

New Wave Science Fiction

David Higgins

Science fiction's New Wave was a transatlantic avant-garde movement that took place during the 1960s and 1970s, and it had a lasting impact on the genre as a whole. New wave writers were highly experimental, they wanted to develop a modern literary science fiction with advanced aesthetic techniques, and they focused on 'soft' sciences like psychology and sociology rather than 'hard' sciences like physics and astronomy. The movement as a whole sought to subvert the pulp genre conventions that had dominated science fiction since the Golden Age.

A wide variety of authors were part of the New Wave movement. Some of them, such as J.G. Ballard, Samuel R. Delany, Ursula K. LeGuin, Joanna Russ, and Philip K. Dick have achieved critical attention in the literary mainstream. Many others are known primarily as science fiction writers, and a short list of these includes Brian Aldiss, Barrington J. Bayley, John Brunner, Thomas M. Disch, Harlan Ellison, Philip Jose Farmer, M. John Harrison, Langdon Jones, Damon Knight, Michael Moorcock, Charles Platt, James Sallis, Robert Silverberg, John T. Sladek, Norman Spinrad, Roger Zelazny, and Pamela Zoline.

In order to understand the New Wave, it is first useful to understand some of the profound technological, social, and political transformations that were taking place during the 1960s. In the Western world, there was an explosion of new technological advancements during this time, and there were deep disagreements about the consequences of these new technologies. On the more optimistic side, some believed that technological progress would lead mankind out into the stars. The Cold War competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, for example, eventually resulted in Neil Armstrong's historic moon landing in 1969, and many believed that this was just one early step toward an exciting and inevitable exploration of outer space. Others, however, were very concerned about the potential for new technologies to create negative and destructive changes for all of humanity. The first two world wars had demonstrated that technological progress could sometimes enable terrible conflict and destruction on a scale that had been previously unimaginable in human history.

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Alongside this rapid technological advancement, the 1960s were also a time of transformative social change. Vibrant youth countercultures emerged throughout the Western world, and they were opposed to what they experienced as the conservatism and social conformity that had characterized Western life in the 1950s. These countercultures experimented boldly with psychedelic drugs (which were still legal in the early 1960s), they rejected traditional limitations on sexual play and sparked a long-lasting sexual revolution, and they protested against America's involvement in the Vietnam War. Also during this time, the Civil Rights movement was transforming relations between whites and non-whites in the United States, and second wave feminism and the gay rights movement were striving to create greater social equality for women and homosexuals. All of these changes created an atmosphere of social tension in the west, and fears surrounding social change led to the assassinations of major public figures such as Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and John F. Kennedy.

At least one other very significant change was also taking place during the 1960s: In the aftermath of World War II, western European powers like Great Britain were losing their colonial empires as former colonies (like India and Egypt) won their independence. At the beginning of the 20th century, the sun never set on the British Empire, and at that time western European empires dominated the world. After World War II, however, Europe lost its colonial dominance, and two new empires emerged – the Soviet Union, which was devoted to the spread of communism, and the United States, which enjoyed a tremendous economic and political upsurge in the postwar period and championed the expansion of capitalism throughout the world.

All of these dramatic technological, social, and political changes were reflected in the transformations that occurred within science fiction in the 1960s. During this time, a new generation of writers emerged who wanted to rebel against what they viewed as the restrictive pulp-formula limitations that had dominated SF writing during the previous eras. Many of these New Wave authors had a very specific goal: They wanted to combine what they viewed as the best aspects of both science fiction and mainstream literary fiction into one new vibrant hybrid art form.

The dominant trend in science fiction prior to the 1960s had been to focus on big, interesting, fantastic, scientific ideas, but this focus on ideas (and on rich settings) often came at the expense of a more sophisticated artistic development of characters, themes, and subtleties of tone, style, and language. Michael Moorcock, for example, wrote in 1963 that much of the science fiction prior to the 1960s lacked "passion, subtlety, irony, original characterization, original and good style, a sense of involvement in human affairs, colour, density, depth, and on the whole, real feeling from the writer" (123). J.G. Ballard articulates similar sentiments in a 1962 article in which

he says "I've often wondered why s-f shows so little of the experimental enthusiasm which has characterized painting, music and the cinema during the last four or five decades, particularly as these have become wholeheartedly speculative, more and more concerned with the creation of new states of mind, constructing fresh symbols and languages where the old cease to be valid" ("Which Way" 117). New Wave authors like Moorcock and Ballard wanted to draw upon avant-garde literary traditions and techniques in order to give science fictional ideas what they felt could be a more sophisticated and socially relevant aesthetic expression.

On the technological front, New Wave authors tended to display critical rather than optimistic views regarding scientific progress. Many of the futures they imagined were bleak and dystopian rather than upbeat and hopeful; if the original *Star Trek* television series represented a mainstream science fictional vision of a harmonious future in outer space, New Wave imaginings instead often prophesized apocalyptic portents of doom and catastrophe. New Wave writers also turned away from the 'hard' sciences (such as physics, biology, and mathematics) that had been the emphasis of many earlier science fiction narratives. Instead, these authors turned their attentions toward the emerging 'soft' sciences (such as psychology and sociology) that were gaining widespread popular attention in the 1960s.

If earlier science fiction had often been characterized by an optimism regarding technological progress, the New Wave instead often focused upon the scientific inevitability of entropy, breakdown, and decay. Colin Greenland's *The Entropy Exhibition* (1983), an in-depth look at the British New Wave, argues that entropy was the movement's central extrapolative theme:

The distinctive themes of *NW* writers – ontological insecurity, alienation, the hidden and hostile dimensions of media and machines, the disintegration of objectivity into subjective worlds of inner space, the dangerously exhilarating multiplication of 'possibilities' – are all primary concerns of their times, though they came to them rather in advance of popular assent. The concept of entropy, a degeneration inevitable from either overorganization or chaos, is the center of this imaginative cluster; hence the frequency with which the writers return to the term, and its fashionability, even for those who use it least scientifically. (201)

Roger Luckhurst's book *Science Fiction* situates the New Wave's emphasis on entropy in the historical context of decolonization. Luckhurst notes that English SF transforms after 1945 due to the dismantling of Empire; he also observes that the UK produces a new round of disaster fictions after World War II, and that "the British disaster narrative always addressed disenchantment with the imperialist 'civilizing' mission" (131). Luckhurst views the emphasis on entropy within the British New Wave as a continuation of this SF disaster tradition, but instead of portraying such

breakdowns as negative, his key examples (Ballard, Moorcock, and Zoline) actively embrace and valorize entropic decay.

New Wave authors also shared a commitment to challenging taken-for-granted social norms. If earlier science fiction narratives often celebrated mainstream Western values (such as the male-dominated middle class nuclear family), New Wave writers often used SF to challenge unspoken cultural assumptions about sex, race, gender, and other normative cultural values. Female New Wave authors, in particular, were at the forefront of certain kinds of social critique. Pamela Zoline's short story "The Heat Death of the Universe" (1967), for example, suggests that a domestic housewife is asked to accomplish the same impossible and unfair work that Maxwell's demon is required to perform in the realm of thermodynamic physics. Kit Reed wrote moral fables sharply criticizing unfair social conditions; her novel *Armed Camps* (1969) tells the story of a decaying America where neither a male soldier nor a female pacifist can offer a solution to entropic decline. Sandra Dorman-Hess and Zenna Henderson both use alien characters to explore themes of race, immigration, and alienation; Dorman-Hess's short story "When I Was Miss Dow" (1966) uses aliens as a narrative tool to reflect on human conditions rather than as a racial enemy to be eliminated.

Finally, the New Wave also responded to the decline of Western European colonialism and the rise of the Cold War conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. Before the 1960s, many science fiction stories celebrated an outward colonization of space and other worlds; science fiction often drew upon patterns and tropes taken from European colonial adventure narratives and American westerns to tell new stories of colonization and conquest in fantastic imaginative locations. One iconic example of this is Edgar Rice Burroughs' *A Princess of Mars* (1917), in which the heroic John Carter demonstrates his mastery over Martian natives in order to eventually become their leader and savior. As John Rieder notes in his book *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*, science fiction itself emerged during a period of European imperialist expansion, and much of early science fiction is concerned with the celebration of colonial conquest. During the 1960s, however, as Western European colonization was declining and many former colonies were winning their independence, suddenly colonialism begins to look like a bad thing rather than a shining heroic ideal. Before World War II one might aspire to be an imperialist in the West, because imperialism was associated with growth, expansion, adventure, and progress. After World War II (and in the aftermath of decolonization), imperialism became a bad word, a synonym for unjust and cruel domination – Soviets accused Americans of being imperialists and vice versa, and both sides in the Cold

War fought to 'free' portions of the world from the 'imperialist' influence of their counterpart.

This shift in the meaning of imperialism was reflected in science fiction. Very few science fiction narratives in the 1960s celebrated the colonization of outer space, and New Wave writers in particular were highly critical of imperial and colonial expansion. In addition, many New Wave writers rejected outer-space stories entirely in favor of exploring the new frontiers of "inner space." J.G. Ballard, for example, wrote in his famous essay "Which Way to Inner Space" that the most exciting "alien" planet to explore was Earth itself:

The biggest developments of the immediate future will take place, not on the Moon or Mars, but on Earth, and it is *inner space*, not outer, that need to be explored. The only truly alien planet is Earth. In the past the scientific bias of s-f has been towards the physical sciences – rocketry, electronics, cybernetics – and the emphasis should switch to the biological sciences. Accuracy, that last refuge of the unimaginative, doesn't matter a hoot. [...] It is that *inner space-suit* which is still needed, and it is up to science fiction to build it! ("Which Way" 117).

The New Wave emphasis on "inner space" explorations was influenced by avant-garde artistic movements that often emphasized the importance of "defamiliarization," or the power of art to help us look at taken-for-granted things in a new and transformative way. The midcentury emergence of psychology and sociology as popular sciences that captured mainstream imagination, as well as the celebrity of radical anti-psychiatrists like R.D. Laing, also shaped the New Wave fascination with "inner space." At the same time, however, one of the other major factors that motivated the New Wave turn toward "inner space" was that the movement occurred within the context of a cultural moment influenced by the emergence of LSD and psychedelic counterculture. In *The Entropy Exhibition*, Greenland suggests that the introduction of LSD played a major role in the development of counterculture in the 1960s; he notes that during this time a populist revolution against normative consensual reality spread from the West Coast of America throughout Europe, and that an active psychedelic counterculture interested in exploring new terrains of perception and new modes of expression influenced the aesthetic and political agendas of New Wave science fiction. In this regard, New Wave writers stand alongside other artists and self-styled revolutionaries in the 1960s who were interested in defining the subjectivity of "inner space" as a new 'frontier' that should be explored for personal, social, and political growth in the face of subjective ideological stagnation. John Hellman observes a similar agenda in the work of New Journalists such as Norman Mailer, Truman Capote, and Tom Wolfe; New Journalism is motivated by a dissatisfaction with the consensual reality portrayed by the mass media and a desire to explore

beyond this 'frontier' of perception to gain access to a more authentic subjective truth. Artists within the New Wave, New Journalism, and psychedelic counterculture (in the form of hallucinogenic 'pioneers' like Kesey and Timothy Leary) were united in their dissatisfaction with consensual reality and their determination to explore new transgressive subjective terrains of inner space. On the whole, New Wave writers were critical of technological progress, suspicious of national power and imperialism, and devoted to a celebration of cultural revolution. In many cases, New Wave writers emphasized the dystopian decay of Western culture in order to critique the social and political conditions of their time.

The use of the term "New Wave" was borrowed from the French New Wave film movement of the 1950s and 60s; French New Wave filmmakers were loosely united by their deliberate rejection of highbrow cinema in favor of experimental subjects and techniques. Judith Merril, an American expatriate writer and editor living in England who published a significant anthology of experimental science fiction stories called *England Swings SF* (1968), may have been one of the first to have specifically borrowed the phrase "New Wave" to refer to the experimental science fiction of the period, but by the 1970s, the term had come into common use to describe the seismic shift in science fiction style and content that characterized the era.

The New Wave had several precursors: In the 1950s, *Galaxy* magazine and the *Magazine of Science Fiction and Fantasy* had started publishing more literary stories focused on average citizens rather than on heroic scientists, and authors such as Alfred Bester and Leigh Brackett wrote unusual science fiction stories that broke the mold of pulp genre conventions in favor of more literary and introspective tales. Despite these earlier precursors, however, most writers, fans, and historians agree that the New Wave crystalized in 1964 when Michael Moorcock took over as editor of the British SF magazine *New Worlds* and began publishing weird SF stories featuring avant-garde narratives that became characteristic of the movement. John Wyndham, a famous British SF writer and author of the SF story *Day of the Triffids* (1951), had published SF stories extensively in the pages of *New Worlds* before Moorcock took over as the magazine's editor. If Wyndham and his contemporaries represented a period of outward emphasis in science fiction, Moorcock and his crew represented, in many ways, the opposite: Wyndham was interested in outer space, Moorcock was concerned with inner space. Wyndham focused on physics and astronomy, Moorcock emphasized psychology and sociology. Wyndham's generation was optimistic and expansive; Moorcock's generation was critical (some would say pessimistic) and apocalyptic. Brian Aldiss notes that under Moorcock's guidance at *New Worlds*, "galactic wars went out; drugs came in; there were fewer encounters with aliens, more in the bedroom. Experimentation with prose styles became one of the orders

of the day, and the baleful influence of William Burroughs often threatened to gain the upper hand" (27).

Stephen P. Lockwood notes that Michael Moorcock repeatedly articulated three core goals of the New Wave in the pages of *New Worlds*: the movement struggled to "revitalize" science fiction by breaking down habitual forms and stagnant genre structures, it sought to create a new form of fiction that amalgamated modern fiction and SF, and it aspired to convince publishers and fans of the seriousness of science fiction as a valid literary form (2f.). In struggling toward these goals the New Wavers were almost universally united, and SF critic Peter Nicholls argues that, despite many internal differences, the New Wave "did more than any other kind of SF to break down the barriers between SF and mainstream fiction" (866).

Moorcock's most active collaborators and fellow contributors at *New Worlds* were Brian Aldiss and J.G. Ballard, and each sought to look for examples and inspirations outside the SF canon. Many New Wave writers turned to William Burroughs (author of *Naked Lunch*) rather than Edgar Rice Burroughs as a guiding inspiration, and Philip Jose Farmer's "The Jungle Rot Kid on the Nod" (1968) and Barrington Bayley's "The Four Color Problem" (1971) were both pastiches of Burroughs' work. *New Worlds* also celebrated Mervyn Peake's gothic *Gormenghast* trilogy, a strange surrealistic fantasy series published between 1946 and 1959, and the magazine was one of the first SF publications to actively identify the works of magical realist authors such as Jorge Luis Borges as akin to its own style of literary SF imaginings.

Not everyone in the science fiction world appreciated the stylistic and topical innovations of the New Wave. Many writers and fans who enjoyed the concrete hard-science explorations of classic SF found the kind of fictions emerging from *New Worlds* to be disjoined, disorienting, and pointlessly iconoclastic. Issac Asimov, who wrote popular stories within (rather than against) the established SF tradition, once famously said: "I hope that when the New Wave has deposited its froth and receded, the vast and solid shore of *science fiction* will appear once more" (cit. in Aldiss and Wingrove 388).

Algis J. Budrys, a SF writer who had gained fame for writing (and editing) more traditional stories during the 1950s, wrote the following denunciation of J. G. Ballard's style of fiction in *Galaxy* magazine:

A story by J. G. Ballard, as you know, calls for people who don't think. One begins with characters who regard the physical universe as a mysterious and arbitrary place, and who would not dream of trying to understand its actual laws. Furthermore, in order to be the protagonist of a J. G. Ballard novel, or anything more than a very minor character therein, you must have cut yourself off from the entire body of scientific education. In this way, when the world disaster – be it wind or water – comes upon you, you are under absolutely

no obligation to do anything about it but sit and worship it. Even more further, some force has acted to remove from the face of the world all people who might impose good sense or rational behavior on you, so that the disaster proceeds unchecked and unopposed except by the almost inevitable thumb-rule engineer type who for his individual comfort builds a huge pyramid (without huge footings) to resist high winds, or trains a herd of alligators and renegade divers to help him out in dealing with deep water. (cit. in Hartwell 150)

Budrys's comments reveal many of the central presumptions of the more traditional style of traditional science fiction that the New Wave was fighting to reject: According to Budrys's view, a proper SF story portrays the universe is a place of "actual laws" which can be understood and mastered through a proper "scientific education" deployed by people with "good sense" and "rational behavior."

Moorcock, Aldiss, and Ballard joyfully mock all of Budrys's presuppositions with satirical wit and vigor. If there are "actual laws" that dominate the physics of the universe, they are likely complex beyond the hubris of human understanding, and they will always inevitably intersect with the equally complex and generally-neglected laws of human psychology and sociology in ways that traditional science fiction (with its masterful engineer-heroes and its plucky female girlfriend-sidekicks) simply ignores. In the view of New Wave authors, a "scientific education" must go beyond math and physics into the much more complex and subjective world of human psychology, and when SF stops taking for granted that "good sense" and "rational behavior" are universal characteristics that look the same to everyone in all places, a more complex relativity emerges that reveals that what looks like "rational behavior" is often actually a mythicized Euro-American ideology of technological progress that leads directly to Hiroshima and to Nazi concentration camps just as easily as it can lead to a progressive future utopia. Ballard, in particular, rejected what he saw as the naïve optimism of traditional genre SF in favor of a more realistic view of the complexity of human character. Ballard expressed this view in *The Atrocity Exhibition*, saying "I think we're all perhaps innately perverse, capable of enormous cruelty, yet paradoxically our talent for the perverse, the violent, and the obscene may be a good thing. We may have to go through this phase to reach something on the other side. It's a mistake to hold back and refuse to accept one's nature" (6).

Although *New Worlds* under Moorcock's editorship was clearly one key locus of New Wave activity, the movement in a larger sense was occurring in several locations simultaneously. Judith Merrill anthologized many New Wave stories in her collection *England Swings SF* (1968) and in her *Annual of the Year's Best SF* anthologies. Harlan Ellison's *Dangerous Visions* anthologies in 1967 and 1972 were

often considered to be the birthplace of the "American" New Wave. Brooks Landon from the University of Iowa notes that *Dangerous Visions* was

innovative and influential before it had any readers simply because it was the first big original anthology of SF, offering prices to its writers that were competitive with the magazines. The readers soon followed, however, attracted by 33 stories by SF writers both well-established and relatively unheard of. These writers responded to editor Harlan Ellison's call for stories that could not be published elsewhere or had never been written in the face of almost certain censorship by SF editors. Among the stories Ellison received were the almost Joycean "Riders of the Purple Wage," by Philip Jose Farmer, "Carcinoma Angels", by Norman Spinrad, and "Aye, and Gomorrah ..." by Samuel R. Delany, as well as stories by Brian Aldiss, Philip K. Dick, J. G. Ballard, John Brunner, John Sladek, Roger Zelazny, David R. Bunch, Theodore Sturgeon, Carol Emshwiller, and Sonya Dormn. [T]o SF readers, especially in the United States, *Dangerous Visions* certainly felt like a revolution [and it] marks an emblematic turning point for American SF. (157)

Indeed, *Dangerous Visions* was a turning point not just in terms of content, but also in terms of format – prior to the 1960s, most science fiction had been published as short stories or serials in magazine form, and magazines often had editorial policies that limited the range of authors' more radical expressions. In the 1960s, however, a significant science fiction book market emerged in the United States, and for the first time, science fiction was being widely published in book form (as we experience it today) rather than in magazine format. Books had a much greater range of content and a wider diversity of audience; many new kinds of stories were published in books and anthologies that would not have been welcome in magazines, and eventually magazines had to become more open in their editorial policies in order to remain relevant. This transition in science fiction publishing from magazine format to book format is actually one of the most long-lasting and revolutionary transformations to emerge from the New Wave period (magazine publishing has all but vanished in the contemporary publishing world in favor of books and anthologies).

Alongside Ellison's *Dangerous Visions*, Damon Knight's *Orbit* anthologies beginning in 1966 were also a key publication cite for innovative new work coming out of the Milford writers workshops (which later became the famous Clarion workshops). Some also add Robert Silverberg's *New Dimensions* anthologies beginning in 1971 as a fifth New Wave publication node; by this time the impact of the New Wave had become widespread in the SF world.

In hindsight, it is clear that something new was occurring in science fiction throughout Britain and America, and we now often look back and refer to the entire phenomenon collectively as the New Wave. At the time, however, SF writers and editors had strong disagreements about what exactly was happening and whether

the new innovations sweeping the SF field were related to one another. In the introduction to his anthology *Dangerous Visions*, Harlan Ellison hastens to distinguish his project from the work of his British counterparts: "my 'new thing' is neither Judith Merrill's 'new thing' nor Michael Moorcock's 'new thing.' Ask for us by our brand names" (xxiv, emphasis in original).

In a similar vein, Thomas Disch (an American writer who moved to England during the peak of New Wave activity in the late 1960s and who published in *New Worlds*) initially denied any affiliation with the new movement whatsoever. In an open letter published in 1978, Disch commented: "I have no opinion of the 'new wave' in sf, since I don't believe that was ever a meaningful classification. If you mean to ask – do I feel solidarity with all writers who have ever been lumped together under that heading – certainly I do not" (cit. in Nicholls 867). Yet from a perspective two decades later, he writes in 1998 that

My sense of the New Wave, with twenty-five years of hindsight, is that its irreducible nucleus was the dyad of J.G. Ballard and Michael Moorcock, with Ballard in the role of T.S. Elliot and Moorcock as Ezra Pound, a Svengali for all seasons, ready to welcome anyone into the club who might in some way advance the cause. (Disch 104)

Despite early attempts to distinguish between the British and American movements, however, a wide variety of American writers, including Disch, Norman Spinrad, and John Sladek, actually moved to London in the 1960s to be part of the *New Worlds* publishing circle, and a large number of British *New Worlds* writers, including Ballard and Brian Aldiss, published short stories in Ellison's *Dangerous Visions* and the subsequent *Again, Dangerous Visions*. Despite the fact that they often denied any association with each other completely, it is clear that there were strong connections between the writers of the New Wave and between the kinds of creative projects they were pursuing. In historical hindsight, we might say that the New Wave was one movement erupting from multiple places all at once, heterogeneous yet flush with momentum to change the field.

Some histories of the New Wave have described it as a movement dominated by men, but this characterization neglects many women's contributions that occurred at the time. Several important women published fiction in *New Worlds*, including Hilary Bailey, Daphne Castell, Gwyneth Cravens, Sandra Dorman (later Sandra Dorman-Hess), Carol Emshwiller, Gretchen Haapanen, Katherine MacLean, Judith Merrill, Kit Reed (Lillian Craig Reed), and Pamela Zoline, who contributed both fiction and illustrations. *New Worlds* also included poetry by Libby Houston as well as non-fiction features by Joyce Churchill, Stacy Waddy, and Judy Watson. In addition to fiction by Dorman and Emshwiller, Ellison's *Dangerous Visions* anthologies in-

cluded work by Miriam Allen deFord, Ursula K. Le Guin, Judith Ann Lawrence, Evelyn Lief, Joanna Russ, Josephine Saxton, James Tiptree Jr. (Alice Sheldon), and Kate Wilhelm. Many of the above authors also published work in Knight's *Orbit* anthologies and Merril's *England Swings SF*. Additionally, *Orbit* featured fiction by Eleanor Arnason, Doris Pitkin Buck, Carol Carr, Grania Davis, Liz Hufford, Virginia Kidd, Vonda McIntyre, Raylyn Moore, Doris Piserchia, Allison Rice, Kathleen M. Sidney, and Joan Vinge, while Merril's anthologies included work by Karen Anderson, Holley Cantine, Sheri Eberhart, Elizabeth Emmett, Alice Glaser, Zenna Henderson, Maxine W. Kumin, Felicia Lamport, Anne McCaffrey, and Muriel Spark.

Several women of the New Wave were successful as both writers and editors. The most famous is Judith Merril, who moved to England and published *England Swings SF* (1968). She continued to support New Wave experimentation and publication after returning to America in her *Year's Best SF* anthologies. Her first major publication was "That Only a Mother" (1948), a story about a woman who believes that her mutant baby is normal. This story chillingly calls into question the relative 'madness' of the murderous father who seeks to kill the child and the warlike atomic society that is responsible for its creation. Hilary Bailey, who was married to Michael Moorcock from 1962-1978, was the co-editor (and sometimes sole editor) of *New Worlds Quarterly*, the anthology that succeeded *New Worlds*. Her work was often fiction in a mainstream style, but she was also known for "The Fall of Frenchy Steiner" (1964), and she co-wrote *The Black Corridor* (1969) with Moorcock without receiving authorial credit. Kate Wilhelm and her husband Damon Knight founded the Milford SF Writer's Conference, which later became the famous Clarion SF Writer's Workshop. Wilhelm edited a Clarion anthology in the 1970s. She began by writing typical genre stories, but she won a Nebula for "The Planners," a story of a collapsing near-future USA and an unstable protagonist.

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NOTE: Small selections from this overview are adapted from an entry I wrote for a reference volume called *Women in Science Fiction and Fantasy*:

Higgins, David. "Science Fiction, 1960-2005: Novels and Short Fiction." *Women in Science Fiction and Fantasy, Volume One: Overviews*. Ed. Robin Anne Reid. Westport: Greenwood, 2009. 73-83.

Science fiction's so-called New Wave era began in approximately 1964. Writing in 2003 about that "cusp" year, Michael Moorcock noted: "It will [soon] be 40 years since JG Ballard published *The Terminal Beach*, Brian Aldiss published *Greybeard*, William Burroughs published *Naked Lunch* in the UK, I took over *New Worlds* magazine and Philip K Dick published *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*." What is New Wave science fiction? Moorcock describes it as the era during which the genre "rediscovered its visionary roots and began creating new conventions which rejected both modernism and American pulp traditions." Right! SFE : Science Fiction Encyclopedia : This term, as applied to sf, is borrowed from film criticism, where it was much used in the early 1960s as a translation of the French *nouvelle vague* to refer to the experimental cinema associated w. The first writers whose work was later subsumed under the New Wave label were British, notably Brian W Aldiss and J G Ballard. These two were publishing stories in *New Worlds* while it was still under the editorship of John Carnell, but it was not until Michael Moorcock took over with the May/June 1964 issue that the kind of imagistic, highly metaphoric story, inclined more towards Psychology and the Soft Sciences than to Hard SF, that both men wrote (in quite different styles) was given. Read our guide to the New Wave of science fiction, which saw the debut of boundary-shattering books by Philip K. Dick, Ursula K. Le Guin and others. In the 1960s and 70s, New Wave science fiction radically redeveloped the field, dispensing with the "hard" science fiction of the past in favor of works that stressed literary merit and ideas over scientific accuracy. Under the vanguard of *New Worlds* magazine, these authors mined the usual elements of the genre—"cyborgs, other planets, and futuristic societies"—for political commentary, existentialism, and pure wonder. "Literary" writers like Philip K. Dick and Ursula K. Le Guin breathed new life into American fiction, bringing the future back to the present.