

<sup>189</sup> Bester, p. 81.

justice has been served. Despite this obvious slant on the objective judiciary system, all verdicts in Bester's world are handed down by a computer, which accepts only facts and hard evidence. The reason of telepaths may be highly valued as an asset, but their subjective view is this way moderated. Furthermore, even if telepaths hold high positions, they are often overseen by normals; a telepath can be the top investigator of police, but he cannot be the commissioner.<sup>190</sup> Understandably, trying to hold onto their own power, the normals are unwilling to relinquish telepaths to their self-imposed control only.

The idea that someone could tap into our phone conversations seems not only possible but also personally threatening. One of the curious technological aspects of the telepathic society is that the telephone has become safe again, as Bester sets a restriction of a physical line of sight on the use of telepathy.<sup>191</sup> In Bester's vision of the future, when the personal space is threatened, one can recede back to technology, which ironically today makes eavesdropping easier, to prevent it. Later this restriction is contradicted, raising doubts if even the telepaths themselves fully know the limits of their capabilities. It is likely that normals realize this potential as well, hence the antagonism. There are some specific dangers to "peeping" as well. If the telepath dives into a shattered mind, he can be damaged by the experience. Sharing a trauma with the target of a scan is often very traumatic also for the telepath.<sup>192</sup> Without proper training and blocking, the manifested physical reality inside another person's mind can be lethal to the mind of the telepath.

Finally, in *The Demolished Man*, the mind has become exceedingly vulnerable to alterations, since psychiatric surgery seems quite a standard process to improve and rehabilitate criminals.<sup>193</sup> It should be noted that many of these alterations, like Demolition, is a conscious process, in which the mind realizes it is being wiped clean without any way to resist it. The benefit of the reprogrammed individual to society once rehabilitated sounds like a worthy cause at least on some

---

<sup>190</sup> Bester, p. 92.

<sup>191</sup> Bester, p. 22.

<sup>192</sup> Bester, p. 132.

<sup>193</sup> Demolition is the case in point. Bester, pp. 128-129. Also, demolition bears close resemblance to Winston getting "reprogrammed" in Orwell's *1984*. Aldiss, p. 245.

level, but begs the question of the rational human mind being relegated back into a human computer, which can then be reprogrammed at leisure to suit one's needs. Even if telepathy values the mind, it can still treat it as a commodity to be quite freely moulded. One can only speculate if a complete restructuring of one's mind is more humane than giving them the death penalty.

#### 4 – The Psi Corps Trilogy by J. Gregory Keyes: “The Corps is Mother, the Corps is Father”

Keyes’s depiction of telepathy is fundamentally based on Bester’s. Telepaths can be graded on a scale, their powers will differ accordingly, and there will be a clear hierarchy. Keyes’s more original aspects come from his depiction of the discovery of telepathy. While Bester has crafted a society (or rather two societies) already established in their existence, Keyes shows the birth and growth of telepathy in society, and how the dominant cultural and societal powers react to it. Keyes draws on known historical cases of ‘othering’ and extrapolates familiar anxieties and tension to his fictional works. For the purposes of this examination, I will number the books quoted as Keyes I, Keyes II and Keyes III in their order, and refer to Alfred Bester, the protagonists of the two latter Keyes novels as Bester(1) to differentiate with the author of *The Demolished Man*. For the purposes of this thesis, the first book is perhaps the most fruitful as it gives an account on how telepathy enters a society, and how it shapes the society around it. The issue of power seems to be very prevalent.

Analyzing Keyes’s books it is necessary at times to draw secondary material from the TV-series *Babylon 5*, set in the same universe and within the same conceptual frame.<sup>194</sup> J. Michael Straczynski, the series author acknowledges that his universe is built on the foundations of science fiction classics, which is why it should not be surprising to find reference to Asimov or Bester in this fictional universe.<sup>195</sup> Moreover, it is not unheard of for literary science fiction to complement science fiction TV-series, which allows for an exploration into telepathy. Straczynski notes that the creation of the Babylon 5 universe was a purposeful metaphor and even extrapolation of the

---

<sup>194</sup> Even though the outline for the books was created by J.M. Straczynski, Keyes mentioned in an interview that he had “a great deal of creative control”. Interview with Greg Keyes at SFFWorld.com by Rob Bedford, 02.11.2003. <http://www.sffworld.com/interview/28p2.html> , acquired 18.04.2007.

<sup>195</sup> Straczynski, pp. 6, 9, 17.

“American and, to a lesser extent, European societies [...] over the last several decades”,<sup>196</sup> which is also seen later in the interpretations of telepathy in the Keyes’s novels.

The name “The Psi Corps Trilogy” refers to the founding of organized telepathy in the setting of Keyes’s books, and its operations and nature are described both in the books and the TV-series. The themes in the three novels range from the discovery of telepathy and creating an authority of control in the first book, to the life of an ambitious young telepath trying to find how he relates to the world around him, and finally to the aftermath of conflict that forces society to re-evaluate how it views telepathy. All books give sufficient viewpoints from non-telepaths and telepaths alike, as well as connects their world to our own through intertextuality or recognizable references. It is however interesting that the actual telepath civil war which is mentioned to exist, is not described by any of the books (chronologically set between the second and third novel), or by the TV-series either.

The omission is a curious one, but perhaps Keyes wishes to employ other literary tools besides violence to depict the tensions between power and society in a world where telepathy exists. As with *The Demolished Man*, I am going to analyze how telepathy is presented in Keyes’s books and what kind of organizational level it achieves, then move on to issues of privacy, and to the question of how a telepathic authority regulates the use of telepathic powers. In addition, I will look into the formation of an impending evolutionary clash between telepaths and non-telepaths, as it is a very dominant theme in the novels, especially the third one. However, first I will provide a basic reading of the world presented by the three novels, giving some context to the analysis. In the first book, *Dark Genesis: Birth of the Psi Corps* telepathy is discovered by accident in the year 2115, ironically enough through a mock-test with Zener cards. At first the results are dismissed, given the reputation of studies in this field, but soon everyone wakes up to a world that suddenly has telepaths: “Extra-sensory perception is no longer a fantasy or a possibility – it’s a fact”.<sup>197</sup>

---

<sup>196</sup> Straczynski, pp. 14, 16.

<sup>197</sup> Keyes I, p. 19.

Some idea of the profound changes a discovery such as this would bring about in a society is given by Alfred Bester as well:

On three planets and eight satellites, social, legal and economic structures crashed while the new customs and laws demanded by [the discovery of] universal jaunting [teleportation] mushroomed in their place. [...] There was a revolution in home and office building: labyrinths and masking devices had to be introduced to prevent unlawful entry by jaunting. There were crashes and panics and strikes and famines as pre-jaunte industries failed. [...] Crime waves swept the planets and satellites as their underworlds took to jaunting with the night around the clock, and there were brutalities as the police fought them without quarter. There came a hideous return to the worst prudery of Victorianism as society fought the sexual and moral dangers of jaunting with protocol and taboo. A cruel and vicious war broke out [...], a war brought on by economic and political pressures of teleportation.<sup>198</sup>

This universal shock on multiple levels of society is echoed by Keyes's novels. Opportunistic politician Lee Crawford goes into action, putting himself into the focus of the chaos, advocating for calmness and the creation of an official authority to regulate all extrasensory matters. However, the general population reacts violently with extremist and alarmist bursts of violence.<sup>199</sup> The first part of the novel is perhaps aptly named "Holocaust".<sup>200</sup>

The potential problems associated with the appearance of telepathy in only a minority of the world's population causes vast anxieties in the non-telepathic majority; the potential threat of the telepath grows in the imagination when telepathy is made an easy scapegoat to human problems.<sup>201</sup> Following the carnage, a tentative governmental body is founded to protect citizens from telepaths, but also in effect slowly starting to protect telepaths from citizens as well. Crawford sums up that telepaths are human, and thus entitled to the same rights as everyone else, but they are not entitled to any kinds of special rights either, such as to violate the privacy of other people. When something is regulated and considered useful, it can be tolerated, even if it is otherwise 'other', deviant.<sup>202</sup> This is why the first institution to control telepaths is established: the Committee on Metasensory Regulation. It can be claimed that against this setting of initial

---

<sup>198</sup> *The Stars My Destination*, p. 13.

<sup>199</sup> This often seems the very bipolar response: Even in *More Than Human* the children are received by Miss Kew, who is more of a philanthropist, and then the servant Miriam, a xenophobe. Sturgeon, p. 112.

<sup>200</sup> Keyes I, p. 17.

<sup>201</sup> Wyndham, p. 90.

<sup>202</sup> Wyndham, p. 154.

massacre followed by an arguable method of oppression sets a background for the envisioned future conflict between telepaths and non-telepaths to be discussed in section 4-3.

Crawford is later assassinated by Kevin Vacit, a telepath able to hide his true nature, ascending to the top of the new organization. His dominance is undermined by the constant quiet warfare between rogue telepaths, refusing to join the system they see as authoritarian. At this point improving the telepath future becomes the sole aim of the newly named Psi Corps and so all means are acceptable for that end. Vacit delivers a crushing blow to the resistance and puts his grandson, the child of slain resistance leaders Matthew and Fiona Dexter under the care of the Corps. His grandson, named after the author of *The Demolished Man*,<sup>203</sup> grows up as an orphan in the Psi Corps. In the second novel, *Deadly Relations: Bester Ascendant*, Bester(1) is presented as highly ambitious and fully loyal to the only parent he knows.<sup>204</sup> Bester(1) is a remarkable telepath, belonging to the very high elite according to his psi rating, and as such he seeks to become a Psi Cop; a telepath who hunts down other telepaths for the benefit of the Corps. Bester(1) is very acutely aware of the discord in society between telepaths and non-telepaths, and slowly he comes to realize something is wrong in the arrangement from the telepath's point of view. Bester(1) is often comparable to Gerry, the lead-figure of Sturgeon's *homo gestalt*.<sup>205</sup>

At the risk of narrating the protagonist Bester(1)'s biography, his life and action deserve to be mentioned to put the Psi Corps into perspective. Bester(1) engages in his own quest for power in order to ensure the future of telepaths and his beloved Psi Corps. He is even willing to sacrifice love for the sake of the sacred principles of the Corps. His bid for power reaches almost the very top until the telepathic community is wracked by civil war, ending in defeat for Bester(1). In the last novel, *Final Reckoning: The Fate Of Bester*, he is now hunted himself despite his wishes to

---

<sup>203</sup> The book's title is specifically referred to on page 102. Intertextuality plays a strong role in Keyes's novels at times. Other references include Akira Kurosawa's movie *Rashōmon* (1950) and the Finnish national mythos *Kalevala*. Keyes II, pp. 32, 90. Later Bester(1) even works as a critic working on books on telepathy in the novel, Keyes III, p. 46.

<sup>204</sup> Vacit tells his infant grandson that "You are Psi Corps" (Keyes I, p. 267), signifying that Bester(1) is to embody the organization. Bester(1) is prone to recite the loyal saying "The Corps is mother, the Corps is father". The same applies to the *homo gestalt*, which is described by saying that the "whole is greater than the sum of its parts". Sturgeon, p. 132.

<sup>205</sup> Both see evolution and the future of telepaths as inevitable, and both scoff traditional morality in their ascension to power. Sturgeon, pp. 144, 146. Bester(1)'s position is explored in the following sections.

live a quiet if embittered life on Earth. The arrogance and ambition he professed during his quest for power comes back to hunt him in the form of a powerful normal, Michael Garibaldi.<sup>206</sup> In the end, the third novel performs a curious twist of the *The Demolished Man*, setting Garibaldi-Reich with some amount of righteousness on his side against Bester(1)-Powell. In the end, Garibaldi wins the duel, and Bester's final defeat seems to bring about some measure of status quo back into the society. I will delve into some of these instances more deeply in the coming sections.

#### **4-1 Representation of telepathy in The Psi Corps Trilogy**

Regarding telepathic powers, as with Bester, the telepaths in Keyes's books can be graded on a scale of *psi* ranging from 1 to 12 (highest). Telepathy itself is limited to the capabilities presented by Bester previously. It is furthermore elaborated that telepaths more accurately sense minds, not people, which suggested that telepathy is not limited to humans.<sup>207</sup> A telepaths can effect the mind of a person, even cause paralysis, fugue and death but not so physically. A telekinetic (or a teek, as a telepath is colloquially referred to as a teep) is very rare and usually somewhat autistic, but their talents are in great demand.<sup>208</sup> The way telepathy is visualized is explained in the book itself by the desire of the human "monkey brain" to give logical shapes or glyphs to mental images when engaging in telepathic discourse, or worse yet, in psionic battle.<sup>209</sup> A metaphor of fencing is sometimes used. The telepath community is represented, although the novels concentrate on a few strong individuals.

The collective telepathic effort, referred to as the "mind's eye", can create illusions that even other telepaths without considerable power cannot overcome.<sup>210</sup> The problem there is that if one link of the collective falters, it weakens the whole. This is possibly why prodigal telepaths like

---

<sup>206</sup> Garibaldi's name is an admitted reference to Italian patriot Giuseppe Garibaldi. In *Babylon 5* and Keyes's third novel Garibaldi (and his wealth) were instrumental in funding the rogue rebellion to overthrow the Psi Corps. For condensed details, see: <http://worldsofjms.com/b5/characters/garibaldi.htm>, acquired 10.04.2007.

<sup>207</sup> Keyes I, p. 110. Keyes echoes Sudre's stance here.

<sup>208</sup> Keyes I, p. 202.

<sup>209</sup> Even parapsychologists like Stephen Braude tend to use mechanical allegories to describe their views of telepathic processes. Braude, p. 284.

<sup>210</sup> Keyes I, pp. 255-256.

Bester(1) prefer to act alone. Telepathy can also be experienced on a larger scale. The background murmur of numerous minds for example in a city is experienced as an inner space of human society by Bester(1) when he opens himself to the “telepathic channel”.<sup>211</sup> Explaining telepathy completely is admittedly still a problem even with several decades into its discovery in the novels, as telepaths can comment that “we still don’t exactly know how telepathy works”, but that the main thing is that “it works”.<sup>212</sup> Line of sight seems to be consistently required, but even that can be interfered with by a stronger telepath. It should also be noted however, that the organizations regulating/controlling telepathy logically seem reluctant to reveal all their capabilities as a precaution, so the true range of telepathic skills and their implications may not be revealed.<sup>213</sup>

The foundation of organizational telepathy is in violence. The original holocaust is followed by another spree of violence when it is revealed that telepaths are not the products of evolution, but actually a recent mutation or engineered. To many telepaths their abilities become a deadly risk: “[it] should have been a blessing, but was little better than a curse”.<sup>214</sup> The telepaths set in this context easily fulfils the image of a gothic monster that is an imminent threat to society. This is slowly mitigated by the discovery of a genetic marker that can screen out telepaths early on, making registering as a telepath compulsory, and so about 70% of telepaths can be recognized effortlessly by a blood test. But yet a third massacre follows when humans make first contact with an alien race and it is realized that they also have telepaths, spurring wild theories of a secret alien agenda behind the existence of telepaths that connect to the fear of an attack inside by an enemy that is essentially outside.<sup>215</sup> After the fright has dissipated, however, the telepaths became more and more needed to defend humanity. Furthermore, it curiously seems that unlike aliens, humans

---

<sup>211</sup> Keyes II, pp. 84-85 and Keyes III, pp. 22-23.

<sup>212</sup> Keyes II, pp. 99-100.

<sup>213</sup> For example, in episode “Ship of Tears”, *Babylon 5*, third season, episode 14, Bester(1) reveals previously unknown details on how telepaths could have concrete military applications. See also section 4-3.

<sup>214</sup> Wyndham, p. 86.

<sup>215</sup> Aldiss, p. 255 and Hienger, webservice.

are the only ones who explicitly have problems among both within the telepath community and with the non-telepathic majority.

Unwillingness to submit to authority and register still leaves open the option of taking the “sleepers”, a drug designed to deaden telepathic capabilities. Unlike the Esper Guild Bester envisioned, in which telepaths apparently could conceive of no other form of community, the act of regulating telepathy in Keyes’s books is met with suspicion and hostility by telepaths. The Esper Guild seemed like an independent body, whereas the institutions formed in Keyes’s books operate under the world government of the Earth Alliance. The organizational development begins as telepaths join together for protection, and it is realized that telepaths are the best police force against other telepaths. The theme of control never wanes from the establishment of the Metasensory Regulation Authority (henceforth abbreviated MRA). Much of this is done to mitigate the fears and anxieties (and jealousy?) of the non-telepathic majority. The MRA exists to control psychic anomalies like the one presented in Stephen King’s *Firestarter* (1980);<sup>216</sup> with training and control people with extraordinary powers will not be a danger to their environment. The MRA functions to allow the normal population to help telepaths survive, but also keeps them regulated at the same time. The message they wish to stress is that “teeps” [telepaths] are “good for all humanity”.<sup>217</sup> It is ironic that many of the stereotypes Keyes presents about telepathy that the MRA seeks to dissolve to lessen prejudice derive from science fiction novels.

The MRA quickly establishes itself as the greatest authority in matters relating to telepaths, and so those who do not either join the MRA or refuse to take the sleepers, are considered potential problems for the freshly achieved status quo. Those who rather flee than join are considered a minority with no social conscience. Although one would expect this admission of imperfection to bring non-telepaths and telepaths closer as humans, the dreadful image of rogues

---

<sup>216</sup> King, Stephen. (1980) *Firestarter*. Hodder & Stoughton, 2006. Even King considers the implications of the existence and use of these powers, though not explicitly telepathic, they fall under the same category. See Aldiss, p. 414 and Nicholls, p. 171. Also Wyndham features an untrained, incredible powerful but erratic telepath in *The Chrysalids*, p. 105.

<sup>217</sup> Keyes I, p. 49.

is so powerful that one of the most important tasks of the MRA is to hunt down and subjugate other telepaths when they break the law. And since registering or taking the sleepers is the only option provided by law, fleeing becomes illegal. Some telepaths truly realize the darkest implications of this, and turn violent themselves, becoming rogues and refusing to submit.

The telepaths from a community known as Teeptown, which arguably gives them a place of their own but also at the same time sets them clearly apart from the rest of society.<sup>218</sup> It is worth noting that Teeptown has normals (family or other functionaries) as well but in a clear minority. Very quickly a sense of community begins to form, likely due to the uniting experience of the pogroms. The Esper Guild's Pledge echoes in the pledge to capture the spirit of the new Psi Corps:

I pledge my body, heart, soul into the service of Earth Alliance and the people who dwell on her myriad spheres. I promise to keep the laws, to keep the faith, to keep my eyes on the truth. I pledge to serve my comrades, my cadre and the Corps. The Corps teaches, guides and provides. The Corps is father, the Corps is mother. We are the children of the Corps.<sup>219</sup>

The Corps is set into the society it serves, yet the overwhelming presence of it is very much underlined in the final parts of the pledge. Laws govern the Corps, not the same high human ideals as in the case of the Esper Guild. The worldview of the Corps is profoundly different from anyone else's, best summed up by young Alfred Bester(1) commenting that he "couldn't imagine not having any *psi*".<sup>220</sup> Indeed, there are also some unwritten laws that are instilled to young telepaths, such as "no telepath [is] ever allowed to fight with another telepath around normals" in order to create (the image of) a unified community.<sup>221</sup>

There is a certain level of body versus mind –dichotomy presented at times. Certain bodily reflexes, such as blushing are beyond the control of even a telepath. A strong telepathic mind can do much, but as the training regimen of the Corps shows, a telepath

---

<sup>218</sup> Keyes I, pp. 78, 81-82.

<sup>219</sup> Keyes II, p. 6.

<sup>220</sup> Keyes II, p. 7.

<sup>221</sup> Keyes II, p. 11.

needs to take care of his body as well as the exertions of using telepathy are a drain not only on the mind but also on the body. Severely exhaustive effort can even lead to hospitalization. Using one's powers beyond the physical limitations can cause trauma of many sorts, bodily and mental. In addition to bodily training, the Corps educates on the use of telepathy to teach young telepaths on how to come to terms with their powers without losing their sanity. Apparently a telepath runs a high risk of losing a sense of self if swamped in a multitude of other minds without proper training.

Most telepaths do see themselves as the evolutionary future. The sleeper-drug is seen as a very poor alternative, as it seems to mentally deaden the telepath completely. Still, to some it is a real alternative, as the surrounding non-telepathic society can cause severe feelings of abnormality. The effect is not quite the same ostracization experienced by Jerry Church in *The Demolished Man*, but the desire to be separated becomes rarer. The telepath organizations seem to be necessarily hierarchical with the highest telepaths on the top. This elite is sometimes known as Cadre Prime, which is often, as in the case of young Bester(1), very much aware of their status as true members of the Corps. Understandably their sometimes rather arrogant approach to their position causes telepaths on the lowest tiers to bristle. Also the power of language in telepathy is presented by a new vocabulary including "p'squinting", "p'hearing", "p'listening", as well as standardizing terms previously glimpsed in science fiction such as "scanning"<sup>222</sup> and "casting". Moreover, the Corps designated telepaths that go rogue as "blips", the term having a negative connotation of something being broken. As language is often connected to power, the Corps is well established by having the authority to define terms relating to telepathy.

The MRA/Psi Corps stands for stability, but for rogue telepaths it stands for repression and loss of freedom, which is why the resistance starts to organize. This also mirrors the choice given to Sturgeon's *homo gestalt*; either stay with Miss Kew in relative safety, or be free and imperilled.<sup>223</sup>

---

<sup>222</sup> "Scanning" in relation to telepathy had become more mainstream through the movie *Scanners* (1980/1).

<sup>223</sup> Sturgeon, p. 123.

Even Teeptown functions in a double-role as a sanctuary and compound. The Corps provides everything from education (which in itself is an act of exerting power over growing telepaths) to employment. The educational aspect is vital indeed considering how traumatic an onset of telepathy can be; not everyone is born telepath but referred to as “late-bloomers”. Then again this makes certain family lines with strong telepaths exclusive as a low class telepath is treated almost like a mentally disadvantaged child, or worse yet, a normal.<sup>224</sup> Forced adoptions are normal, when telepath children born to non-telepath parents are more or less effectively taken away and put under the care of the Corps so they will grow up to serve their (own) community.

The MRA and later Psi Corps combats its poor image constantly, but since many rogues rather opt to die than to be regulated/repressed, the image of martyrs makes this task nearly impossible. Ursula LeGuin sees science fiction too often returning to old, exploiting systems where the masses exist only to be led by their superiors, and to an extent this is the reality offered by the Psi Corps.<sup>225</sup> The resistance is the countering, overthrowing force in the novels. “Corps is slavery of the mind” is a phrase used by the resistance.<sup>226</sup> They argue that the Psi Corps is a part of the traditional society, and as such a part of the problem, which is the normal majority not wanting to fully accept the rights of telepaths to freedom of life. This idea coincides with LeGuin’s idea of a permitted revolution of the social ‘other’, as telepaths are not racially ‘othered’ amongst themselves.<sup>227</sup> Among the more common targets of the resistance are the factories that make the sleeper-drug, which is seen as a drug to deny telepaths their true existence. Fiona Dexter comments wryly after they have blown up a sleeper-factory, sending a cloud of vapour drifting toward a nearby city, that “maybe after the normals get a taste of the stuff, they won’t be so eager to inject it into us”.<sup>228</sup>

---

<sup>224</sup> Keyes I, p. 135.

<sup>225</sup> LeGuin “American SF and The Other”, p. 88.

<sup>226</sup> Keyes I, p. 140.

<sup>227</sup> LeGuin “American SF and The Other”, p. 89.

<sup>228</sup> Keyes I, p. 230.

On the other hand, the rogues are often at the mercy of the normals who aid them, and many do not do so for altruistic reason. The system that smuggles away telepaths fleeing the Corps is named the “underground railroad” after the network that helped African Americans flee southern states in the United States during slavery. Keyes interestingly uses the term knowingly while the underground railroad is often responsible for sending rogue telepaths who cannot pay their way into slavery to pay off their debt. Not many normals are willing to risk their lives to help the telepaths without something in return. The Corps naturally argues that it does provide freedom to life without abuse by normals. Still the spectre of control is strong enough to drive talented telepaths (as such assured a good standard of living in the Corps) to go rogue, when they feel they have no say. Indeed Bester(1)’s lover, Elisabeth Montoya pleads Bester(1) to flee with her, but as he sees her hopes for a better life as an illusion created by the resistance, he turns her in.<sup>229</sup> This, among other things, fuels Bester(1)’s hatred of the rogues, because they offer false promises to good telepaths who would be better off in the Corps.

After the telepath crisis and the civil war omitted by the books, the third novel features a new reincarnation of the controlling governmental body. To those who dislike telepaths, or at least their organizational structure like Michael Garibaldi, a man who has crossed paths with Bester(1) several times. Garibaldi expresses his distrust for the new Corps, now named the “Metasensory Division” of a monitored governmental branch as follows: “Old Psi Corps, no Psi Corps, rotten-to-the Corps – you can’t trust telepaths, not when it comes to one of their own”.<sup>230</sup> Of course the new Metasensory Division is very eager to prove Mr. Garibaldi wrong, showcasing itself as a new, non-threatening organization and still a legitimate authority for telepaths:

You represent the new order, so of course you would like nothing better than to discredit the old one, in order to legitimize yourself.<sup>231</sup>

---

<sup>229</sup> Keyes II, pp. 134-135.

<sup>230</sup> Keyes III, p. 8.

<sup>231</sup> Keyes III, p. 242.

Some external signs and restrictions were lifted to accommodate for the resistance's claims and inclusion to the new telepath community, which in turn entailed the expulsion of those highly regarded in the old Corps. Bester(1)'s old age serves as no deterrent for him, as his mind seems to function as sharply as ever, and even if his body is tired, the serrated edge of his telepathy is still strong (senility seems to be a non-issue).<sup>232</sup> In the end Bester(1) is still fighting against Garibaldi, a fallen Lincoln Powell brought down by a righteous version of Ben Reich. The new authority lives on, but the reader is left guessing what is going to become of it this time.

#### **4-2 Issues of Privacy**

Lee Crawford underlines the importance of privacy and issues pertaining to it right in the beginning of the first novel, when he muses over how the discovery of telepathy will change the lives of everyone:

Our daily lives, our respective cultures, our political systems, our legal systems – all are intrinsically dependent of privacy at the level of the nation-state and at the individual level. This has been worked out in great detail, over the years, particularly as technology has made intrusions into privacy potentially deeper and easier. I'm afraid if there are, in fact, telepaths, that we're right back to square one.<sup>233</sup>

Society has arguably been based on personal and societal secrets, and navigating through those with one's façade intact. It is therefore interesting how Crawford manoeuvres politically: He threatens to oust telepathic politicians unless they support his authority of control. In this telepathy is a vulnerability as “ousting” which is currently most often used when referring to make one's sexual preferences public. There are other threatening sexual connotations to telepathy, as in the case of losing the privacy in your own bedroom, making your more intimate sides public.<sup>234</sup> Later under the control of the Psi Corps telepaths are predictably subjected to arranged marriages to achieve better, higher rating telepaths as offspring. This idea of eugenics is

---

<sup>232</sup> The “edge” of Bester(1)'s telepathy is underlined by the use of mechanical terms, such as “snipping” when he operates on the mind on another individual. See for example Keyes III, p. 9.

<sup>233</sup> Keyes I, p. 12.

<sup>234</sup> Keyes I, pp. 44-45.

familiar also from *The Demolished Man*, and brings other, darker connotations to the system.<sup>235</sup>

Not to waste good material, forced breeding programs on the re-education camps, which in itself hints at sanctioned bodily and privacy violation, are allowed.

The pervasive nature of screenings into privacy is clear, but their direct impact is manifested when telepaths are actually found. That single discovery changes the way that person experiences privacy from that point on. Even if telepaths are prone to form communities, many who go rogue see it as their only chance to retain some privacy on an individual level. The sleeper drug is an invasion on mental privacy by limiting your innate faculties. The key point is that telepaths are born with their talent, and as such anything that infringes on that talent can be seen as an infringement on their personality. This bipolar choice between control and freedom, both taken to their absolutes, seems to favour individualism. As such it also seems like a very American dilemma to pose; the same choice of freedom – control – dichotomy is presented in other works of American science fiction, such as in the movie *X-Men: The Last Stand* (2006).<sup>236</sup>

The telepaths own sense of outward privacy is immediately limited by his appearance dictated by who he is. If the telepath chooses to follow the rules of the society, s/he is by no means better off in matters of privacy. For example when the Psi Corps is formed, the officers of the Corps are expected to wear a badge with the Greek letter *psi* on it. Another feature of clothing are the gloves telepaths are to wear to minimize unwanted contact (physical contact may provoke unwanted telepathic link), but they also function as a very visible status symbol. Others take pride in wearing them, whereas to others they are another way of singling telepaths out. This anxiety of becoming visibly (and officially) marked is not new in science fiction.<sup>237</sup> The attitudes of normals can be heard echoing in the words of non-telepath children, who can call easily recognizable

---

<sup>235</sup> Godshalk, p. 155.

<sup>236</sup> In the third instalment of the comic-based superhero movie, the mutants with peculiar talents (including telepathy) are given the option of taking an injection that would act as an inhibitor to their talents. Some prefer to return to a predominantly normal society while others see it as an attack against what and who they are. *X-Men: The Last Stand*. (2006). Directed by Brett Ratner, written by Simon Kinberg and Zak Penn. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0376994/>, acquired 11.04.2007.

<sup>237</sup> See for example Wyndham, pp. 70, 109.

uniformed telepaths “mindfrickers”.<sup>238</sup> The telepaths’ manners and outlook are lampooned in a new version of the blackface, confining them further as the ‘other’ of the society.<sup>239</sup>

Telepathic interference, senses and blocks still give a telepath an arsenal of defences that are not available to non-telepaths. Also telepathic communication is still vulnerable to eavesdropping by another telepath even if it can be on private or common “channel”. Telepaths can be for example distracted or irritated by intentional (and lewd) surface thoughts. Kevin Vacit, on the other hand, is powerful exactly because his telepathy is not known to others, and thus his privacy is secured. He can enjoy the benefits of telepathy without being labelled as such, which actually is the only reason why he is able to become the director of the MRA. Even if telepathy is a risk to privacy, it can also heighten a sense of sharing when two people are open to one another, emotionally and even sexually. Especially in a situation that can be considered repressive and existence threatened as is implied in Keyes’s novels, telepathy can open the only channel of privacy among other people.<sup>240</sup>

For Matthew and Fiona Dexter, a bond forged through telepathy alone, sharing strength and weakness serves them well when they become the leaders of the telepath resistance. The romantic idea of sharing something on a deeper level than normally possible is available for telepaths, although it is mentioned quite clearly that this does not guarantee happiness. Even telepaths have to be screened for genetic matches (assigned by the Corps) to get a permission to marry. It is not explicitly stated, but assumingly the Corps can also deny permission on the same grounds. Another aspect of intense intimacy is the moment of death. Called “death-bed scans”, these scans are very dangerous to the body and soul of the telepath performing it.<sup>241</sup> Bester(1) does several death-bed scans in an effort to explore the telepathic inner space and to find the final limit of

---

<sup>238</sup> Keyes II, p. 148.

<sup>239</sup> Keyes III, p. 68.

<sup>240</sup> See also Wyndham, p. 81.

<sup>241</sup> Keyes II, pp. 171, 174.

telepathy at the threshold of death, but ends up emptying himself, seeing himself as an empty shell of a person.<sup>242</sup> This way he becomes the expected telepathic Gothic Monster.

The judiciary is also addressed in the first novel, sketching an arrangement similar to Bester's original one, where spectral (telepathic) evidence cannot be used in court without serious corroborating evidence.<sup>243</sup> Normal courts very rarely deal with telepaths, as that falls under the jurisdiction of the Psi Corps and it is strongly hinted that as with Bester's Esper Guild, a telepath trial does not necessarily bother with all the niceties of trial procedure. Several times when handling young telepaths the punishment of choice is to undo the protection of a telepath's privacy, which is increasingly valued when so much power is attributed to the mind.<sup>244</sup> Keyes also borrows the concept of Demolition from Bester, as he notes that some criminals, and especially rogue telepaths sometimes need to be "brain-wiped" and then reprogrammed so they can be readmitted into society as useful members.<sup>245</sup> An utter violation of privacy can be a punishment or a voluntary, ultimate act of trust. Perhaps it is this rather peculiar collective sense that makes telepaths in the Corps realize they have a connection that no normals can share in.

The Corps professes its governance under a rule of law as the pledge exemplifies, but these laws are often seen (especially by Bester(1)) as something telepaths should follow when they can to maintain appearances, but also bypassed when the situation, i.e. the greater benefit of telepaths, calls for it. In short, even Garibaldi seems to view telepaths as regular (but not *normal*) people; if regular people have trouble avoiding the temptation to eavesdrop, then why is more expected from telepaths who are fundamentally human? In many cases e.g. Bester(1) refers to basic human morals when it comes to respecting privacy; a telepath respects privacy because he wants to, because he is human, not because a law dictates so. In this case he is again similar to Gerry, the

---

<sup>242</sup> Keyes II, p. 189.

<sup>243</sup> Keyes I, p. 80.

<sup>244</sup> Keyes II, p. 13.

<sup>245</sup> Keyes II, p. 26. See also "Passing Through Gethsemane", *Babylon 5*, third season, episode four.

leader of Sturgeon's *homo gestalt*, who respects the untouchability of some minds because meddling would mean it "wouldn't have been the same" again.<sup>246</sup>

The law specifies that illegal scanning of non-telepaths is a serious crime, but leaves open the question of a telepath scanning another.<sup>247</sup> Unauthorized scannings are harshly punished when caught, but this suggests that when caught by normals. Naturally evidence of scanning or other tampering can be cleaned. Bester(1) seems to follow the same pragmatic ethos of Lincoln Powell, who despite his promises not to "peep" into the minds of suspects does so anyway, secure in his position.<sup>248</sup> Usually the strength of a scan is physically manifested in the victim, the action violating both the mind and the body, nor is it usually a surgical procedure:

There was not, unfortunately, much left of Chandler when AI got through. Reeducation [sic] would be able to do something with him – possibly even return him to full sentience, make him a working human being. But however that turned out, he would never again be Thurston Chandler.<sup>249</sup>

This attitude toward other people is clearly based on power. Bester(1) even laments that as using telepathic powers to overwhelm is "so easy to do to normals", he is losing motivation to restrain himself.<sup>250</sup> Bester(1) finds that he does not even have to do anything, but create the idea that he *might*, or already *might have*. The concept of control and power relating to operating on a helpless, conscious subject gives at least Bester(1) as the embodiment of "evil" telepaths some measure of satisfaction.<sup>251</sup> The image of a rape of the mind comes into mind, an act of willing alienation from the humanity of the victim.<sup>252</sup> An incidence at Beta Colony sets Bester(1) against all issues of privacy if they deter what he sees as the greater benefit of telepaths. As a murderer kills telepaths on this distant colony without anyone on the colony much caring (actually many like it that the killer is getting rid of them), Bester(1) perceives them as hostile.

---

<sup>246</sup> Sturgeon, p. 125.

<sup>247</sup> Keyes II, p. 78.

<sup>248</sup> Godshank, p. 154.

<sup>249</sup> Keyes II, p. 161.

<sup>250</sup> Keyes II, p. 194.

<sup>251</sup> Keyes III, p. 52.

<sup>252</sup> LeGuin "American SF and The Other", p. 89.

Bester(1) is then prepared to scan them illegally, effortlessly, even violently and with impudence in order to get the evidence he needs to find the man before he can kill again. It should be noted that the only one who can discover evidence of tampering in the first place is another telepath, and as the Psi Corps has the monopoly of control, the temptations to misuse power here are inevitable. The problem is that evidence acquired by means such as these make it possible to prosecute, in which case Bester(1) is eager to dole out punishment himself:

If he could only escape his [straight] jacket [...] he would know a moment of perfect, absolute pleasure. He would tear out his own eyes, bite off his tongue, render himself by degrees into one of his victims. It's the only thing he can imagine that might give him peace, allow him to escape from the things he sees – and he can never do it. He'll stay bound for the rest of his life, or he'll die. It's as simple as that.<sup>253</sup>

Bester(1)'s methods are undeniably brutal, and his lack of interest in the matters of privacy or personal safety when it comes to anyone he does not see as sharing his ideals crafts him into a Gothic monster. Like Frankenstein's creation, Bester(1) sees only his goals, and discards the morals of the means he chooses to employ. The infamy of Bester(1) is far-reaching in the sense that even after the crisis and his exile people who have been close to him are considered untrustworthy by others, since one cannot know for certain what kind of diabolical traps Bester(1) might have implanted in them, and for the victims themselves for the very same reason. Bester(1) had left some moles inside the new structure, who were discovered only after his fall, making the organization look susceptible to wrong influences of this kind. The idea that one cannot trust one's own mind must be especially distressing for a telepath, but not much less so to a non-telepath. This is brought into perspective as Garibaldi seeks revenge for the telepathic reprogramming he had been subjected to, revealed in episode "The Face of the Enemy"<sup>254</sup>, by

---

<sup>253</sup> Keyes, II, p. 234.

<sup>254</sup> "The Face of the Enemy", *Babylon 5*, fifth season, episode 17. Bester(1)'s reprogramming made Garibaldi seemingly voluntarily betray his friends to reveal a plot aimed at subjugating telepaths. Bester(1) actually congratulates Garibaldi for saving telepaths from yet another holocaust, even if he didn't have a choice in the matter. In essence, a person who has been reprogrammed like Garibaldi thinks that he is acting out of his own free will. The suggestion is that when telepathically controlled, a subject does retain some consciousness of self, but can only be released after the conditioning is ended, if at all. In fantasy literature, a similar approach is given through sorcery: "The insidious aspect of these Cants [of Compulsion] is that their subject often has no way of distinguishing sorcerously compelled thoughts

trying to kill Bester(1), who informs Garibaldi that he has been hit with a telepathic compulsion known as “Asimov”, referring to Isaac Asimov’s rules of robotics (see 2-3). In effect, Garibaldi cannot kill Bester(1), and yet is aware of this mental cripple until the “Asimov” can be removed.<sup>255</sup> However this conflict between telepaths and non-telepaths falls better into the sphere of discussion of the next section.

### 4-3 The Inevitability of Conflict

The aspect of an evolutionary dimension in telepathy was realized as early as 1893 by F.W.H. Myers in his work.<sup>256</sup> The perceived evolutionary battle between telepaths and normal human beings has in this thesis been theorized to be based on the concept of ‘othering’. Evolutionary narratives tend to have a pessimistic view of human nature.<sup>257</sup> There is sufficient material in all four novels used as primary sources (and in *More Than Human* as well) to question whether or not telepathy is the viable and logical next step in human evolution presented by science fiction literature, assuming that current humans are not the end-product. This understanding partially overlaps with the previous possibility, because evolution can be either natural or artificially stimulated. The lack of a threatening artificial intelligence leaves the telepathic intelligence as a potential risk.<sup>258</sup> The anxieties of humans realizing they may be, or are going to be, surpassed by a new entity such as telepaths are understandable. The label of inferiority is present in the extensive racial theorizing of the last century.

Even the very name of *homo superior* implicitly hints at a “master race”. It follows that inferior people become expendable. It also sets them apart from the majority of (normal) people,

---

from his own thoughts. [...] If the compelled soul feels every bit as uncompelled as the free soul, then how can anyone truly know himself to be free?” Bakker, R. Scott. *The Thousandfold Thought*. London: Orbit. 2007. p. 509.

<sup>255</sup> “Phoenix Rising”, *Babylon 5*, fifth season, episode 11. As a result, Garibaldi turns into an alcoholic.

<sup>256</sup> See, Myers, F.W.H. (1893) ”Science and a Future Life” in *Science and a Future Life, with Other Essays*. London: Macmillan. 2001. pp. 36, 39.

<sup>257</sup> Smith, p. 47.

<sup>258</sup> Even in Keyes’ novels, it is noted that human-form robots are ”illegal”, Keyes II, p. 25.

who have the power of defining normality, often after their own image.<sup>259</sup> Power is rarely relinquished voluntarily, especially if there is uncertainty on how the new wielder will act and treat others. Telepaths, despite their special nature, are as petty and vindictive as normal people. Moreover, even normal humans are often aware that “on a level playing field” the *homo superior* that the telepaths represent will overwhelm the *homo sapiens*.<sup>260</sup> However even the claimed artificiality of telepaths is inconsequential to the evolutionary conflict if they manage to surpass the only competitor they have. The idea of persecution and even genocide are potential tools to employ to promote or thwart that goal, as is seen in Keyes’s first novel.

From the telepaths’ perspective their victory is considered a natural, nearly inevitable occurrence. The normals would be better off simply accepting the change and allowing the human species to evolve to its new form. However, if the object is already ‘othered’, and it reveals itself as superior as well, measures are taken by the general population (or more accurately those governing them) to stop this development. In Bester’s and Keyes’s novels, several mechanisms of control are instituted over the telepath population for this very reason. The telepath population is not happy about being restricted, and thus the underlying anxiety of an inevitable evolutionary clash between humans and telepaths seems certain. In *The Chrysalids* the established telepaths plainly state that obstructing their future cannot be tolerated, as they are considered a superior variant of humanity.<sup>261</sup>

Where then can telepathy as a literary device be useful beyond fictional society with likewise fictional telepaths? In essence, “psi” can be moved to the background “and the tale is not about *psi* as much as it about human and natural community [...]”.<sup>262</sup> One could make the claim that the realization of impossible coexistence with two species of humanity in science fiction was already

---

<sup>259</sup> Wyndham, pp. 63-64.

<sup>260</sup> “The Face of the Enemy”, *Babylon 5*.

<sup>261</sup> Wyndham, p. 196.

<sup>262</sup> Lowentrou, p. 395.

made in H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895), between the Morlocks and the Eloi.<sup>263</sup> J.G. Ballard commented through a character in his story "Low-Flying Aircraft" (1976) that "The ultimate dystopia is inside of one's head",<sup>264</sup> which brings us closer to understanding why a normal and a telepath cannot seem to coexist readily: If the telepath sees the clash as inevitable, the dystopian vision in his head, as was the case with Bester(1), the dystopia is effectively realized, and the utopian option is completely ignored. But as will be shown later, the telepath can incorporate several other identities known to the reader.

Keyes brings out the inevitable aspect of this conflict mainly through the viewpoint of the characters in his novels mainly through Bester(1) and Garibaldi. Already in the first book Lee Crawford presents the initial telepath holocaust as something inevitable.<sup>265</sup> The measure of control imposed on the telepath population relegates them to a position of second class citizens, who have to register and identify themselves for the satisfaction of the majority. Also invoking the name of the Holocaust gives additional readings to the first book in particular. Toward the end of the book there is a series of diary entries that mimic the famous diary of Anne Frank. This aspect of the persecution experienced by ethnic and/or religious minorities (e.g. Jews) ties the plight of telepaths depicted in Keyes's novels together with actual history. These anxieties of the past (and present) have merely been extrapolated to this science fiction setting.

It is pointed out in *Dark Genesis* that religion and churches were actually quite welcoming to telepaths, providing them sanctuary and relief. One could speculate this is a form of a backlash from the Second World War, when the Catholic Church did not strongly protest the Holocaust. Furthermore, it is curious that in these same instances telepathy is viewed as a gift from God, and not as a vile, demonic aspect as in the days of the Witch Trials (see section 2). The more stereotypical religious response to dangerous deviancy is exemplified in Wyndham's *The*

---

<sup>263</sup> Slonczewski & Levy, p. 177. Granted, at the time this was an extrapolation of a class-structured society.

<sup>264</sup> Savolainen, p. 124.

<sup>265</sup> Keyes, p. 13.

*Chrysalids*.<sup>266</sup> At the same time, however, those who seek to annihilate telepaths find their justification religiously if need be in Keyes's novels as well: "You are all cursed by the devil. [...] I merely send you home to hell".<sup>267</sup> Some normals have founded religious sects that specifically stipulate that they should stay away and refuse all contact with telepaths. In addition, the telepaths are 'unothered' to an extent after the holocaust and all its horrors have become evident. Overtly simplifying, granting the formation of the MRA and Teeptown might be seen to correspond with the patronage for the foundation of the state of Israel.

Even if the MRA and later the Psi Corps are designed to hunt their own, they do not see themselves doing it at the bidding of the normal general populace. The MRA for example does not view rogues as unsalvageable, but aims to bring them into custody rather than hunting them down to the bitter end. Many times when the MRA collaborates with normals in the hunt, the cooperation is very tense. The MRA very much considers that if a telepath has to be killed, it should be done by one of their own: "If teeps are to be killed, we'll do it. [They are] family, even if they deny us".<sup>268</sup> This camaraderie is countered by the existence re-education camps for the rogues though. Even if the MRA's abuses of power become evident, however, it is still the defender of the normal society from the equally monstrous telepaths of the resistance movement.<sup>269</sup> The hierarchy of the MRA/Corps allows for the leadership to quite freely control the telepath masses.<sup>270</sup> The organizations formed by telepaths seem to be more prone to be authoritarian led by strong individuals. In many cases the governmental body that is supposed to oversee the actions of the MRA/Corps does not do anything at all until something bad happens,

---

<sup>266</sup> Wyndham uses religion as a particularly hostile element in a society of normals and mutants, where being a mutant is considered not only deviant, but a deadly sin and dealt with accordingly. Wyndham, pp. 19.

<sup>267</sup> Keyes I, p. 23. This also prominently seen in Wyndham, p. 88.

<sup>268</sup> Keyes I, p. 75.

<sup>269</sup> Drawing from Stapledon's writings, Smith suggests that a human struggle for self control is a recurring theme. However, one must ask if it control over the self, or emancipating self-control? Both sides seem to be presented by the MRA/Psi Corps and the resistance respectively.

<sup>270</sup> Relating to hierarchy and power-structures, LeGuin connects the tendency of science fiction to establish authoritarianism. LeGuin "American SF and The Other", p. 89. The mass-controlling hierarchy dichotomy is also a very nietzschean interpretation. Ansell-Pearson, p. 4, 6.

revealing the double-standard of wanting the MRA/Corps to handle telepath issues but quietly and discreetly as not to bother the lives of the normal majority.

Vacit in his time in the first novel saw danger for the future of telepaths. Unknown to others, under his direction the Psi Corps took form, but he also set up the telepath resistance as a back-up plan for the future of telepaths at the same time. Vacit seemed to worry that if the Psi Corps suddenly became a target of another wave of violence, the resistance would still survive and carry out the telepath legacy. Also, keeping the resistance active made the existence and funding of the Psi Corps necessary for the normal population. Vacit's opinion only changed when he came face to face with the alien race, the Vorlons, who had created human telepaths through genetic engineering in the first place. A brief recap is in order. The Vorlons are an ancient race locked into an eternal conflict with another ancient race known as the Shadows. The Shadows have proven to be susceptible to telepaths, which is why the Vorlons have planted telepaths on hundreds of worlds to be used quite frankly as fodder against the Shadows in the next great war.<sup>271</sup> Vacit accepts this, but all telepaths are not so accepting of their forced role as tools and later carry a considerable grudge toward their careless creators, which spills over to a hatred of non-telepaths,<sup>272</sup> who they were to serve.

Vacit had reasoned that using the Corps for control and planning would be complemented by his idea to use the resistance as a darwinistic breeding pool for crafty telepaths to combat the eventual true enemies, the normal majority. However, the Vorlons do not believe in evolution (which is preferred by the Shadows) but in control.<sup>273</sup> Vacit changes his policies accordingly. At this point improving the telepath future becomes the sole aim of the Psi Corps and so all means are acceptable for that end. After this Vacit is invested in the Psi Corps only, losing his interest in dividing the strengths of the telepaths and decides to crush the resistance he had fostered.

Suddenly what Vacit saw as coexisting strategies turned into a battle between absolute extremes

---

<sup>271</sup> "Secret of the Soul", *Babylon 5*, fifth season, episode seven.

<sup>272</sup> This attitude is not unique to Keyes; Smith, p. 59.

<sup>273</sup> The Vorlon says that "evolution crawls to imperfection. It ends in extinction". Keyes I, pp. 222-223.

between the rogues and the Corps. On the other hand, the same division also seems to be extended to the budding struggle between telepaths and non-telepaths.<sup>274</sup> In so doing the resistance itself became a part of the conflict between non-telepaths and telepaths, not because the resistance was especially pro-normal, but because it was so fiercely anti-Corps.

It is too one-sided to consider the Psi Corps as intrinsically evil either. Often the Psi Corps chasing after rogues aim to incapacitate whereas the rogues aim to kill, with conventional weapons or through psionic battle. In the Corps hierarchy, after Vacit passed away, the Corps fell under the control of the anti-telepath director Johnston, who did his best to undo the monopoly the Corps had and make the Corps more a tool or a mindless weapon (a term which is very ironic when it refers to a telepath) to serve the non-telepathic majority. Moreover, during director Johnston's tenure there were serious attempts in human experimenting to bring out telepathy in non-telepaths to make the real, organized telepaths obsolete (and thus expendable).<sup>275</sup> The rules restricting telepaths were further tightened during his tenure, which is one of the reasons Bester(1) went to some trouble to assassinate him for "selling us [telepaths] out to the mundanes" by using agents he telepathically programmed for the task. Bester(1) gives his first speech on the inevitability of conflict by telling Johnston that "both of us know the truth", even if "we talk the talk in public", but the conflict is coming simply because "humanity will not tolerate *Homo Superior* in its midst" and that "it's going to be us" who walk away alive from that battle.<sup>276</sup> With Johnston gone, the policies of the next director of Psi Corps would be almost inconsequential given Bester(1)'s already grown base of power behind the scenes.

When it comes to other differences between normals and telepaths at the hands of the Psi Corps' authority, in many cases the sentiment remains that even rogue telepaths are considered

---

<sup>274</sup> Keyes might be drawing on Stapledon's *Star Maker* (1937) here, as Stapledon is also fond of working out cosmic history through a dialectical process. Smith, p. 51.

<sup>275</sup> Later the substance known as "dust" is brought back under telepath control. "Dust to Dust", *Babylon 5*, season three, episode 5. Garibaldi comments that "Psi Corps did experiments on people that would have made Joseph Mengele lose his lunch". Keyes III, p. 65. This connection, if nothing else, removes sympathy from the agenda of the Corps, even if sole individuals were at fault. Also, Stephen Braude hypothesizes that telepathy might exist already but if people do not receive it "correctly", it all goes to waste. Perhaps Johnston was eager to test Braude's hypothesis. Braude, p. 299.

<sup>276</sup> Keyes II, pp. 255-257.

considerably more valuable than normal people. As the charter of the Corps says there should be no difference between a “mundane” and a telepath, a telepath might still be greatly tempted to help those s/he is sharing a community with. The *homo superior* is capable of changing the rules when necessary; it becomes acceptable to kill a “mundane” to save a telepath.<sup>277</sup> Bester(1) starts his own bid for power, organizing a well hidden paramilitary telepathic force on Mars and reaches the apex of his monstrosity, as he is quick to use his telepathic powers for his ends. The only side he recognizes as legitimate is the side of (his) telepaths.<sup>278</sup> For this end, the message of telepathic superiority can be sent only through language that is clearly understood, such as the murder of unarmed normals who worked with rogue telepaths.

In *The Demolished Man* Powell forebodingly reminds his community that if they lose their contest against Reich, then telepaths might “suffer the usual history of minority groups”.<sup>279</sup> In *Deadly Relations* Bester(1) wryly comments on the situation on Beta Colony (and also Teeptown) that normals tend to prefer that telepaths are kept “separate but equal”, connecting the treatment of telepaths to the treatment of the African American minority in the United States during segregation.<sup>280</sup> It seems that Keyes is suggesting that certain patterns of behaviour repeat themselves in human nature when the majority is faced with a minority they cannot cope with on any level. The telepaths were considered even more dangerous, but as Bester portrayed in *The Demolished Man*, a society that has telepaths has to live with them as they are an unnecessary evil. In these societies you either live with telepaths with some arrangement, or try to exterminate them, and Keyes presents both options.

Telepaths are furious racists as well if Bester(1) is an example: “You normals are obsolete. The future belongs to the telepaths”.<sup>281</sup> In the same episode Bester(1) talks of evolutionary darwinism:

---

<sup>277</sup> Smith, p. 56.

<sup>278</sup> Keyes II, p. 201.

<sup>279</sup> Bester, p. 207.

<sup>280</sup> Keyes II, p. 217.

<sup>281</sup> “Ship of Tears” *Babylon 5*. Another noteworthy point is that the episode showed telepathic ability amplified by surgical implantations.

Sheridan: So how did you find out about all of this?

Bester(1): I'm a telepath. Work it out.

[...]

Bester(1): We are not expendable. Mundanes are.

Garibaldi: [sarcastically] That would be us.

Bester(1): [arrogantly] Got it in one, Mr. Garibaldi. It takes generations to breed a telepath.

Mundanes breed like rabbits. Supply and demand, nothing more, nothing less.<sup>282</sup>

On the other hand, Bester(1) can be seen as the only saviour who can challenge the old system and has the power to protect telepaths beyond it. When Bester(1) hears human telepaths, *his* telepaths are being taken by aliens for enhancement to be used for their (undoubtedly nefarious) purposes, he sets out to stop them by any means necessary. Elsewhere Edgars, a powerful businessman managed to create a telepath-virus and an antidote to keep non-telepaths safe during and after the telepath uprising, which he also saw as inevitable. It was insurance against the day the telepaths try to do to non-telepaths what has been done to them for decades now; turn them into second-class citizens.<sup>283</sup> This virus and antidote would ensure that power in this relationship would be kept in the hands of non-telepaths, giving them the option of either serving or dying. It can be thought of as an evolutionary safeguard. In short, going well beyond Bester's Lincoln Powell, Bester(1) and anti-telepath normals alike are saying "if we could wipe out your whole species, frankly, we would".<sup>284</sup> The vocabulary shifts from ethnic to evolutionary cleansing.

Bester(1) is betrayed by his disciple Byron, whose martyrdom sparks the outbreak of more violent telepath resistance and an even more violent reprisal from Bester(1). The crisis ended with Bester(1) and his comrades defeated and exiled, which did little to mitigate Bester(1)'s own anxieties of another, greater crisis to come. Bester(1) is especially bitter about the fact that rogue telepaths and normals, and telepaths have now come together under a new spirit of understanding to hunt him down. For this purpose, Bester(1) is completely dehumanized, and the original telepath holocaust is turned around, making the telepath this time the instigator of atrocities. In his

<sup>282</sup> *ibid.* Transcribed from subtitles.

<sup>283</sup> "The Face of the Enemy", *Babylon 5*.

<sup>284</sup> Smith quotes John from *Odd John*, p. 121. Smith, p. 56.

lack of remorse for anything else except losing, Bester(1) is doubly cursed as a monster damned by others. However, it could be argued that this monstrosity is as much a creation of Bester(1)'s own actions as it is by the self-righteous condemnation by the society that surrounds him.

To Bester(1) the Corps were the only answer to protecting telepaths from the coming crisis, and having worked so long for it he is unable to recognize any other options. Like Vacit, Bester(1) stopped believing that the rogues could be redeemed, so he set out to remove the threat to the unity of the telepaths under the Corps, by turning the “camps into killing fields”. Bester(1) reasons that he had no choice because the Corps had originally been intended as a tool for normals to retain control over the telepaths: “fear us as they fear no alien race, because we are them, only better”.<sup>285</sup> To Bester(1) his loss is the loss of cause of *homo superior*. This is visible in the naming of his unfinished memoirs, *The Third Thumb*, showing a clear bias for his opinion when it comes to evolution and the telepaths' position in it.<sup>286</sup> Like Gerry, Bester(1) is overcome by his own kind working with a non-telepath.<sup>287</sup>

After Bester(1)'s brief rule certain improvements were made, but for instance in the case of telepaths marrying each other is no longer required but is encouraged; “[marriage] is even harder if one is a teep and the other a mund – uh, not a teep”.<sup>288</sup> What is noteworthy in this statement is the change in language: because the Corps called non-telepaths “mundanes”, it is now (unrealistically) expected that changing the language also changes the underlying attitudes. The normals of the third novel, inspector Girard and Garibaldi are starkly contrasted with Bester(1), as both of them also have some additional senses. Garibaldi thinks of his own intuition as something primal or animal, whereas Girard sees “flashes” of the mental scenarios he constructs when solving a case. Both deny that this intuition is telepathy, but to them it is a rather question of

---

<sup>285</sup> Keyes III, p. 38.

<sup>286</sup> Curiously enough, telepathy has also been referred to as the “third eye”, Nicholls, p. 173.

<sup>287</sup> Sturgeons has Stern, Keyes has Garibaldi. Sturgeon, p. 225.

<sup>288</sup> Keyes III, p. 162. The same is expressed in Wyndham, pp. 91-92.

identity than a case of universal, latent telepathy (and its subsequent denial). Girard even freely admits that in a way he is jealous of the telepaths and their powers.

Garibaldi quickly points this out by referring to racism in general from the viewpoint of mixed-race marriages: “I don’t think we’ve lost any of our old baggage, [...] [we] just put it I prettier bags”. However, Garibaldi continues that “it is not what we think that’s important but what we do”, while at the same time lamenting that legislating about this issue will not bring any real progress.<sup>289</sup> From the standpoint of coexistence Bester(1)’s example is bad for telepaths in the sense that it concretely showed the normal majority how great the potential for power in the society a telepath has, and with enough motivation to use it, a holocaust of the normal population would not be impossible. Garibaldi partially echoes the sentiments of director Johnston in the way that he is disgusted by the idea of letting a telepath into his head, but it is the acceptable lesser evil.

Bester(1)’s trial is the final chapter of the third novel, and in that form it offers abundant analysis of how Bester(1) perceives the conflict. The trial is set against the background of a world “hungry for justice” and/or revenge.<sup>290</sup> Bester(1) comments in his defence that his guilt is very much pre-determined because someone must atone for the crisis. He queries if it would make the prosecution feel better if he said his name was “Hitler, or Stalin, or Satan”?<sup>291</sup> Furthermore Bester(1) denies the easy answer of blaming the crisis solely on him: “”Why you now call the telepath Resistance was at the time universally recognizes as an illegal, subversive organization of terrorists”, and commenting further that according to the jurisdiction given to the Psi Corps, non-telepaths collaborators also fell into the same category and were dealt with accordingly.

One hundred and fifty-eight years ago the existence of telepathy was known to almost no one. One hundred and fifty-seven years ago it became common knowledge [...]. By the end of that year, eighteen thousand telepaths were dead. No war was declared by any government. They were killed one at a time, they were killed en masse and buried in pits, they were aborted when DNA testing revealed what they were as fetuses. [...] As I said, once telepathy was discovered, the murder of telepaths began. It hasn’t stopped. [...] To

---

<sup>289</sup> Keyes III, p. 163.

<sup>290</sup> Keyes III, p. 237.

<sup>291</sup> Keyes III, p. 240.

grow up telepathic is to grow up with the constant menace of death, the vague but real threat of dying at the hands of someone who doesn't even know you, only knows what you *are*, what you represent to them. [...] This undeclared, unrecognized war has been fought for a hundred and fifty-seven years. Its casualties – have always been on *my* side. And when this killing began, what did [the government] do about it? They built a telepath ghetto called Teeptown, and they gave us badges to mark us, separate us. They gave any normal who wanted to kill a telepath the means to find us and identify us. Then they used telepaths to control telepaths.[...] The implicit threat was always there, [...] *either you control yourselves or we will control you*. That was the choice I grew up with.<sup>292</sup>

Bester(1) argues that the formation of the Corps and the perceived ghetto of Teeptown was in itself an act of hostile oppression, setting the telepaths up for a possible “final solution”, but Bester(1) says he wanted to fight back. However, his reprisal doomed him: It seems easier to accept that people are suffering than to allow them the means to strike back, causing more suffering. Bester(1) is not only echoing the thoughts of Gerry in *More Than Human*, but also those of Michael in *The Chrysalids*, who is also willing to put his own community of telepaths far above the community of the normals: “This is a war between our kind and theirs. We didn't start it – we've just as right to exist as they have”.<sup>293</sup> From his viewpoint, the future strife is linked to humanity's past and still very much coming, as telepaths are still marked and catalogued “more certainly and permanently than anyone who ever wore an armband with a star – because that, at least, you could take off”.<sup>294</sup> Bester(1) could be considered to be a kind of tragic hero of telepaths, as misguided as he apparently was.<sup>295</sup>

One might also argue that Bester(1) was a mirroring the oppressive society he lived in. It might be easier for him to live with his actions by maintaining the illusion that there was no alternative.<sup>296</sup> Despite his argumentation, Bester(1) is sentenced to life in prison with forced injection of the sleeper-drug to make his telepathic abilities dead for the remainder of his life. The latter, it seems, is much more wracking for him than the confinement. As the new incarnation of

<sup>292</sup> Keyes III, pp. 242-243. Emphasis as in the text.

<sup>293</sup> Wyndham, pp. 120, 128.

<sup>294</sup> Keyes III, p. 244.

<sup>295</sup> Smith finds this same aspect in Stapledon's *Last and First Men* (1930). Smith, p. 48.

<sup>296</sup> This is something Straczynski has more than one character come to terms with, Straczynski, p. 15.

the Psi Corps unveils their new icons for the future, Bester(1)'s real parents Matthew and Fiona Dexter, the circle seems to close as the new Corps adopts the ideals of freedom professed by the resistance. Bester(1) understands his past, but out of sense for irony refuses to tell anyone who the lost son of the now lauded exemplary figures is, and what he did.

Still, hope lingers: "It is in the acceptance of responsibility and accountability, often worked through memory and the recovery of the past, that we bring the past into a living relation with the present and may thus begin to lay the foundations for utopian change".<sup>297</sup> Keyes does not envision Wyndham's telepathic Utopia where the telepathic "New People" would be the new standard, and non-telepaths would be considered abnormal.<sup>298</sup> Bester(1) does not truly regret or let go of his precious Corps, whereas Gerry is converted to realize that "humanity [...] is your mother and your father now".<sup>299</sup> Nevertheless, the general atmosphere of the ending has an optimistic feel to it. Often science fiction does offer the "readers and protagonists hope: the ambiguous, open endings maintain the utopian impulse within the work".<sup>300</sup> Before his death even Bester(1) allowed himself to wonder if there truly will be a change for the better. Bester(1) dies quietly in his sleep and is buried in silence.<sup>301</sup>

---

<sup>297</sup> Baccolini, Raffaella. "The Persistence of Hope in Dystopian Science Fiction" in *PMLA*, Vol 119, Number 3, May 2004. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p. 521.

<sup>298</sup> Wyndham, p. 145.

<sup>299</sup> Sturgeon, p. 227.

<sup>300</sup> Baccolini, p. 520.

<sup>301</sup> With the exception of Garibaldi staking the grave just in case. Keyes III, p. 257.

## 5 – Conclusion

Telepathy remains a relatively popular and neutral form of ‘othering’ in science fiction as it can be seen to promote either a utopian or a dystopian vision. It is also neutral because telepathy in itself does not differentiate between race, class, or gender; it only differentiates between telepaths and non-telepaths, although one could argue that this ‘othering’ can be fierce enough to erode the neutrality it has. This rings true in Keyes, Bester and Sturgeon alike. Moreover, the use of certain words and imagery in Keyes’s books make drawing parallels with actual human history very effortless. The parallels drawn are clear enough in the “Psi Corps Trilogy” to be readily identified. As Ashcroft & al. comment, ‘othering’ creates an enemy, an opposition that must exist for the dominant force to define itself.<sup>302</sup> The concept excludes and marginalizes, and as seen in Keyes’s books, it dehumanizes. ‘Othering’ is never a one-way interaction, but those ‘othered’ quickly develop their own classification for those that would oppress them, legitimizing their struggle for freedom, much as the peoples of subjugated colonies did.

The aspect of control is very pervasive in all four books I have analyzed as primary material. Reich needs to be contained, the Psi Corps seeks the control a whole segment of a population, and the *homo gestalt* refuses to submit to Miss Kew. The imperfect *homo superior*, or even the *Übermensch* has to deny the control because it feels too restricted by it, but also on the other hand realizes that some control must exist as long as it is indeed imperfect. The individual stands up from the community more often than not, as is the case with Bester(1), Powell, and Gerry. Very rarely does telepathy expect any kind of surrender to a group mind, but more often to a political or social entity, like the many forms of the Psi Corps in Keyes’s books or the Esper Guild in *The Demolished Man*. The community of telepaths is then crafted around that entity for the purposes of its hierarchal leadership. Ironically a telepathic leadership where ideally everyone could speak their minds seems to be exceedingly undemocratic and leaning toward majority control.

---

<sup>302</sup> Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin. p. 173

Under this control, the telepath becomes a threat, a potential monster. The *Übermensch* is combined to the Gothic Monster to produce a peculiar *Untermensch* that is the telepath as exemplified by Bester(1); a being with considerable power, but very human and susceptible to the same failings as non-telepaths nonetheless. Admittedly Bester(1) does have a vision befitting the *Übermensch* of an evolutionary clash that will elevate one participant clearly above the other, and decries the status quo to which the “Psi Corps Trilogy” returns as a condition in which zero progress is being made.<sup>303</sup> The progress need not be evolutionary, but it can be even social, affecting the ways that people think. Perhaps one of the more crucial questions from the aspect of the potential future conflict and the continuation of a dystopia in the novels is how much organizational telepathy has changed, or is repeating same patterns as before? At the end of Keyes’s third novel the careful optimism portrays a potential for this kind of change.

Even if the telepathic evolutionary struggle is much more explicitly stated in Keyes’s three novels, *The Demolished Man* also carries the same connotations and implications within, especially through Lincoln Powell. There seems to be some measure of common ground between Bester and Bester(1), given that both display opinions that relate to Hobbesian cynicism. Having a monopoly on telepaths quickly starts to change from a necessary evil to a bid for actual independent power. To have power in a society entails the power of defining normality, and to non-telepaths telepathy is something that threatens their staple of uniqueness. Some telepaths succumb to this pressure and opt for normality through the sleeper-drug in Keyes’s novels, but others, curiously both Bester(1) and the resistance to the Corps alike, are proud of their perceived deviancy. To telepaths their ability is a sign of their uniqueness, and as such they want to keep it to themselves. The authoritarian organization they form only underline the importance of this privilege. At the same time the organization strives to make telepaths into responsible, even worthy users. Those who do not conform are judged harshly within and without their community.

---

<sup>303</sup> The Nietzschean *Übermensch* seeks to reform a stagnant society as well. Ansell-Pearson, pp. 102-103.

All four novels see telepaths linked in with non-telepaths as human beings. This approach does not seem revolutionary as such, but when it is considered against the historical background of actual human atrocities (Jews and the Holocaust) and fierce ‘othering’ on a societal scale (segregation and apartheid in the United States and South Africa respectively), a theme of advocating tolerance is found. On the other hand, it can also be seen as a lamenting theme of sad, bigoted human thinking that is doomed to repeat itself when anything that can be ‘othered’ is presented. Especially Bester(1)’s defence oration hits a potentially sore point when people would like to think that the human race has evolved on its spiritual level as well; that we have “grown” beyond committing, or certainly beyond repeating, a Holocaust. This point is also why it is necessary to find someone to blame, a person who can be used as a scapegoat to avoid having to scrutinize humanity as a whole. This certainly seems to be the case with Bester(1)’s trial, and he comments as much, as seen above. Only through sacrificing someone can the rest of humanity go on and expecting to find something other than endless dystopias.

As telepathy can be seen to dwell on suffering and ‘othering’, it can also be connected to the idea of a society in change. After a significant discovery, be it factual (e.g. automobile) or fictional, the human society restructures itself to fit better into the changing world. This restructuring is usually slow, revolving around technology even if one would argue that that several technological breakthroughs have historically facilitated war. Telepathy embodies a human change that demands immediate attention, and it would be incorrect to expect that the shockwaves would be any less devastating. After the shock and the restructuring, both of which can be violent as both Bester and Keyes show, the society usually returns to some kind of status quo, showing its resistant nature despite apparently continuous inner conflicts.

The freedom(s) of man are subjected to endless speculation on the level of the individual telepath and also on the level of telepaths as a community. However, the freedom of telepaths seems to conflict with the safety of normals in Keyes’s books, whereas the freedom of Reich

would threaten (assumably) the safety of telepaths. Admittedly this interpretation creates a pessimistic cycle of impossible coexistence. At times science fiction gives a gloomy image of the future of man, of the inability to humanly change when faced with issues familiar to us from but only in new guise. In so doing we are also brought face to face with the contemporary man. The idea is similar to the telepath's potential use of power; it can be both good and bad, but given our intrinsic knowledge of human nature (perhaps often wondering what we would do in that situation) we lean towards a more dystopian vision. One might consider whether this is a cynical or a realistic approach to how issues of 'othering' are dealt with in our society, or perhaps only in the society the writer is writing from. Hopelessness is not offered by Keyes or Bester, but rather an open ending with a vague feeling of optimism can be conveyed. The uncanniness of telepathy in the human world seems to return to a delicate state of status quo in the end in both Keyes's and Bester's books.

In the books analyzed for this thesis, it is clear that telepathy is far from being a transcendental experience which uplifts humanity. The discovery of telepaths cannot be viewed as a utopian solution to uplift the perceived human existence bent on war and destruction. Indeed, telepaths and normal people are often distinguishable only through the organizations created, and the powers manifested, but never by basic human nature. Forsaking the material for the mind is very rarely an option allowed to be even considered. Only through *Babylon 5* are such opportunities even presented in Keyes's world, as a highly modified telepath is able to leave his mortal coil behind.<sup>304</sup> Of course, the lack of the option of a utopian transcendence does not automatically make any of the novels dystopian as such, as noted by Baccolini. It is merely the existence of telepaths in these fictional worlds that removes the utopian alternative.

The acceptance of telepathy moreover deserves some consideration, as it seems to be a vehicle for several ideas, and many of them do not have to have anything to do with telepathy itself.

---

<sup>304</sup> "Mind War", *Babylon 5*, first season, episode 6.

Issues of privacy, anxiety about community and self-image through ‘othering’ are all present with or without telepathy. It is possible to speculate that in our increasingly technological times people actually feel more and more estranged from one another as a community, and telepathy is welcomed with such vigour exactly because it compensates for the perceived loss through technology by uplifting humans. It is rather like a subconscious expectation of development and progress in the human psyche that offers these new futuristic paradigms, which obviously include problems to be overcome. This seems rather idealistic, but not necessarily misleading.<sup>305</sup> Stories on telepathy should not be taken at their face value. Similarly, a story that is not explicitly about telepathy can still be a “psi story”.<sup>306</sup>

As a theme telepathy has been very prevalent, dating in the mainstream from the 1950s to the 21<sup>st</sup> century with apparently very little changes in the overall formula. Telepathy can be used as an easily understood vehicle to convey social fears and anxieties expressed by contemporary people, and can be taken further still to depict a society undergoing massive restructuring when old values are debunked by something new and fantastic. In science fiction diversity, as Royle pointed out previously, seems to be an intrinsic part of the “telepathic” literary device. Bester’s books are still respected by modern science fiction writers as precious base set for the genre. However, cases in which telepathy is the dominant trait in all people and not just a minority-issue are nearly non-existent in the works mentioned in this thesis. It is important to note that these texts are only a fraction of the representation telepathy receives in the science fiction literary genre.

---

<sup>305</sup> I am paraphrasing James Blish, who criticizes science fiction writers for thinking up incredible new paradigms and then through their work giving them undeserved credit. Blish, James. (1971) *The Tale that Wags the God*. Chicago: Advent Publishers. 1987. pp. 44-45.

<sup>306</sup> Lowentrou, p. 399.

## 6 - Bibliography

Aldiss, Brian W. (with Wingrove, David) *Trillion Year Spree*. London: Victor Gollancz. 1986.

Ansell-Pearson., Keith. *An Introduction to Nietzsche as a Political Thinker*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1994.

*Babylon 5*, (TV, 1994-1998) created by J.M. Straczynski:  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0105946/>, acquired 17.2.2006.

Baccolini, Raffaella. "The Persistence of Hope in Dystopian Science Fiction" in *PMLA*, Vol 119, Number 3, May 2004. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 518-521.

Bakker, R. Scott. *The Thousandfold Thought*. London: Orbit. 2007.

Bester, Alfred. (1953) *The Demolished Man*. London: Millennium, Victor Gollancz. 1999.

Bester, Alfred. (1956) *The Stars My Destination*. London: Millennium, Victor Gollancz. 1999.

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*. London, New York: Routledge. 1998/1999.

Blish, James. (1971) *The Tale that Wags the God*. Chicago: Advent Publishers. 1987.

Brantlinger, Patrick. "The Gothic Origins of Science Fiction" in *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, Vol. 14, No. 1, Autumn 1980. pp. 30-43.

Braude, Stephen. "Telepathy" in *Noûs*. Vol. 12, No. 3, September 1978. Blackwell Publishing. pp. 267-301.

Broderick, Damien. "New Wave and backwash: 1960-1980" in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. James, Edward and Mendlesohn, Farah (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. pp. 48-64.

Botting, Fred. *Gothic*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Clark, Arthur C. (1953) *Childhood's End*. London: Pan Macmillan. 2001.

*Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977). Directed and written by Steven Spielberg.  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0075860/>, acquired 26.2.2006.

*Ghost In The Shell* (Japanese title: *Kôkaku kidôtai*), 1994. Director: Mamoru Oshii. Writing credits: Masamune Shirow & Kazunori Itô. Produced by Production I.G./Bandai Visual.  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0113568/>, acquired 22.2.2006.

Gibson, William. (1984) *Neuromancer* London: Voyager, HarperCollins Publishers, 1995.

Godshalk, William L. "Alfred Bester: Science Fiction or Fantasy?" in *Extrapolation: A Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy*. Vol. 16. 1975. Wooster: University of Ohio. pp. 149-155.

- Hassan, Ihab. "The New Gnosticism: Speculations on an Aspect of the Postmodern Mind" in *Paracriticisms – Seven Speculations of the Times*. Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press. 1975. pp. 121-147.
- Heinlein, Robert A. *Starship Troopers*. (1959) London: New English Library. 1970.
- Heinlein, Robert A. *Stranger In a Strange Land* (1961) Hodder and Stoughton. 2005.
- Herbert, Frank. *Dune*. (1965) London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, NEL Paperback Edition, 1968
- Hienger, Jörg. "The Uncanny and Science Fiction" in *Science Fiction Studies*. Vol. 6, Part 2 (July) 1979. DePauw University. Accessed at: <http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/18/hienger18art.htm>, acquired 20.04.2007.
- Huntington, Samuel. *The Clash of Civilizations*. Simon & Schuster, 1998.
- Interview with Greg Keyes at SFFWorld.com by Rob Bedford, 02.11.2003. <http://www.sffworld.com/interview/28p2.html> , acquired 18.04.2007.
- Isaac Asimov's "Three Laws of Robotics"  
<http://www.auburn.edu/~vestmon/robotics.html>, acquired 1.5.11.2005.
- Jackson, Rosemary. *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*. London, New York: Methuen. 1981.
- Joan Sloanczewski and Michael Levy. "Science Fiction and the life sciences" in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. James, Edward and Mendlesohn, Farah (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003 pp. 176-185
- Jones, Gwyneth. "The Icons of Science Fiction" in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. James, Edward and Mendlesohn, Farah (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003 pp. 163-173.
- King, Stephen. (1980) *Firestarter*. Hodder & Stoughton, 2006.
- Keyes, Gregory J. *Dark Genesis: Birth of the Psi Corps*. Ballantine Publishing, Del Rey. 1998.
- Keyes, Gregory J. *Deadly Relations: Bester Ascendant*. Ballantine Publishing, Del Rey. 1999.
- Keyes, Gregory J. *Final Reckoning: The Fate Of Bester*. Ballantine Publishing, Del Rey. 1999.
- Keyes, Gregory J., entry in Internet Speculative Fiction DataBase:  
<http://www.isfdb.org/cgi-bin/ea.cgi?J.%20Gregory%20Keyes> , acquired 08.03.2007.
- LeGuin, Ursula. (1979) "American SF and The Other" in *The Language Of The Night – Essays of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. New York: Berkley Books. 1982. pp. 87-90.
- LeGuin, Ursula. *Tales From Earthsea*. London: Orion Children's Books. 2003.
- Lowentrou, Peter M. "PsiFi: The Domestication of *Psi* in Science Fiction" in *Extrapolation*, Vol. 30, No. 4. Kent University Press. 1989. pp. 388-400.

Luckhurst, Roger. *The Invention of Telepathy: 1870-1901*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2002.

Malmgren, Carl D. "Against Genre/Theory: The State of Science Fiction Criticism" in *Poetics Today*, Vol. 12, No. 1, Spring 1991. pp. 125-144.

McVaugh, Michael. "J-B-Rhine's Extra-Sensory Perception and Its Background in Psychical Research" in *Isis*, Vol. 67, No. 2, June 1976. pp. 160-189.

Mendelshon, Farah. "Introduction: Reading Science Fiction" in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. James, Edward and Mendlesohn, Farah (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. pp. 1-12.

Michael Garibaldi character profile:

<http://worldsofjms.com/b5/characters/garibaldi.htm> , acquired 10.04.2007.

Myers, F.W.H. (1893) "Science and a Future Life" in *Science and a Future Life, with Other Essays*. London: Macmillan. 2001.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. (1885) *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Trans. Hollingdale, R.J. Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1961.

Pratchett, Terry. (1992) *Lords And Ladies*. London: Corgi Books. 1993.

Rhine, J.B. (1934) *Extra-sensory Perception*. Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing. 2003.

Riggenbach, Jeff. "Science Fiction as Will and Idea: The World of Alfred Bester" in *Riverside Quarterly*, Vol. 5. 1972. Gainesville (FL). pp. 168-177.

Royle, Nicholas. (1990) *Telepathy and Literature – Essays on the Reading Mind*. Oxford, Cambridge MA: Basil Blackwell Ltd. 1991.

Savolainen, Matti. "The New Wave of Science Fiction as Postmodern Literature: J.G. Ballard as a Test Case" in *Criticism in the Twilight Zone: Postmodern Perspectives on Literature and Politics*. Zadworna-Fjellestad and Björk, Lennart (eds.). Stockholm. 1990. pp. 121-128.

*Scanners* (1980/1) Directed and written by David Cronenberg.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0081455/> , acquired 02.04.2007.

Shelley, Mary (1818) *Frankenstein*. London and New York: Penguin, 1994.

Smith, Curtis C. "Olf Stapledon's Dispassionate Objectivity" in *Voice For the Future: Essays on Major Science Fiction Writers*. Volume 1. Claerson, Thomas D. (ed.). Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1976.

Stableford, Brian. "Science fiction before the genre" in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. James, Edward and Mendlesohn, Farah (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003 pp. 15-32.

Stapledon, Olaf. (1937) *Star Maker*. London: Orion Publishing. 1999.

*Star Wars*. (1977). Directed and written by George Lucas. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0076759/>, acquired 26.2.2006.

*Starship Troopers* (1997). Directed by Paul Verhoeven. Writing credits: Robert A. Heinlein (book), Edward Neumeier (screenplay). <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120201/>, acquired 13.5.2006.

Straczynski, Michael J. "The Profession of Science Fiction, 48: Approaching Babylon" in *Foundation: The Review of Science Fiction*. Vol. 64, Summer 1995. pp. 5-19.

Sturgeon, Theodore. (1953) *More Than Human*. London: Millennium, Victor Gollancz.. 2000.

Sudre, René. *Treatise on Parapsychology*. Trans. Green, C.E. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1960.

Suvin, Darko. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On The Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979.

*The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. James, Edward and Mendlesohn, Farah (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003

*The Matrix* (1999). Directed and written by Andy Wachowski, Larry Wachowski. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0133093/>, acquired 04.04.2007.

*The Matrix Reloaded* (2003). Directed and written by Andy Wachowski, Larry Wachowski. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0234215/>, acquired 04.04.2007.

*The Matrix Revolutions* (2003). Directed and written by Andy Wachowski, Larry Wachowski. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0242653/>, acquired 04.04.2007.

*The Science in Science Fiction*. Nicholls, Peter (ed). London: Roxby Science Fiction Limited. 1982.

The Society for Psychical Research:  
<http://www.spr.ac.uk/>, acquired 27.2.2006.

Thurschwell, Pamela. *Literature, Technology and Magical Thinking, 1880-1920*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2001.

Wells, H.G. (1895) *The Time Machine*. London and New York: Penguin. 2005.

William Crookes & London Dialectical Society: *Report on Spiritualism of the Committee of the London Dialectical Society*. London: Longmans. 1871.

Williams, Raymond. "Science Fiction" in *Science Fiction Studies*. Volume 15, Part 3 (November) 1988. DePauw University. Accessed at <http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/documents/williams.htm>, acquired 21.04.2007.

Winthrop, John. (1630) *A Modell of Christian Charity*.

<http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap1/winthrop.html> Acquired 10.04.2007.

Wyndham, John. *The Chrysalids*. (1955) London and New York: Penguin. 1958.

*X-Men: The Last Stand*. (2006). Directed by Brett Ratner, written by Simon Kinberg and Zak Penn. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0376994/> , acquired 11.04.2007.