

**CHAPTER THREE**

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Helliconia Summer (1983) is the second novel in the Helliconia Trilogy. It is about a planet part of a binary star system, whose seasons are centuries long. Helliconia Spring (1982) is the first novel in this series which covers hundreds of years but Helliconia Summer spans only six months. It examines in depth, the breakdown of the relationship between the King and the Queen of Borlien. The King is struggling to maintain control of his country and to solidify relations between Borlien and Oldorando.

In the book Helliconia Summer (1983), there are two plots; the main plot is related to the king. The king Jandol Anganol is struggling with his weakening power over events in his life and his country. The king was defeated in Cosgatt War so he wants to regain his power. The king wants to make friendship with the king of Oldorando. For the sake of the country he is ready to divorce his beautiful queen MyrdemInggala and then he is ready to marry Simoda Tal, the princess of Oldorando kingdom. After divorce the king wants to marry Simoda Tal but uncertainty the princess was killed by RobaydayAnganol, the prince of Borlien. The king was very disappointed because the death of the princess. But he is also ready to marry Milua Tal, another princess of Oldorando kingdom.

The king JandolAnganol marries Milua Tal, nine and half year old princess of Oldorando. The King is phagor lover because so many phagor slaves working in his army. Yuli, a phagor is the king's pet. Other kingdoms are enemy of phagors but the king JandolAnganol has given shelter to the phagars so they can live in his kingdom. At last, the king's phagor army

gives victory to the king against other kingdom. Phagors regained their strength because Summer has gone and Autumn comes. In cold climate phagors regained their power. They become dominant species on the Hellicaonia planet. Then, the sub-plot is related to the Billy Xiao Pin, a young man from the Avernus space station, who won the Helliconia Holiday Lottery and he came on Helliconia planet. He wants to see the most beautiful woman, the queen of queens, MyrdemInggala.

He shakes the religious belief of Helliconian people. When Billy came on the planet he discussed with SartoriIrvrash, the former chancellor of Borlien. They discussed about Helliconia planet, Avernus and the Earth. SartoriIrvrash also was an atheist like Billy. Billy lived on Helliconia enjoying the company of Abathy, a prostitute. But after a few days he is suffering from bone fever and fat death. He knows that the helico virus will affected once he went on the Helliconia planet. Because the infection of helico virus he died.

At the end of the story the king's victory over the other kingdoms and the phagors become dominant species on the Helliconia Planet, because summer has gone and autumn comes. The season plays a dominant role in Brian Aldiss Helliconia Trilogy. The summer part much resembles Renaissance period and the birth of the Modern age on our planet and in our own history. In this story we find struggles between dogma and numerous religions, scientific approach and exploration mixed with political struggle of all kinds.

Helliconia is planet in binary star system, whose complex motion gives it a double cycle of seasons. The familiar yearly sequence is

overwhelmed by that of the 'Great Year' orbit (2,592 Earthly Years) around the second hotter sun. Helliconia Spring sees the world emerging from a 500 year Great Winter into 900 years of Spring. Mellowing climate shifts the balance between Helliconia's two races: the horned, Minotaur- like phagors who rule the Winter and near humans now approaching dominance. Civilization blooms, evoked with poetic joy in language and seen through closely observed individual lives. Cities, politics, primitive technology and money are rediscovered. Each rebirth is reminder of the tragedy of what was lost in the long disaster of winter.

Helliconia imposes extraordinary constraints on its people: "First fate moulds our character, then character moulds our fate".<sup>1</sup> Above the action Earth watches via interstellar communications relayed by its orbiting habitat Avernus. Though there is enough time ahead, many centuries of it the question already looms: Can "humanity" rise far enough to preserve its memory, culture and history unbroken through the next Great Winter? Aldiss's grandiose scope pays deliberate homage to Olaf Stapledon's Last and First Men (1930).<sup>2</sup>

In Summer, Aldiss narrows from generations to weeks, delineating a society reminiscent of Renaissance Europe. Kings and generals war for supremacy, manipulating and manipulated by social forces, religious prejudice and the developing impact of science. A rising entrepreneurial middle class at times almost eclipses the royal machinations of JandolAnganal or his deposed and imprisoned father YarpalAnganal. Court scenes both religious and secular describe the Holy Pannovalan Empire of the Father Supreme of the Church of Akhanaba, the Great C'sarr Kijander

IX—a reflection of Renaissance Catholicism blended with the Holy Roman Empire. By depicting battles that resolve nothing, societies increasingly aware of science and technology, and court intrigues both public and private, Aldiss creates a sumptuous world that is simultaneously imaginative creation and astute exegesis of history.<sup>3</sup>

The novum of the series, Helliconia is an oddly fascinating planet circling around two suns in such a way that the relations of its two species, one human and the other non-human. Both are bound in a strange symbiosis that is tied to the extremely long term, secular changes in climate and profoundly influenced by a tick unwittingly playing a strategic role in the shifting fortunes of the two antagonistic species. With the exception of the Earth research outpost observing Helliconia from stationary orbit and transmitting to Earth reports and televised coverage of significant events there, emblems of science and technology are put into the background and replaced by sustained attention to the impact of the long seasonal change on the rise and fall of the rival species.<sup>4</sup> For example, “Despite all the difficulties imposed by the enormous gulfs of space and time, a permanent watch post was built in orbit about Helliconia, the Earth Observation Station. Its duty was to study Helliconia and send back its findings to Earth”.<sup>5</sup>

The inspiration of the planetary novum resides in Aldiss’ effort to imagine a Gaian planet where the gross discrepancy of the two suns and the planet’s position relative to the two stars in the solar system leads to a cycle of seasons taking over 2500 Earth years to complete. The richly textured, almost luscious, description throughout the trilogy of the subtle and active participation of flora and fauna, plants and animals, grasses and insects in

the glacially slow tide of seasonal change.<sup>6</sup> It reinforced by the involvement of the emotional feelings, cultural beliefs and religious outlooks constituting the partly shared partly antagonistic cultural landscape of the two species, culminates in a complex and convincing portrait of an alternative Earthlike, but non-earthly, Gaia. That Aldiss devotes many pages to the climatic adaptation of plants and animals, as in the following lines: “That is correct. Animals and plants adopt different strategies to survive the vast changes of a year. There are binary biologies and botanies, some following one star, as previously, some the other”.<sup>7</sup>

Aldiss gives minute description of the animals and plants. Situated within a wider set of ecological relations and interacting forces, the two species on Helliconia only vaguely and for short periods within the long cycle of Helliconia’s seasons sense their interdependency. Critical to the regulation the relative balance of their respective populations and their power positions one another is the helico virus transmitted by a phagor tick at two climatic switch points every 1825 Helliconian years. The helico virus alternately producing “bone fever” to prepare a slimmed down human population for the advent of Helliconian spring and summer and the “fat death” to ready human survivors for the approaching winter. The character Billy is suffering from bone fever and fat death, he says: “Bone fever and fat death – I can explain Just one virus. Germ. Different effects. According to time of Great Year. True”.<sup>8</sup>

Ironically, then, disease is essential to human survival. The change of seasons leads to a reversal of human dominance over the phagors. These and other Gaian themes are subtly and patiently illuminated through a careful

juxtaposition of changes in Helliconian ecology observation station Avernus orbiting above the planet.<sup>9</sup>

Aldiss offers penetrating insight into the enormous costs of humankind's alienation from wild nature in his characterizations of the vicissitudes of the Earth observers on Avernus. So Aldiss gives minute information about Helliconia. For example: "Helliconia was thousand light – years from Earth. To travel from one world to the other in the most technologically advanced starship took over fifteen hundred years. Human mortality was too frail to sustain such a journey".<sup>10</sup>

Consigned to permanent exile from the Earth in a stationary orbit around Helliconia and barred by a deadly native virus from visiting Helliconia. Each new generation of "families" constituting Earth's scientific sentinels increasingly find themselves imprisoned in a "technological purgatory" from which no escape or rebirth is possible. On board, homelessness is compounded by experiential impoverishment from the creative and regenerative taproots of wild nature. Ultimately, this double estrangement leads to severe psychological and social problems for the crew members. But before that, violating mission control policy against direct contact with the planet, they establish once a year holiday as a safety valve where a scientific member is chosen by lottery and given the opportunity to be transported to the planet, despite certain death within a week or two.

The inhabitants of the technological sphere, the Avernus, are doubly estranged from the web of life. The helico virus, transmitted from phagor to human, is an agent of natural order on the planet below, yet incredible virulence of the disease excludes the Avernians, who have no immunity,

from participation in the life they can only observe. Nor can they return to Earth, over one thousand light years distant. In Helliconia Summer, “to be born on station was to be born into unremitting exile. The first law governing life on the Avernus was that there was no going home”.<sup>11</sup> Helliconia Winter is even more explicit regarding the implication of this estrangement. In a passage deliberately echoing Shelley’s Defence of Poetry (1840),<sup>12</sup> we are told that:

“The Avernus was an embodiment, cast in the most advanced technology of its culture, of the failure to perceive the answer to that age-old problem of why mankind was divorced from its environment. It was the ultimate taken in that long divorce. It represented nothing less than the peak of achievement of an age when man had tried to conquer space and to enslave nature while remaining himself a slave”.<sup>13</sup>

This alienation is the major theme in the second volume, manifested in large part in the “Helliconia Holiday Lottery”, a regular event in which one member of the spacecraft’s crew is permitted to descend to the planet, even though to do so is to die. Despite this death sentence, winning the lottery is a great joy and honour, for the artificiality of life on the Avernus has become intolerably oppressive for many.<sup>14</sup>

The lottery proves an insufficient outlet, however, even though Avernian technology enables a vicarious participation in the short surface-life of the lottery winner. For too many of those who must remain behind, the Avernus and their mission and all it represents have lost all consolation and meaning: “The belief in technological progress which had inspired the



building of the Avernus had, over the generations, become a trap for those aboard it ... Belief had largely died on the Avernus, leaving despair in its place".<sup>15</sup>

In Summer, Observers from Avernus enter into the action on Helliconia, as Billy Xiao Pin leaves Avernus for Helliconia and death, since the helico virus that enables Helliconians to survive summer and winter invariably kills Earth-humans; Helliconia remains isolated from Earth. Avernus is isolated from both, from Earth by three-thousand light years, from Helliconia by the surety of death.

Billy's presence alters that balance, however briefly. The italicized passages dealing with Avernus cease to be merely cold observations. Avernus is as critically sensitive to change as Helliconia itself to the despair of separation from all other humans, to the tensions of centuries within an artificial world, and to the sheer tedium of constantly observing and never participating in a world, to stasis. When Billy touches Helliconia, the relationship between observer and observed blurs.<sup>16</sup>

Another theme of Helliconia Summer (1983) is political intrigue. Helliconia Summer is a novel of crisis. JandolAnganol, the beleaguered king of Borlien, after the defeat in Cosgott War is struggling to keep the ship of state afloat. So he wants to the help of Oldorando king. That is why, he is ready to divorce his beautiful queen, because he wants to marry a young princess of the Oldorando Empire. So after the marriage he will be the king of Oldorando as well as Borlien. In this book, the king is the centre of a storm of political trials, while the world goes mad around him. The character, the king of Borlien says: "Do you imagine my daughter would be

dead today if you had not been espoused to her? It was political killing. She had no personal enemies, poor girl".<sup>17</sup>

Here the King of Oldorando, Sayren Stund knows that his daughter was killed because of political intrigue. Then Aldiss presents here another theme of child marriage in the second volume, as Helliconia and its sun Batalix draw nearer to Fryer at the time of perihelion, the drama is a more subtle and complex one, concerning the holding of territories and kingdoms, the triumph and eclipse of religions. The king of Oldorando wants divorce from his beautiful queen, the queen of queens, in order to make a dynastic marriage with a child. Even after the death of Simoda Tal, he becomes ready to marry her younger sister Milua Tal. At the time of marriage, Milua Tal was only nine and half years old. Here the king quotes: "I'd put you at no more than nine years old. "Nine years and five tenners", she replied, but it is emotions, not years, which count".<sup>18</sup> Here Aldiss presents autobiographical incidents. This particular story was borrowed from the history of the early Serbian state and the reign of the doomed Nemanijas. King Milutin took as his fourth wife the child Simonida, daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Andronicus. In Thessaloniki, he was married to his six-year-old bride. But child marriages were common in the Middle Ages.<sup>19</sup>

The famous British Science Fiction writer, Colin Greenland says about Helliconia Summer that, "Through the perspectives of Science Fiction ...destiny can be reintroduced. Doris Lessing says that, "Aldiss, a far more intelligent and skilful writer, has put it the other way round, starting with the stars and letting fate follow. Science Fiction enables Aldiss to get God and Nature into story as presiding forces, without sacrificing sophistication of credibility".<sup>20</sup>

In Helliconia Summer (1983), we find another theme that is attack on church philosophy. The character SartoriIrvrash is a former chancellor of the king of Borlien. He is an atheist and scientist. Through this character, Aldiss directs attack on church philosophy in this way: “Knowledge can build only on knowledge, and one never knows where the next step will lead. But it leads somewhere, whereas Church dogma leads only in a circle. The church’s very emblem is that circle”.<sup>21</sup>

In the Helliconia Trilogy, some part of the story of Helliconia Summer resembles the Renaissance and the birth of the Modern Age on our planet and in our own history. In this story we find struggle between dogma and numerous religions, scientific approach and exploration mixed with political struggle of all kinds. Aldiss presents all contemporary issues in his novel Helliconia Summer (1983).<sup>22</sup> For Aldiss, Science Fiction explores the possibilities of space, time and humanity. He does not substitute for the discoverer and conqueror; he does not create power-fantasies complete with heroes who can rescue universes; nor does he offer easy entry into alien worlds. Instead, he draws maps, provides human guides- common, ordinary men and women, less than superhuman, who must understand change beyond their abilities to adapt. Through these characters, readers may follow Aldiss’ guidelines as he penetrates the convoluted “inwardness” and “outwardness” of humanity.<sup>23</sup>

The setting of the book Helliconia Summer is the Helliconia planet itself. Helliconia lies in a loose binary star system, which consists of a yellow – orange dwarf similar to our sun, Batalix and a hotter and brighter white star, Freyr. Helliconia orbits Batalix, which in turn orbits Freyr. The character Billy gives description about the Helliconia planet. “He spoke in

matter – of – fact tones about a yellow G4 – type star which some five thousand million years old”.<sup>24</sup>

Helliconia orbits Batalix in 2,480 Earth days, which is called the “Small Year”. Helliconia’s orbit around Fryer, the “Great Year”, is highly elliptical and takes approximately 1,800 Small Years. While seasonal changes in the small year are slighter than those of Earth, the long seasons of the great year are much more marked. When distant from Freyr, Batalix’s illumination is sufficient only to maintain ice age conditions. However, Freyr’s output is many times greater than Batalix’s. So as Helliconia approaches Freyr, the topics of Helliconia becomes hotter even than the tropics of Earth.<sup>25</sup> The character Billy explains that:

“Two star which he called A and C, were orbiting each other. Batalix was drawn within the massive gravitational field of A. In the series of perturbation which followed, Star C was lost, and A acquired a new companion, Batalix”.<sup>26</sup>

Since the present day, the humans of Earth have been through an era of space exploration. This proved to be largely disappointing, faster than light travel was impossible, and few planets were found with life beyond the microbial. The one great success was the discovery of Helliconia. The *Avernus* was dispatched to monitor but not interfere with Helliconia, providing the Earth with scientific data and the entertainment of an epic reality show. The woman character VryDen says: “We discovered also that the fast planet, called by VryDen Kaidaw, has its orbit not about Batalix but about Helliconia, and is therefore a satellite body or moon”.<sup>27</sup>

The massive space station Avernus, is visible from the surface of Helliconia, as a bright, fast moving star. There are thousands of probes and other monitoring devices down on the planet, providing scientific readings, video pictures, etc, which Avernus collects and transmit to the Earth. Six thousand people, the descendants of the original crew, live on the Avernus in a small but comfortable high technology environment. They are enlightened and scientific and their lives are entertaining, but they are isolated from both Earth and Helliconia and they yearn to live a real world. So they started new plan to enjoy the planet life of Helliconia. They started Helliconia Holiday Lottery. The person who will win the lottery, he will go on the Helliconia planet. For example:

“So the ironically named Helliconia Holiday Lottery came into being. The lottery was held once every ten years during the centuries of the Helliconia Summer. The winner of the lottery was allowed to descend to his certain death, and to choose any place at which to land”.<sup>28</sup>

Brian Aldiss is very particular about his work. Gerald Janas is a famous journalist of New York Times. He says about Aldiss works that, “Brian Aldiss writes Science Fiction on the grandest possible scale. He writes of the evolution of cultures, of entire species, of the ever- changing physical environment that shapes and is itself shaped by the forces of life. Yet he does not forget – what true Darwinian could? that the key unit of evolutionary change is the individual... given the brilliant success of the first two books, I would say that Mr. Aldiss is now in competition with no one but himself”.<sup>29</sup>

The main character of the Aldiss science fiction work, Helliconia Summer (1983) is king JandolAnganol, the king of Borlien. He is struggling with his weakening power over events in his life and his country. For the sake of country he is ready to divorce his beautiful queen MyrdemInggala and ready to marry Simoda Tal, the princess of Oldorando kingdom. The whole story goes around the king JandolAnganol. He is the hero of the story. He says: "I swear I will love you still, despite a thousand Simoda Tal, if you will tell me now".<sup>30</sup>

The king JandolAnganol is phagor lover. He has given shelter to the phagors in his state. He thinks that, "Phagors preceded mankind. Phagors were the dominant race on our world, and probably treated our ancestors as animals until we rebelled against them."<sup>31</sup> Another major character is queen MyrdemInggala, the queen of queens, queen of Borlien. She is one of the most beautiful women in Helliconia, more beloved than the king, lusted after by nearly every man alive, but the king wants to take divorce from her.

But at last the queen of queens was dead, slain by an arrow fired by an agent of her ex-husband, king JandolAnganol. A former chancellor, SartoriIrvrash and a new chancellor CaroBansity play important roles in Aldiss's great science fiction book, Helliconia Summer (1983). Both chancellors are friends of each other and they are atheists and scientists. Through these two characters Aldiss attacks on religious things. These two characters play an important role in this novel.

Another major character is Billy Xiao Pin, a young man from the Avernus space station, who won the Helliconia Holiday Lottery and he came on Helliconia planet. He shakes the religious belief of Helliconian people.

The character Billy says: “Billy wondered, Can I convince them about Avernus, about Earth? But they’ll never convince me about their gods.”<sup>33</sup> After a few days on Helliconia, Billy died because of the helico virus. This virus plays the role of preserver as well as destructor. Nobody outsider can come on Helliconia because of this helico virus.

Many other characters are playing minor roles in this novel. For example, RobaydayAnganol, the prince of Borlien, who killed princess of Oldorando, Simoda Tal, because she was going to marry his father. Then he killed Div, son of Ice trader and lover of Abathy, a prostitute. One more character is Krillia Muntras, the Ice Captain, a man who sells ice to the hotter regions of Helliconia, lives beside a glacier. He is friend of nearly everyone. Then Simoda Tal and Milua Tal, the princesses of Oldorando kingdom, besides the queen of queens, these are the only two women characters in this novel. Aldiss has given very little scope to women characters in his novel, Helliconia Summer (1983). Aldiss says about writing of Helliconia trilogy:

“I wanted Helliconia to stand as a massif central of the scientific romance. I saw the flood of Tolkien imitations lapping like a poisonous sea at the grounds of what I regarded as the old Science Fiction, the straight flat-diction SF presided over John Campbell in the heyday of Astounding... The vast tapestry was a requirement of the extended Great Year of Helliconia. I was ill at the time, suffering from what was known as PVFS (Post-Viral Fatigue Syndrome). The novels were written during the brief epoch of the electronic typewriter; you could not pick up the phone while typing

was going on in case the guy at the other end thought revolution had broken out in Oxford, and headed madly for the mountains. After two years of research, I began to write to fill my canvas with humans and phagors and god knows what else. Beauty and terror, love and pathos and stupidity. It was creative freedom”.<sup>34</sup>

Brian Aldiss is very curious about his narrative technique and style. In Helliconia Summer (1983), the second part of Helliconia Trilogy, he used flash back technique. In Helliconia Summer (1983), first three chapters tell us about divorce of the King and the Queen as well as death of Simoda Tal, princess of Oldorando kingdom. Then next chapter tells us why the king was ready to divorce the queen and remarry the princess. Further few chapters tell about the reason of Simoda Tal's death and who has killed the princess of Oldorando.

Brian W. Aldiss's writing style and technique is similar in his three volumes of Helliconia Trilogy. So in the first volume Helliconia Spring (1982), we discuss about his writing style and technique which continue in his second and the third volume, Helliconia Summer (1983), and Helliconia Winter (1985). Brian Aldiss has, over the years, built up vast experience and innate wisdom about all things science fiction. Having trodden the path and explored many of the side track in Science Fiction, he sits in a unique position to cast a comparative gaze across the years and observe the changes.

Aldiss says about his writing style and technique. Technology is another aspect that has changed considerably through time. He says: “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 years. However, it would be a pity if this put the Surrealists out of business. Science Fiction and the Surrealist have always lived cheek by jowl. Robert Sheckley, R.A.Lafferty, William Tenn and me in my 'Enigma's mood', and many others, have committed Surrealism at one time or another".<sup>35</sup>

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