

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
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Helliconia Winter (1985) is a concluding part of the Helliconia Trilogy. The planet Helliconia is orbiting binary suns. Helliconia has a Great Year spanning, three millennia of Earth time. So cultures are born in spring, flourish in summer and then die with the onset of the generations long winter. The centuries long winter of the Great Year of Helliconia is upon us, and the Oligarch is taking the harsh measures to ensure the survival of the people of the bleak Northern continent of Sibornal. Behind the battle with which the novel opens lies an act of unparalleled treachery. But the plague is coming on the wings of winter and the Oligarch's will is set against it and against the phagors, humanity's ancient enemies, who carry the plague with them.

This is the concluding volume of the Helliconia Trilogy, a monumental saga that goes beyond anything yet created by this master among today's imaginative writers. Just as the series began with everything waking up with spring, so it ends with the world once again falling asleep for winter. Definitely ranking as one of the best series of all time, Aldiss finishes weaving his masterful plot, somehow making a book that is in the vein of the others and yet completely different. The matter of Earth is finally clarified and he ties in the destiny of us with Helliconia and shows that the two planets are not different after all.

On Helliconia, Aldiss's special planet, where one year lasts two and half thousand Earth years and winter is seven centuries long. As Helliconia moves on its elliptical path away from the warmth of the sun Freyr and crops

fail and the growing harshness of the climate is matched by the harshness of government under the Oligarch. In *Winter*, mankind's ancient enemies, the phagors, begin to leave the mountain fastnesses to war upon human civilization. In the volume three of the *Helliconia Trilogy* is the conclusion of the story of Aldiss's great work. *Helliconia Trilogy* includes three massive, thoroughly researched, deeply through-composed tales, set on a planet whose primary sun is in an eccentric orbit around another star. So the planet experiences both small seasons and long Great Year, during the course of which radical changes afflict the human like inhabitants. This is a fantastic science fiction novel by Brian Aldiss. A famous British Science Fiction Writer Colin Greenland says about *Helliconia Winter* that:

“... though Science Fiction often has this scope, it has never had this grandeur... This action is international, the scenery sometimes colossal, but the people are all actual size. Grandeur is not aloofness ... Aldiss rises majestically to this romance of imperial twilight. *Helliconia Winter* is a tale of magnificent grimness of institutionalized cruelty, fateful coincidences, and conflicts of desire and duty. It bristles with thick furs and handlebar moustaches, plague-ships and desperate sleigh-rides. *Helliconia* is a world denied modernity”.<sup>1</sup>

There are two plots in *Helliconia Winter* (1985), the main plot and the sub-plot. The main plot deals with the story of *Helliconia* and the people of *Helliconia*. But the sub-plot deals with the story of Earth Observation Station, *Avernus* and the story about the Earth. The book begins when *Lutern*, main character of the story, has just recovered from a mysterious

illness that kept him immobile for about a year after the unexplained suicide for his elder brother Favin, whose name it is now forbidden to speak.

His father and his neighbour arranged a long time ago that Luterin would one day marry the neighbour's daughter Insil Esikananzi. His almost always absent father sends Luterin into the army, where he gains renown under Archpriest-Militant Asperamanka during a campaign to protect the town of Isturiacha on the southern border from an invasion by troops from what they call the Savage Continent.

Luterin kills Bandal Eith Lahl, commandant of the Borldorian battalion of the opposing army and takes Bandal's widow Tores Lahl as his slave. Soon, the Fat Death disease shows itself in the Sibornalese army. So, other Sibornalese troops show up in Koriantura with orders from the Oligarch to destroy the returning army of Archpriest Militant Asperamanka, in an attempt to halt the spread of the Fat Death. One of these troops is Captin Harbin Fashnalgid, who gets billeted with Eedap Mun Odin, trader in porcelain.

Captain Fashnalgid secretly hates the Oligarch and the army, into which he was sold by his father. He sneaks out of Koriantura and intercepts and warns Luterin Shokerandit and Toress Lahl before they are seen by the Oligarch's army. Luterin doesn't fully trust the captain but heeds his warning and follows him to the coast, where Fashnalgid has a dinghy waiting. There, Luterin falls ill with the Fat death. Toress Lahl and Captain Fashnalgid sneak Luterin and themselves into the house of Odin in Koriantura, with the help of Odin's slave woman Besi. Meanwhile, Chubsalid, the popular leader of the Church, decides to oppose the

Oligarch's latest edict, which is against the practice of communing with ancestors by going into Pauk. For example: "Shokerandit fixed his gaze on a poster on a wall by the door. It announced that henceforth. Anyone Entering the State of Pauk committed an Offence".<sup>2</sup>

The character, Archpriest-Militant Asperamanka has survived the massacre at Koriantura and joins Chubsalid in a visit to the Oligarch, who condemns them to be burnt at the stake for opposing the state. Aspermanka throws in his lot with the Oligarch and is spared, but Chubsalid is killed. This marks the separation of the church and the state in Siboranal. For example, "Church also hates the Oligarch yet we work together. Church and state must never divided".<sup>3</sup> In this way Aldiss comments on church philosophy.

At last Luterin comes home and announces that he wants to marry his slave Toress Lahl instead of his intended bride Insil Esilananzi, to the disapproval of both families. Lusterin gives Toress the key to a centuries-old shrine to King JandolAnganol from Toress's homeland, located in a secluded spot. Then he goes off hunting for a couple of days. When he returns, his father is at home. Luterin expresses his hatred for the Oligarch who ordered his own army to be destroyed at Koriantura. The character Fashnalgid says : "I have been posted to Koriantura to help organize a force, which will ambush the Priest-militant's army when it returns from Chalce. Our orders are to kill every last man including Asperamanka."<sup>4</sup>

Then Luterin realizes from his father's responses that his father is in fact the Oligarch. Luterin kills his father and escapes to the Wheel of Kharnabar. He enters the Wheel, and is alone inside it for ten years, after

which his cell lines up with the sole entrance or exit again. The character Luterin says: “The Great Wheel began to rotate slowly; the view of the outer world was cut off from the cell’s new occupant by the rock face. The outer world disappeared from view”.<sup>5</sup>

Then the killing of the previous Oligarch is now seen as a positive thing, and Luterin’s passage through the Wheel of Kharnabar has bestowed a certain measure of holiness upon him, so he is officially a free man again. But Insil has been married off to Asperamanka, and it has not been a happy marriage for her. One time she fled to the shrine of JandolAnganol, where she found Toress Lahl who escaped there after the killing of the Oligarch and raised her and Luterin’s son there. Toress and Insil became friends. Insil tells Toress that Luterin’s older brother Favin was killed when he discovered, to his dislike, that his father was the Oligarch.

The keeper of the Wheel and the Master of Kharnabar arrange a party for Luterin, also to mark the occasion of the Day of Myrkwyr. Myrkwyr means the day when the polar regions go into their long period of twilight. But for phagors, Myrkwyr marks the return of conditions favourable for them. A company of phagors attacks the hated Sons of Freyr, mean humans and kills Asperamanka. Luterin escapes because of the confusion. Insil Esilananzi leads him to Toress Lahl. The book ends as Toress and Luterin leave for the shrine of king JandalAnganol, where he will meet his now ten year old son for the first time. This is the story of main plot. Hilary Bailey is a British writer and editor, she is the former wife of Michel Moorcock. She has given opinion about Helliconia Winter as follows:

“It is actually from the confusions of physical life ... that Aldiss draws his strength. He must be one of the few writer of large, cosmological books who doesn't fear, loathe, disapprove of or actually misunderstand the terms on which normal people normally live their lives”.<sup>6</sup>

But the sub-plot is related to Earth and Earth Observation Station, Avernus. The links between Helliconia and Earth form a subplot that Aldiss was careful to leave somewhat vague in the trilogy's first two books. In this novel, we learn more about events on Earth, where the human species nearly destroys itself before the survivors learn to appreciate their role in the superorganism that constitutes all life on the planet. Here, Aldiss' insights into evolution and ecology come across far more powerfully in the Helliconian setting than in the breathless summaries of terrestrial 'future history' that read like synopsis of another trilogy. But this is a forgivable flaw in a splendid work of imagination that weds grandeur of concept to a mastery of detail and a sense of style unmatched in modern science fiction.

Helliconia Winter (1985) is the concluding volume in Brian W. Aldiss's masterful trilogy whose theme is nothing less than the interrelationship of all living things. This time Aldiss has narrowed his focus a bit. Unlike Helliconia Spring (1982), and Helliconia Summer (1983), which told of the rise and fall of entire culture, the new novel has a single protagonist, Luterin Shokerandit, a princeling on Helliconia's northernmost continent, where efforts are being made to preserve law and order during the long freeze.

As in the previous books, the impact of climate on behaviour is dramatized in a way that does full justice to the maddening unpredictability of individuals who remain free to resist the environmental imperatives they cannot escape. The novel filled with memorable scenes, two marvelous set pieces stand out: a dog sled ride through a frozen land that loses nothing in comparison with the classic snow and icescapes in Ursula K. Le Guin's Left Hand of Darkness (1969) and Luterin Shokerandit's incarceration in the Great Wheel of Kharnabhar-prison, religious shrine and bitter symbol of hope for the Helliconians. Brian Aldiss has also amplified his earlier, somewhat sketchy treatment of "pauk", the mental state in which Helliconians can communicate with their dead-but-not-departed relatives. The religious character Fashnalgid says: "We have the custom of pauk, by which living persons can sink their selves down into a trance state to commune with their ancestral spirits".<sup>7</sup>

Aldiss's rigorous handling of a subject that could easily degenerate into slack sentimentality also serves to warn the reader not to draw facile parallels between Helliconia and Earth. The fate of Avernus's crew provides a fictional object lesson on the consequences of technological encapsulation and experiential deprivation. Shaking off the "defeated minimalism" that had long been the order of the day. Its crew gradually descends into a downward spiral of sexual depravity and pornographic display, schizophrenia and despair, and then abject violence and barbarism among one another. Completely divorced from the creative fundament of wild and sensuous nature and unable to contain the sexual wilderness of the human psyche within the boundaries of emotional maturity and mutual respect, the



crew begins fabricating monstrous sexual organs for perverse pleasure while reverting to interpersonal violence:<sup>8</sup>

“The laboratories were encouraged to bring forth more and more grotesque mutations. Dwarfs with enlarged sex organs were succeeded by hybrid sex organs imbued with life. These ‘pudendolls’ move with legs of their own; later models progressed by labile or preputial masculature. These reproductive laviathans publicly aroused and engulfed each other, or overwhelmed the humans thrown into their paths... several generations of Avernians venerated these strange polymorphs almost as if they were the gods which had been banished from the station long ago”.<sup>9</sup>

When part of the remaining crew mutinies, the contingent attempts to carve out a new home on a nearby planet that had centuries before served as the base for the original crew while the Avernus was being built from the materials on Earth’s colonizing ship. Their last-ditch recolonizing project however fails for lack of understanding that the human species “is no more and no less than a part and function of a living entity”. Having so long ago broken its Earth ties to Gaia and become insured to the abstract and lifeless world of the observation station. This Avernian remnant can no longer mobilize historical memory or bodily recall of the more encompassing web of relations necessary for human survival and well being constituting a “tutelary biospheric spirit”.<sup>10</sup>

Avernus’s main function is to serve as a beacon to Earth, transmitting reports and live coverage of the events on Helliconia. These programs begin to command worldwide attention and extensive commentary. What is it that

holds Earth's viewers for decades and then on and off for centuries in trial of Helliconia's drama? It must be more than simply the historical record of an alien world with two rival species locked in bitter, unending combat shaped by transcendent ecological forces and conditions of which they have incomplete knowledge. For one thing the tides of Helliconian history and geo-physico-climatic cycles provide the ecological springs to an alternative cultural and social existence. That is more closely tied to Helliconia's lack of dynamic and institutionalized technological development. Perhaps the legions of viewers from one generation to the next experience in the Otherness of Helliconia a yearning for certain qualities, conditions, and values there that Earth is not but might yet be.<sup>11</sup>

Lacking an alienating technology, that increasingly isolates, insulates and abstracts life from its natural tap-roots, reconciled to the inevitability of death through rituals and perhaps experiences allowing them to communicate with their ancestors for insight and wisdom. Yet caught up in conflicts and contests flamed by emotions and passions similarly rending the Earthly human fabric. Helliconia draws a rapt and spellbound Earth audience to the complex and subtle manifestations of identity and difference, estrangement and familiarity that engenders a powerful "empathic link" that fosters a "transformation of the spirit".<sup>12</sup> By the same token, it prompts a startling realization that "as a strand in an inescapable web of cosmology, culture, and history". Helliconia is both very far away and extremely close, simultaneously utterly alien to earthly existence and a beckoning possibility of what it might become.<sup>13</sup>

Aldiss's ecological sensibilities and egalitarian appreciation of identity and difference lead him to a comparative analysis of Earth and Helliconian religion and to a fictional exploration of the eventual communication between an earthly Gaia and its Helliconian counterpart the original Beholder. In juxtaposing terran and Helliconian religion, Aldiss acknowledges the greater sophistication of Earth's inhabitants in regard to their attachment to a nondogmatic religious sense surpassing a godhead compared with the Helliconian's religious grounding in a more primitive fealty to a dogmatic spirituality personified in the All-powerful. Even the practice of "pauk", typically seen as the hall mark of primitive religions on Earth, is interpreted by terrestrial onlookers in sympathetic ways".<sup>14</sup>

Aldiss explains it in *Helliconia Summer*: "Understanding grew that the people of Helliconia possessed an ability peculiar to them, to shift beyond and return from the boundary set between life and death. This continuity had been given them in compensation for the remarkable discontinuities of their Great Year. Pauk had evolutionary value and was a point of union between the humans and their changeable planet".<sup>15</sup>

Later, as Helliconia becomes "of prime importance to the spiritual existence of Earth",<sup>16</sup> its lure increasingly stems from the manner in which Helliconian religion including Pauk-blends profound insight into questions of natural existence, personal meaning, religious mystery and cosmological origins and destiny. Interestingly, more than Pauk, it is the parallel "tethor state" of the ancipital race, the nonhuman phagors, with whom the Earth observers most closely identify and find succor. For while the dead spirits visited during pauk by the humans in Helliconia are ever complaining and

never at peace, the phagors in tethor “supported their living descendants, formed them in adversity”.<sup>17</sup> When Gaia and the Original Beholder establish empathic contact, it is as a communication of one living biosphere to another, as one of those extremely rare and precious communions between “geochemical spirits who have managed the life of a functioning planet as a single organism ... a vast co-operative entity, creating well-being from the centre of the furious chemical firestorm”.<sup>18</sup>

As a prelude to this communion of geochemical spirits, Earth first suffers a devastating nuclear war born of a technical civilization alienated from Gaia. Fortunately, Earth somehow abides and Gaia slowly recovers, renewing its regulatory capacities over a wounded but healing planet and a scarred and chastened humankind. When humankind’s reconciliation with Gaia is eventually realized, a determination arises from the living of Earth. Gaia’s human components, to send an empathetic sign to Helliconia, not to the humans, whose primitive religion and practices have estranged them from their Original Beholder. But to the fessups and gossies who might receive their beam and mediate between Earth’s Gaia and Helliconia’s.<sup>19</sup> Aldiss says about Helliconia Trilogy in his article, Helliconia : How And Why that:

“I consulted the various authorities whose names are acknowledged in the novels. Most of them entered into the game of Helliconia readily, and had fruitful suggestions to make. Most specifically, it was Iain Nicholson’s description of the binary system and how it came about which opened up what I regard as one of the most profound themes of the novel, the process of enantiodromia, by

which things constantly turn in to their opposites; knowledge becomes by turns a blessing and a curse, as does religion; captivity and freedom interchange roles; phagors become by turns conquerors and slaves. As a means of making concrete this amorphous but deeply felt theme, the binary model was ideal”.<sup>20</sup>

Helliconia Winter features the Great Wheel that revolves horizontally inside a mountain, hauled by entrapped volunteers whose efforts – in a metaphor suggesting ancient Egypt – supposedly pull Helliconia through the long winter. This architecture-cum-machine pays homage to the revolving temple or prison of Edgar Rice Burroughs’s The Gods of Mars (1918).

Ultimately Aldiss shows a triple choice for humanity and near-humanity. The voyeuristic scientists of the artificial satellite Avernus lapse into decadence, barbarian strife, and eventual death. Earth, recovering from an apocalypse brought on by nuclear war in the far future, develops into a contented, harmonious utopia. And Helliconia struggles onward, locked in the Great Year’s endless cycle of planetary metamorphosis, a punishing cycle that is also the vital rhythm of life.

Aldiss is careful to avoid the easy puzzle-solving of pulp science fiction, whose conventions would demand both a “magic bullet” of advanced medicine to break the hold of the virus and sustainable high technology for comfortable winter survival. As Helliconia has been conceived, though, this solution is no solution but rather a disaster, a poisoning of the biosphere’s delicate self – regulation. The actual ending or lack of ending is more grimly resonant. Despite many fine inventions, however, the second and third

volumes do not equal the magical, colour-splashed unfurling of *Helliconia Spring*.<sup>21</sup>

The setting of the novel *Helliconia Winter* (1985) is the planet Helliconia itself and as well as Earth and Earth Observation Station, Avernus. On Helliconia, whole story happens in Sibornal Continent. In this continent, all states are under the control of the Oligarch. The hero Luterin becomes victim of the ruler. The whole story goes around the main character, Luterin. The final piece in the Helliconia story covers the journey of Luterin Shokerandit from warrior to messenger, traitor and traveler, isolationist, radical and finally back to warrior. He captures as his slave the beautiful doctor Toress Lahl, a foreigner to him. Together, they are selected to take a message to the ruler of Helliconia, the Oligarch. As they race from Captain Asperamanka's army towards the capital. They race not only traitors and murderers but the inevitable plague of the Fat Death which causes cannibalism and the coming Weyr Winter which lasts for over 600 years. So the Sibornal continent becomes setting of the final volume of Helliconia Trilogy. *Helliconia Winter* (1985) is the final volume of Brian Aldiss's great work Helliconia Trilogy. It becomes a milestone in the work of great British Science Fiction novelist, Brian Aldiss.

In *Helliconia Winter* (1985), Brian Aldiss gives reference of the Earth and Earth Observation Station, Avernus. In the story, The Earth is on the verge of destruction. The Earthly people are fully developed and they have invented almost 29 planets other than the Earth. Human beings have captured almost all 29 planets and they are living on it. For example: "Small

colonies were established on twenty-nine planets, some of which flourished for several generations”.<sup>22</sup>

So there is nuclear war between the Earth and other planets. The people on the Earth are fully developed and they have invented Nuclear weapons. So there is a fear of nuclear war between human beings. So, the Earth is on the verge of destruction. Here Aldiss gives example: “The fear of total destruction had always been there. Nuclear weapons, once invented, cannot be disinvented. And such are the laws of enantiodromia that the fear became the wish, and missiles sped to targets, and people burned like candles, and silos and cities erupted in on inexpugnable fire”.<sup>23</sup>

There are individual English speaking authors who have become directly involved in the antinuclear movement. Brian Aldiss is a striking example. As a young soldier who was spared the necessity of invading Japan by the dropping of the Hiroshima bomb, Aldiss felt grateful for the weapon, and during the fifties he remained critical of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, whose motives he suspected were contaminated by its leftist leanings. His first story dealing with the subject, Basis for Negotiation (1962), was actually a satire on the CND’s (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) widely publicized Aldermaston marches. Even when, in 1964, Aldiss included in Greybeard a note of sympathy for the protesters privately, he was far from sure that they should be supported. Aldiss quotes here: “Throughout the ages-and long before the invention and development of nuclear weapons -there had been those who prophesied that the world would end because of man’s wickedness. Such prophesies were always believed, no matter how many times they had been proved wrong in the past.

There was a wish for, as well as a fear of punishment. Once nuclear weapons were invented, the prophecies gained plausibility, although now they were couched in lay terms rather than religious ones. Evidence, the more convincing because governments tried to suppress it, proved that the world could be ended at the touch of a button".<sup>24</sup>

Later events changed Aldiss's mind. Living as he did in the 1980s a few scant miles from the Greenham Common Encampment, where British women have been protesting the placement of American cruise missiles, he became directly involved in the protest in person and in statements to the press, including a letter to the London Times. The issue that concerned him most directly was the danger of a nuclear winter. Having been at work for several years on his *Helliconia* novels, in which a planet goes through a multimillennial change of seasons. He found a fortuitous opportunity to treat the nuclear winter theme in *Helliconia Winter* (1985). Although *Helliconia's* winter is natural and not artificially induced, he parallels it with nuclear winter on Earth in a fascinating and most effective fashion. Even more strikingly, he satirizes the arms race by depicting the political leaders who insist on the ruthless extermination of the enemy as fools who fail to realize the essential interdependence of all *Helliconian* life. *Helliconia Winter* (1985) does a fine job of connecting ecological concerns to the danger of nuclear war. The novel is highly recommended, along with the two preceding volumes, *Helliconia Spring* (1982) and *Helliconia Summer* (1983).

In many ways, *Helliconia* represents a culmination in Aldiss' career. All three volumes are implicit in *Non-Stop*, published almost three decades



before, as if he has finally completed investigating change, to the extent that it may be completed. The Helliconia volumes summarize theme, characters, and narrative strategies, drawing on virtually everything Aldiss has written. The conclusion of Helliconia Winter, for example, echoes the final chapter of Frankenstein Unbound as protagonists find themselves in a world of darkness and snow, waiting for ...something. Billy Xiao Pin's intrusion parallels Roberts' in MOI. The human stupidity and cruelty revealed in Graybeard also find a place in Helliconia when, for instance, the Oligarch in Winter destroys the phagors, which carry the virus causing the Fat Death and the Bone Fever, without which humans on Helliconia could not survive. Like the scientists in Greybeard, Helliconia's rulers seem intent on limiting their own survival as a species; Winter touches upon similar theme from The Dark Light Years and Earthworks. The sense of Renaissance culture, of change within stasis suggests The Malacia Tapestry and Aldiss' tripartite examination of human psychology in Brothers of the Head echoes throughout Helliconia-Earth, Helliconia and Avernus suggest a similar division.<sup>25</sup> Philip Purser- Hallard is an author and scholar whose interests in Science Fiction and religion have been expressed both in his works. He has given opinion about Aldiss work, Helliconia Trilogy. "Brian Aldiss is the inventor of the mini-saga lately taxing readers of our magazine...the completion of his Helliconia trilogy confirms him as the master of the mega-saga, too...the philosophical, theological and sociological detail of this invented firmament is formidable".<sup>26</sup>

The planet Helliconia plays the role of main character in Helliconia Winter (1985), because of evolutionary progression. There is Weyr Winter on Helliconia planet. So seasons play a great role in the story of Helliconia.

In Helliconia Winter (1985), Luterin Shokerandit is a main and leading character. He is son of the Oligarch. Luterin, the only son of a yelk herder who goes off to earn honour for the family name in battle and ends up making an epic journey and influencing the course of his planet. Luterin is a main character so the whole story goes around this character only. At last he kills his father when he comes to know that his father has killed his elder brother, Favin and he comes to know that his father is the Oligarch.

Another main character is Toress Lahl, wife of Bandal Eith Lahl, commandant of the Boldorian Army. Luterin kills Bandal, commandant of the Borldorian battalion of the opposing army, and takes Bandal's widow Toress Lahl as his slave. She is a doctor. She takes care of Luterin when he is suffering from Fat Death. Because of Toress Lahl, Luterin saved from Fat Death. At last she becomes the mother of Luterin's son. Toress Lahl is one of the woman character that suffers a lot in her life. First she was wife of Bandal Eith Lahl, commandant of Borldorian battalian. But Luterin killed her husband and kept her as a slave. After become a slave, she worked for Luterin and takes care of Luterin, when he was suffering from Fat Death.

When Luterin kills his father and escapes to the Wheel of Kharnabar, he enters the Wheel. He is alone inside it for ten years, after which his cell lines up with the sole entrance or exit again. So for ten years Toress Lahl lived at a centuries old shrine to king JandolAnganol, located in a secluded spot. The whole story, this character become tragic but at last she got Luterin as well as her son also with her.

There are so many minor characters in the novel like Captain Asperamanka, the leader of the greatest army of Sibornal. He also becomes

the companion of Luterin and Toress Lahl in their journey. At last he married Insil Esikananzi, the daughter of Luterin's neighbour. After married to Insil Asperamanka become the master of Kharnabar and resides in the old Shokerandit estate. Another minor character of this story is Harbin Fashnalgid, an army deserter who falls in love with a slave girl and travels with Luterin. Brian Aldiss has, over the years, built up vast experience and innate wisdom about all things relating to Science Fiction. Having trodden the path, and explored many of side tracks in Science Fiction, he sits in a unique position to cast a comparative gaze across the years and observe the changes.

Aldiss And More An Interview with Brain Aldiss he says that, "Technology is another aspect that has changed considerably through time. 'As a generalization, the amount of technological and strictly scientific content has increased in science fiction over the years. This probably has something to do with the proliferation of popular science fiction writing, which has also immensely improved over the year. However, it would be a pity if this put the Surrealists out of business. Science Fiction and the Surrealists have always lived cheek by jowl. Robert Sheckly, R. A. Lafferty, William Tenn and me in my 'Enigma's mood', and many others, have committed Surrealism at one time or another".<sup>27</sup>

The faith of Asimov and Bernal in apotheosis through technology is replaced by a more intuitive, even spiritual, approach in Brian Aldiss' Helliconia Trilogy, where technology is as much villain as saviour. Like Asimov, Aldiss finds in the Gaia hypothesis an idea that brings together much of his earliest work. Aldiss signals this with deliberate use of imagery

from earlier novels-the deadly assatassi fish of Helliconia Summer (1983) first appeared in Galaxies like Grain of Sand (1960) but on the whole the significance of Gaian unification has much profounder implications for Aldiss. He himself gives some indication of this. Reporting that “most of my work seems to be about getting right the relationship between humankind and the environment, in the wider sense of that term ... Always there’s a balance to be sought after,” he goes on to ask :

“But what is there except the profound human nature connection?... The problem was not an abstract one of course or I would hardly have followed it for so long with such ardour. I did not think God or a good was a strong enough or a “modern” enough link between the two seemingly opposed sides of the equation. And this is where Helliconia is different from-a marked step ahead of – my previous dramatizations of the problem. This time, I had an answer. The “God” was the planet, was nature, was process”.<sup>28</sup>

There, of course, had been strong hints of this concern even in Aldiss’ earliest stories, as Brian Griffin and David Wingrove demonstrate in their exhaustive study of Aldiss’ works up to the Helliconia novels.<sup>29</sup> There is an abortive gesture toward this galactic sentence in Galaxies like Grains of Sand (1960); in Cryptozoic (1967) in which Wordsworth’s well-traveled sonnet make another brief appearance- the discovery of time’s true nature inaugurates a new age for humankind, one in which it is understood that “All mind communicate”.<sup>30</sup> The “minders”, the mental time-travelers know this- or something like this-intuitively. Edward Bush, the novel’s protagonist, is aware that humanity has estranged itself from nature, yet during his mind-

travel trances he feels himself to be “a biosphere, containing all the fossil lives and ideas of his ancestors, containing other life forms, containing countless untold possibilities, containing life and death. He was an analogue of the world”.<sup>31</sup> A later revelation explains why Bush, the artist –visionary, records this sense of global, a temporal unity:

“Long past, immeasurably long past, the human race had been born into creation at myriad points at once .It was as diffuse as gas. It was pure intellect. It was omnipotent. It was God. It had been God and it had created the universe. Humanity-and this is the novels tragedy-also had forgotten that it had been God, having gradually “drawn in upon itself” and forsaken its divine omnipresence, narrowing itself and concentrating itself, losing power in its desire for affinity and so now embodied only on Earth, only in a species that has finally forgotten its own origins in godhead. The novel, like Aldiss’ other earlier works ends far from Gaia”.<sup>32</sup>

A British poet, critic and biographer Martin Seymour-Smith says, about Aldiss work that, “ Aldiss not only knows more about Science Fiction than anyone else living, but is also-at least for my money-the only truly gifted-as distinct from merely ingenious-exponent of it still writing...This work reflects a whole philosophy of life, generated from Aldiss in the first place by his gloom-shared by many-about the prospects for humanity...This is Science Fiction as literature-something that does not happen too often and which has not happened on this scale since the still neglected novels of Olaf Stapledon”.<sup>33</sup> So Aldiss’ great work *Helliconia* Trilogy has become a milestone on the way of Science Fiction literature.

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