

Globalization, Postmodernity, and the *Bildungsroman*: Tracing Narratives of Development in
Three Versions of Orson Scott Card's "Ender's Game" Story

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In his widely influential *The Way of the World*, Franco Moretti situates the rise of the *Bildungsroman* form as coinciding with the shifting social conditions and economic restructuring of feudalism to capitalism, but his analysis does not consider how the genre reacts as capitalism itself continues to advance. For Moretti, the *Bildungsroman* helped to address the problematic nature of a newly emerging notion of youth, but more importantly, it became the “symbolic form’ of modernity,” a form used “to attach meaning, not so much to youth, as to *modernity*,” (5). Youth, in Moretti’s analysis, becomes “modernity’s ‘essence’, the sign of a world that seeks its meaning in the *future* rather than in the past” (5). But what of youth in postmodernity? What of the postmodern iteration of the *Bildungsroman*?

If the “eternal present” of postmodernity is as Fredric Jameson suggests, “an age that has forgotten how to think historically in the first place,” then it seems necessary that the development of our youth and the structure of the *Bildungsroman* shift to accommodate this new “essence” of postmodernity (*Postmodernism* 10, ix). Just such a shift in the *Bildungsroman* form, I argue, can be traced through the publishing history of Orson Scott Card’s “Ender’s Game,” a story that has a developmental narrative of its very own. First appearing as a short novella in an issue of *Analog* in 1977, the story was then expanded into the better known novel-length version in 1985, and roughly fifteen years later, it was rewritten from another character’s point of view in Card’s publication of *Ender’s Shadow* in 1999. A consideration of this developmental history sheds light on the generic development of the *bildungsroman* and its struggle to represent the socio-economic development of our world system. This analysis traces three parallel narratives of development through Card’s literary work: that of Ender Wiggin, that of the Ender’s Game story itself, and that of the *Bildungsroman* genre. All three can be mapped onto a traditional Marxist account of capitalist economic growth; that is, all levels of my analysis

illuminate the various ways in which individuals, art, and genre shift to accommodate a new form of being as the world transitions from a global economy largely structured by monopoly capitalism to one subsumed by a new form of multinational capital. Through these parallel developmental narratives, I argue that Card's literary work charts a transitional period in the development of the *bildungsroman* genre as it attempts to adapt to such a systemic shift and to capture a newly emerging form of youth culture, one which is itself coping with the war-normalized space of postmodernity. Taken together, Card's three iterations of the "Ender's Game" narrative tell the developmental story of the genre itself and culminate with *Ender's Shadow*, a postmodern *Bildungsroman* that figures the changing economic system and emerges as an alternative form and response to the Young Adult novel of the postmodern era. With its cyberpunk roots and developmental arch, the *Bildungsroman* of postmodernity exposes the negative effects of late capitalism while at the same time offering a narrative of hope and resistance. This revision to the *Bildungsroman* form suggests that youth development in our postmodern world does not necessarily have to adopt the values of multinational capitalism, but that no one can completely escape from the immense power of its reach.

From its early conception in Wilhelm Dilthey's *Poetry and Experience* (1887), to the now "principal reference" Jerome Hamilton Buckley's *Season of Youth* (1974), the *Bildungsroman* was originally theorized as a genre that flourished and disappeared in nineteenth-century European literature. However, in "Modernist Studies and the *Bildungsroman*," Tobias Boas argues that "attention within twentieth-century *Bildungsroman* studies has increasingly shifted towards post-colonial and minority writing" because this is where the novel of formation currently "thrives" (239).¹ Boas highlights the way in which recent criticism calls for an

¹ In *Unseasonable Youth*, Jed Esty explores the development of the *Bildungsroman* form within postcolonial and minority writing, places that he terms "colonial contact zones" and extends Moretti's

expansion of the genre's definition to account for this shift towards non-European forms but also to accommodate this slightly altered "novel of *transformation*" where "the hero no longer merely changes with the world; instead, the world also changes with and through him" (240). Such a transformation, however, may not actually signal a need to expand the definition so much as it suggests that the traditional *Bildungsroman* form no longer functions in our current world system. Boas cites Franco Moretti and Mikhail Bakhtin as marking a fundamental shift in how scholars think about the genre, initiating "a move to reinterpret the novel of formation as a genre that intimately links personal to national development"; however, these theorists leave texts from the modernist period on largely untouched (236). Although Moretti offers a compelling analysis of the modernist *Bildungsroman*'s specific relationship to the rise of the nation state under capitalism, his analysis does not consider how the genre reacts as capitalism itself continues to advance. What *does* happen to the genre of development as the dominance of the nation-state gives way to an economic structure that favors multinational corporations, and the global elite?

Such a question demands a more explicit understanding of the difference between modernity and postmodernity. In *Postmodernism or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Fredric Jameson theorizes postmodernism as "the reflex and concomitant of yet another systemic modification of capitalism itself" (xii). More than just an explanation of the next phase of the world's economic infrastructure, Jameson's account of postmodernity also denotes "the production of postmodern people capable of functioning in a very peculiar socioeconomic world" (*Postmodernism* xv). His analysis follows Ernest Mandel's three-stage narrative of capitalist development, situating the economic restructuring of late capital as beginning just after

analysis to these spaces. He does not, however, consider what happens to the form after the modernist period and in spaces that are not conventionally thought of as "postcolonial" in nature. My analysis gestures towards filling this gap between Esty and Moretti. See *Unseasonable Youth*. NY: Oxford U.P., 2012. Print.

WWII, “in the 1950s, after the wartime shortages of consumer goods and spare parts had been made up, and new products and new technologies could be pioneered” (*Postmodernism* xx).² Culturally, however, the awareness of such a systemic shift was not immediately recognizable until after the social transformation of the 1960s (*Postmodernism* xx). It wasn’t until “the great shock of the crises of 1973 (the oil crisis, the end of the international gold standard, for all intents and purposes the end of the great wave of ‘wars of national liberation’ and the beginning of the end of communism)” that the economic and cultural structures of late capitalism somehow “crystalize[d]” and revealed the “strange new landscape” of postmodernism (*Postmodernism* xx-xi). If such a landscape elicits a new generation of “postmodern people,” then it would make sense that the modernist developmental narrative would no longer speak to the “essence” of youth in the postmodern age. But can the *Bildungsroman* even continue to exist in Jameson’s ahistorical world of late capital?

Roberta Seelinger Trites suggests that in the postmodern era, the *Bildungsroman* has given way to the “market dominance” of the Young Adult novel, a genre “predicated on demonstrating characters’ ability to grow into an acceptance of their environment” (19). The YA novel in Trites analysis replaces the modernist *Bildungsroman* as a representation of “postmodern thinking”: it “teaches adolescents how to exist within the (capitalistically bound) institutions that necessarily define teenagers’ existence” (18-19). Trites theorization of the Young Adult novel aligns nicely with Jameson’s own description of art in the postmodern era, yet, her analysis does not account for the prevalence of *Bildungsroman* genre alongside the YA novel. Indeed, although some YA novels follow a *Bildungsroman* structure (a point that Trites does acknowledge), a traditional *Bildungsroman* narrative does not target an adolescent audience

² Ernest Mandel theorized a three-stage narrative of capitalist development (see *Late Capitalism*. London: Humanities Press, 1975) that was later taken up by cultural theorists such as Fredric Jameson in his *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* Durham: Duke UP, 1991.

but is a developmental narrative written primarily for adults (even if read by young people). And this type of narrative persists. *Ender's Game* is one such example of a “postmodern” *Bildungsroman*. Indeed, as Card himself explains, *Ender's Game* “was never intended as a young-adult novel” though, “it has been embraced by many in that age group and by many teachers who find ways to use the book in their classrooms” (*Ender's Shadow 2*). If we accept Jameson's theorization of postmodernity, then it is not all surprising that the “postmodern *Bildungsroman*” might appear in a work of science-fiction.

Following his own description of postmodernism as “an era that has forgotten how to think historically in the first place,” Jameson would, a decade later, argue for science-fiction as the generic response to this lack of history (*Archaeologies xi*). For Jameson, while “in the moment of the emergence of capitalism the present could be intensified, and prepared for individual perception, by the construction of a historical past” (i.e. the Historical novel), “today the past is dead,” and SF assumes “a structurally unique ‘method’ for apprehending the present as history” (*Archaeologies 288*). Thus, just as Moretti situates the *Bildungsroman* form as emerging as a symbolic form for understanding the newfound “mobility” and historicity associated with capitalism, it makes sense that its successor, a developmental narrative capable of capturing the “eternal present” or loss of historicity associated with late capital, would emerge within science-fiction (Moretti 4, *Postmodernism 10*).

A SF iteration of a postmodern *Bildungsroman* also uniquely conforms to Jameson's depiction of postmodernism's tendency to merge the “classical” and the “popular,” to blur the line between “high and so-called mass culture” (*Postmodernism 63*). Indeed, in Jameson's view, postmodern artists “no longer ‘quote’ the materials, the fragments and motifs, of mass or popular culture” but “they somehow incorporate them to the point where many of our older critical and

evaluative categories (founded precisely on the radical differentiation of modernist and mass culture) no longer seem functional” (*Postmodernism* 64). Thus, as the modernist developmental narrative no longer functions as the symbolic form of youth in the postmodern era, it finds its rebirth in a genre that has historically been stigmatized as “mass culture” but has more recently been accepted as a genre worthy of study within the academy. Science-fiction of the post-WWII era is equally relevant because of its frequent thematic relationship to war.

A postmodern *Bildungsroman* must also take into consideration the peculiar relationship that postmodernity seems to have with war. Although Jameson’s analysis focuses on the socio-economical implications of postmodernity, one cannot help but notice how such a shift is made possible only after a period of global war. In fact, Jameson’s analysis makes clear, though implicitly, how the economic fallout and the war-time development of new military technologies helped to lay the groundwork needed for facilitating a system of late capital. Such economic and technological innovation also had mass cultural implications. In *The Age of the World Target* Rey Chow argues that the end of the Second World War, and more specifically, the dropping of the atomic bombs effected “a fundamental change in the organization, production, and circulation knowledge” (34). As she explains:

War is thoroughly absorbed into the fabric of our daily communications—our information channels, our entertainment media, our machinery for speech and expression. We participate in war’s virtualization of the world as we use—without thinking—television monitors, remote controls, mobile phones, digital cameras, PalmPilots, and other electronic devices that fill the spaces of everyday life (34).

In Chow’s analysis war has become normalized “no longer separable from civilian life” (34).

Taken together, Chow and Jameson theorize a world space of late capital, currently in motion but culturally dependent in various ways on the political, economic, and/or cultural effects of war. It

is in this space that the developmental narrative of postmodernity must find its narrative form, and one instance of that form's development can be traced through Card's work.

The first two iterations of Card's story—the early novella, “Ender's Game,” and the later novel-length version—appeared along with a host of other post-WWII science fiction works dealing with military organizations and war technology. In his two-part study of this type of science-fiction, Darko Suvin asserts: “We live in a world increasingly determined by the untold feedback between politico-economic militarization and war”; in fact, “continuous warfare has *never* ceased under capitalism” (“Of Starship Troopers” 115-116). Science-fiction becomes a productive place to explore this question of war because of its “estrangement” qualities: science-fiction “always been an interesting early warning system carrying understanding otherwise accessible only in specialized ways,” and is thus “often a good indicator of its readers' intimate preoccupations” (“Of Starship Troopers” 115).³ Like Jameson, Suvin identifies the mid-70s as another shifting social moment, and he sees this movement as particularly reflected in the field of war/military-centered science-fiction. This socio-economic shift, I argue, coincides with the emergence of a revisionary form of the developmental narrative. Such an emergence can be charted through an examination of the various iterations of Card's story, of which the shortened version would eventually be revised and developed into the *Ender's Game* of Suvin's critique. Not only does Card repeatedly rehearse the *Bildungsroman* structure in each iteration of the “Ender's Game” story, but each narrative also seems to implicitly interrogate how the increasingly war-normalized space of late-capital effects the development of our youth.⁴

³ Darko Suvin, “Transubstantiation of Production and Creation: Metaphoric Imagery in the *Grundrisse*,” *Minnesota Review*. 18 (1982): Offers a complete discussion of Suvin's theorization of the principle of “cognitive estrangement” as it relates to science-fiction.

⁴ Thinking about *Ender's Game* in terms of the *Bildungsroman* genre is not a completely new project. In fact, just a few years after the novel's publication, Peter Hall challenged scholars to consider the implications of a specifically science fiction *Bildungsroman*. He writes: “one reason for the importance

The earliest iteration of “Ender’s Game” already begins to reflect the changes to the world market resulting from what Jameson refers to as the “crises of 1973,” while the novel makes those changes a more important part of its narrative. To Jameson, “late-capital,” conveys “the sense that something has changed, that things are different, that we have gone through a transformation of the life world” (*Postmodernism* xxi). And it is this transformation—from capital to late-capital and from a society removed from war to one normalized by it—this subtle but “all-pervasive” variation to our world market and global regime manifests itself in the evolution of Card’s story, for such a transformation also changes the nature of youth development and thus puts the developmental narrative into crisis.

Both versions *Ender’s Game* chart the growth and development of Ender Wiggin, a young boy handpicked by the government to attend a prestigious military school that would train him for combat in space. Where the narratives differ, however, is in their depiction of Ender’s development and the ultimate stance on what a culture normalized by war means for the future of society. Though he attributes his interest in writing science fiction to his early exposure to Isaac Asimov’s *Foundation* trilogy, Card recalls that the real inspiration for “Ender’s Game” came

of the *Bildungsroman* as a genre has been its depiction of the development of an artistic sensibility or a sympathetic imagination in a particular time and environment. What then of the science fiction *Bildungsroman*, where time and environment are essential parts of the *fiction*” (158). Hall suggests that science fiction *Bildungsroman* narratives such as *Starship Troopers*, *The Forever War*, and Card’s *Ender’s Game* “must be read in a slightly different manner than a *Bildungsroman* written in the nineteenth-century tradition of the realistic novel,” but that reading them strictly as “sociopolitical allegories” may limit what may be gained from these texts (158). Similarly, Michael Levy suggests that whereas the traditional *Bildungsroman* hero must gain practical and moral knowledge about the world, in the SF iteration, “the knowledge that needs to be mastered, even the moral knowledge, is often in large part scientific or technological in nature” (115). The protagonist of the SF *Bildungsroman*, according to Levy, is also often plagued by a lack of development or premature death, a phenomena that he attributes to a young readership: “In general, each of the books has fulfilled the criteria required to be considered a *bildungsroman*, albeit with a few modifications necessitated due either to its having been written for children and young adults or its being science fiction. For example, because of the age level and presumed interests of die intended audience, most of the novels have broken off earlier in their protagonists’ lives than might a *bildungsroman* written for an adult readership” (114). However, my analysis seeks to propose an alternative explanation for this lack of development.

from his childhood fascination with history and biography. After reading Bruce Catton's *Army of the Potomac*, Card admits: "I had come to understand something of war, and not just because of the conclusion Catton himself had reached. I found meaning of my own in that history" (*Ender's Game* xiii).⁵ It was this new thinking on war coupled with his exposure to Asimov that led to the foundational question of "Ender's Game": "How would you train soldier for combat in the future?" (*Ender's Game* xiv). Indeed, what would war look like in the future? Although both the novella and the novel clearly stem from this same question and seek to explore how an extensive period of war-time activity may impact the culture and development of future generations, I argue that each of the narratives advances a different answer to this question, and those answers formally coincide with an interrogation of the *Bildungsroman* form itself.

As Jameson's account of postmodernism suggests, postmodern art itself becomes implicated in the commodity production of consumer capitalism, and "this whole global...postmodern culture is the internal and superstructural expression of a whole new wave of American military and economic domination throughout the world: in this sense, as throughout class history, the underside of culture is blood torture, death, and terror" (*Postmodernism* 5). Late capitalism, culture, war, and art become intertwined and interconnected in postmodernity, so that a new form of the *Bildungsroman* also registers this cultural space entrenched or normalized by the constant presence of war. Such a formal adaptation occurs between the first two narratives of Card's "Ender's Game" story. While the

⁵ It is interesting that Card's inspiration comes from Catton's text on the *Civil War* and that Card's narrative jumps to a global war fought in space, especially if we consider Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's theorization of war within the space of late capital. In *Multitude* they argue that conflict today "might be best conceived as instances not of war but rather *civil war*" (3). Such a "civil war," they explain, "should be understood now not within the national space, since that is no longer the effective unit of sovereignty, but across the global terrain" (3-4). If the world is being reconstituted as a single social space rather than separate national ones, war in postmodernity would necessarily be, by definition, a civil war. Perhaps this helps explain why Catton's account of nineteenth-century civil war might speak to Card's figuration of a global, long-lasting war in "Ender's Game."

novella implicitly thinks through the long-term effects of total war on future generations and ultimately reveals the inability of the modernist *Bildungsroman* to capture the developmental arch of postmodernity, the novel takes a more deliberate approach by attempting to reimagine the *Bildungsroman* form to more adequately capture youth development in the postmodern era, culminating in a revision that can be read as a form of the genre in transition. Let us begin by looking at the novella.

“Ender’s Game”: the *Bildungsroman* in crisis

“Ender’s older than I am. He’s not a child. He’s barely a person.” ~Captain Graff

At first glance, Graff’s early description of 11-year old Ender Wiggin seems hardly appropriate for capturing the essence of the youth protagonist of the novella that follows. As the story continues, however, the accuracy of Graff’s description becomes increasingly clear. We first meet Captain Graff and Lieutenant Anderson as they reminisce about life on Earth, recalling an image of Beaman Park: “Beautiful park. Trees. Grass. No mallo, no battles, no worries” (105). Such a park, Graff points out, was always full of children, “kids who get up in the morning when their mothers call them and they go to school and then in the afternoon they go to Beaman Park and play. They’re happy, they smile a lot, they laugh, they have fun” (105). In the world of “Ender’s Game,” however, this image of children playing in the park is nothing but a happy memory. There is no time for childhood. As Anderson bluntly explains: “It’s good for children to have fun, I think, sir...But right now the world needs soldiers. And this is the way to get them” (106). The children have become tools of the state, destined for life as military commanders. Thus, the novella charts Ender’s growth from Battle School commander to world-savior but leaves his personal development outside of his military training largely untouched. Ender, after all, has no life outside of battle school. Indeed, the characters within Card’s novella

gesture towards life on Earth, but concrete memories of life outside of Battle School simply do not exist: “[Ender’s] earliest memories were of childish war games under the direction of a teacher, of meals with other boys in the gray and green uniforms of the armed forces of his world. He did not know that the gray represented the sky and the green represented the great forest of his planet. All he knew of the world was from vague references to ‘outside’” (117-118). And this ignorance is reinforced by Card’s description of Ender’s first and only visit to Earth:

Ender Wiggins was rushed from place to place so quickly he had no time to examine anything. But he did see trees for the first time. He saw men who were not in uniform. He saw women. He saw strange animals that didn’t speak, but that followed docilely behind women and small children. He saw suitcases and conveyor belts and signs that said words he had never heard of. (117)

In Card’s words: “Ender Wiggins was a stranger to the world he was being trained to save” (117). Ender and the other Battle school children occupy a new militarized space, and the nature of such a space fundamentally changes the nature of their development.

The developmental narrative of Ender and the other Battle school children is completely disrupted by the war-saturated space of the military school. They are neither children nor adults; they exist solely as a creatures and tools for war. As Graff suggests, Ender is “barely a person,” little more than a machine used by the state to fight a war (104). Over and again, Card’s novella emphasizes the precarious position the children are put in because of the war. Ender realizes this before any of the other children: “But as he [Ender] looked at Bean, it occurred to him for the first time in weeks just how young Bean was...no, Ender thought, he wasn't young. Nobody was young. Bean had been in battle, and with a whole army depending on him he had come through and won. And even though he was small, Ender could never think of him as young again” (116) Later, Bean has a similar thought about himself: “He [Bean] was a soldier, and if anyone had asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up, he wouldn't have known what they meant”

(117). By the end of the novella, Ender's superiors explicitly refer to him as a weapon and object with no conscious autonomy: "Weapons don't need to understand what they're pointed at, Ender. We did the pointing, and so we're responsible. You just did your job" (133).

In the novella, the characters occupy a space completely entrenched in war, but this life does not extend beyond Battle school. War is normalized, but only for those within specifically militarized spaces, and an effort is made to keep those spaces isolated from civilian life: "Before he could make any sense of the strange world he was seeing for the first time, they enclosed him again within the shell of the military, where nobody had to say 'There's a war on' anymore because no one within the shell of the military forgot it for a single instant of a single day" (118). The ending of Card's novella, however, reveals the futile nature of such a task, that the effects of war, no matter how far removed from one's home country (or planet), are far-reaching and pervasive. The war with the buggers affects three generations of characters—the children, the teachers, and future generations—and in doing so, it calls into question the very *Bildungsroman* form itself.

"Ender's Game" ends with more questions than answers, especially in terms of Ender's developmental narrative. Indeed, for the first time in his life, Ender sees beyond the world of Battle School, and what he sees is less than appealing. He is left spent, demoralized and unable to comprehend the magnitude of the destruction he has just caused. Bean, his most advanced soldier, ponders "What will we do now that the war's over?" (134). What will these "kids," who have been trained solely for battle do with the rest of their lives? How will they react when thrust into the domestic spaces of civilian life? The final scene of the novel features Anderson and Graff pondering their post-war future as they absentmindedly watch the make-believe play of two children in the park. Echoing their earlier reminiscing of Beaman Park, Anderson and

Graff's actual park experience at the end of the novella proves to be much different than their nostalgic memory, and that difference is quite revealing. Whereas they earlier fantasized about Beaman park as a place with "No mallo, no battles, no worries," a place always full of children playing, oblivious to the war in space, their immediate observations fail to live up to the fantasy:

A little boy jumped from the bars and ran near the bench where the two men sat. Another boy followed him, and holding his hands like a gun he made an explosive sound. The child he was shooting didn't stop. He fired again. 'I got you! Come back here!' The other little boy ran on out of sight. 'Don't you know when you're dead?' The boy shoved his hands in his pockets and kicked a rock back to the monkey bars. Anderson smiled and shook his head. 'Kids' he said. Then he and Graff stood up and walked on out of the park. (134)

Kids, indeed. But these are *not* the kids of Graff's previous fantasy. This picture of kids "playing war" in the park, highlights the impact that the bugger war has already had on the next generation of children in Ender's society. Despite efforts to minimize its effect, war *has* infiltrated civilian life, and the image of kids "playing war" gestures towards the even more fully war-normalized culture still to come. And importantly, Graff and Anderson seem oblivious to the effects of that culture. The ending of Card's novella thus leaves the reader wondering: What will life be like in the years following the bugger war? What will the life of these boys, to whom war is simply a game, look like? What will be the story of their development?

The novella attempts to capture the childhood experience of a generation much different than that of the youth of Moretti's modernist *Bildungsroman*, and its inability to portray such a developmental narrative highlights the inadequacy of the previous form. Through its abrupt and revealing ending, "Ender's Game" opens the door for the revised novel that would appear a decade later. Although implicitly, Card's *Ender's Game* would address some of the very questions that the novella leaves unanswered. Whereas the novella depicts Ender as a child with no family history or life outside of Battle School, the novel offers a more detailed

characterization of his developmental arch by providing readers with both an account of Ender's life before the military academy and unfettered access to his interior thoughts and emotions throughout his training. In this way, the novel attempts to reimagine the Ender's Game story as a *Bildungsroman*, offering us the complete developmental history of Ender Wiggin, a narrative absent from the novella.

Ender's Game: the Bildungsroman in transition

"I've got a pretty good idea what children are, and we're not children." ~Dink

Dink's blunt acknowledgment of his own subjectivity marks a fundamental difference between the shortened "Ender's Game" novella, and Card's 1984 expansion and revision, *Ender's Game*. Rather than just exploring in more general terms the long-term effects of war on future generations, *Ender's Game* questions how the developmental narrative of those generations might change. In this way, the novel picks up where the novella left off—the young children "playing war" at the end of the novella could just have easily been Ender and his brother Peter playing war prior to Ender's deployment to Battle School—and explores how the war-normalized culture of late-capital might fundamentally change the way children think. *Ender's Game* reimagines the *Bildungsroman* form in light of a systematic shift to postmodernity, and in this new version, the narrative charts Ender's slow realization of his own subjectivity while also revealing a world entrenched in a more advanced form of war-normalization than that of the novella. Thus, the novel dives deeper into the immensely complicated problematics associated with war and considers the cultural implications of a societal structure completely subsumed by military tactics, war-time procedures, and technology originally developed for military purposes.

In a world subsumed by global war, Ender's developmental narrative and the development of the world system become intertwined. His growth as a person and his success as a commander become one in the same. Ender is able to successfully navigate life at Battle School because of his ability to think unlike anyone else, and when read in economic terms, Ender's thought process mirrors the economic structure of late capital. Thus, just as the *bildungsroman* of Moretti's analysis mirrored the family and economic structure associated with the youth experience of modernity, Ender's developmental narrative transitions us towards the experience of postmodernity.

Rather than depicting the traditional path of the provincial youth's slow growth, vocational discovery and subsequent re-entrance into the adult world, *Ender's Game* offers a developmental path of a different variety. Ender is thrown directly into the adult world and expected to perform tasks that no other human being has ever been able to accomplish. As the epigraph to this section suggests, the participants of Battle School are *not* children, they are, according to Dink, "trying to be adults" (108-109). Robbed of his childhood, Ender's developmental arch is less about his acquisition of new knowledge as it is his discovery of how to use his already superior intellect in a more proficient way: he must learn how to manipulate and control the space and people around him. Ender muses: "Every time, I've won because I could understand the way my enemy thought. From what they *did* [...] And I played off of that. I'm very good at that. Understanding how other people think" (238). Even in his confrontation with the adults, Ender is always aware of their sometimes-manipulative motives; for example, acutely in tune with Graff's friendly façade, Ender says, "I'll become exactly the tools you want me to be [...] but at least I won't be *fooled* into it. I'll do it because I choose to, not because you tricked me" (252). Ender learns to identify his own subjectivity and use that knowledge to his

advantage. In many ways, Ender's growth is completely interior; it is a growth of his ability to use his already superior intellect to gain power and control, not necessarily to gain new knowledge.

Whereas the novella only gestures towards Ender's superior abilities, (the novella begins after he has already achieved commander status) the novel charts Ender's progress from launchie to toon leader to commander, highlighting the unique aspects of Ender's character that fuel his quick progression through the ranks of the game. Ender's ultimate success as a commander is intricately linked to his ability to rethink and reconceptualize the way space and individuals have traditionally been used in space combat. Early in the novel, Ender demonstrates his ability to think unlike anyone else in his mastery of a computer simulated battle game. Quickly he realizes that "all he had to do was watch the game and understand how things worked, and then he could use the system, and even excel" (48). Ender does just this by being "deft enough to pull off a few maneuvers that the boy[s] had obviously never seen before," and creating patterns that the boys and the computer "couldn't cope with" (47). In much the same way, Ender immediately learns to navigate the disorienting, gravity-free space of the battle room by letting go of "his old up-and-down orientation" and "forc[ing] himself to change his view (56). Thus, Ender is able to reposition himself and gain control in this space. Most significant, however, is Ender's innovative battle strategy. By employing a system that relies on autonomy, decentralization, and unpredictability, Ender creates a mechanism of control that is oddly representative of the governing logic that Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari theorize as the "rhizome" shaped structure of late capital.⁶ Indeed, if we look at Card's battle room through this economic register, Card's battle room—a space described as unpredictable, disorienting, and difficult to control or navigate

⁶ For a full discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's theorization of contemporary capital see: Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 1988.

through—becomes a spatial representation of the shifting world space of postmodernity, and Ender’s development and success become linked to his status as the first of his generation to understand how this space works and how to manipulate it to his advantage. Thus, Card’s novel follows Ender’s generation as they begin to restructure the way they think in order to accommodate the reorganization of social space by late capital.

Such an economic reading may at first glance appear unwarranted; however, if we recall Jameson’s theorization of science fiction as a functioning to “defamiliarize” our present or Suvin’s assertion that the genre often “carr[ies] understanding otherwise accessible only in specialized ways,” then it becomes less surprising that a story written on the heels of the various economic crises of the 70s might begin to register changes to the world system on an socio-economic level (*Archeologies* 286; “Of Starship Troopers” 115). Though this might not be the explicit intention of the text, a subsequent reading of the *Ender’s Game* in terms of globalization theories nevertheless reveal a new way to think about Ender’s strategy in the battle room. Indeed, Ender’s mechanism of control becomes representative of the decline of the nation-state and the decentralization of power that is characteristic of a globalized world economy. And if we accept Moretti’s theorization of the *Bildungsroman* as the symbolic form of modernity—a form that seeks to capture the essence of youth culture that emerges out of the economic shift from feudalism to capitalism—then such an economic reading is essential to an analysis of any text that attempts to represent the *Bildungsroman* form as our world economy transitions to a more advanced stage of capitalism.

As Timothy Brennan suggests, globalization implies more than just “economic or cultural integration” but that “the world is being reconstituted *as a* single social space” (123). He insists that as our world becomes intricately connected via the invisible and powerful force of the global

market, traditional divisions along ideological and material lines become less absolute—a phenomenon that Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri term Empire, which results from the reorganization of our global economy (*Empire* xii). Hardt and Negri’s notion of Empire becomes the “governing logic” that Brennan suggests is key to bringing this social space, this complex, “interconnected system of localities and regions...into a unity unknown before” (*Empire* 123). And it is this logic that Ender deploys in the battle room.

By employing an innovative battle strategy that relies on autonomy, decentralization, and unpredictability, Ender creates a structure of command that has never been seen before, and its organization captures the governing logic of a globalized world economy. Upon first entering the battle room, Ender immediately recognizes the ineffectiveness of the traditional command structure noting, “the well-rehearsed formations were a mistake. It allowed the soldiers to obey shouted orders instantly, but it also meant they were predictable” (84). Ender sees this system as flawed, outdated, and easily disrupted; therefore, he modifies and redesigns the entire structure of his army:

Instead of the usual four toons, he had created five, each with a toon leader and a second; every veteran had a position. He had the army drill in eight-man toon maneuvers and four-man half-toons, so that at a single command, his army could be assigned as many as ten separate maneuvers and carry them out at once. No army ever fragmented itself like that before [...] he trained his toon leaders to use their small units effectively in achieving limited goals. Unsupported, alone, on their own initiative (175).

So, whereas all of the other commanders have a centralized command center and unison toon formations branching out from this center, Ender decentralizes his command, which allows each platoon to work autonomously. This new organization transitions away from a single-command structure with rigid formations and inflexible patterns so reminiscent of what Deleuze and Guattari theorize as the “arborescent” structure of early capital and takes on the contour of the

“rhizome” shaped structure that Hardt and Negri emphasize as being at the heart of Empire: “In contrast to Imperialism, Empire establishes no territorial center of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries or barriers. It is a *decentered* and *detrterritorializing* apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers” (*Empire* xiii). Ender adopts this “decentered” model in his own battle structure. Ultimately, this visionary reorganization of forces enables Ender to utterly destroy all of his opponents and completely change the nature of the game: “Even with less than four weeks together, the way they fought already seemed like the only intelligent way, the only possible way. Ender was almost surprised that Rabbit Army didn’t know already that they were hopelessly out of date” (178). Soon, all of the other armies have no choice but to follow Ender’s lead.

The novel’s emphasis on this decentralized method of organization and its privileging of language and communication as the key mechanism of control is reinforced by Ender’s climactic defeat of the Buggers. After watching videos of the previous war, “Ender began to see the way that all the movements focused on, radiated from a center point [...] the perspective from which all decisions were being made, was one particular ship” (268). Just like the outdated command structure of all the armies that Ender defeated in the battle school, the Buggers are ultimately defeated because they have not learned how to decentralize their battle formations. Clearly, Card’s novel describes, spatially, through its rendering of the battle room precisely the reconceptualization of world space that Hardt and Negri’s Empire. And perhaps not coincidentally, through Ender’s self-realization of his own exploitation and his subsequent resistance to authority, Card’s novel also figures what Hardt and Negri see as a fundamental flaw within that global order—war.

As Hardt and Negri explain: “Empire rules over a global order that is not only fractured by internal division and hierarchies but also plagued by perpetual war. The state of war is inevitable in Empire, and war functions as an instrument of rule” (*Multitude* xiii). Ender’s discovery of the key role that war plays in the world system develops gradually over the course of the novel, but it begins with his realization that his true enemy is not the other armies, but the teachers who control the game. Ender notes: “Graff and the other officers were watching them. Analyzing. Everything we do means something” (28). Later, when cataloguing what he learned from his time working with Petra, Ender recalls: “Manipulation gravity was one thing; deception by officers was another; but the most important message was this: the adults are the enemy, not the other armies. They do not tell us the truth” (82). Indeed, throughout the rest of the novel, Ender slowly uncovers the truth behind the first and second Bugger Invasions and builds hostility towards the adults in charge of his training. Ender bides his time until his final battle, when he believes that he will finally get even with the teachers by destroying the game itself: “If I break this rule, they’ll never let me be a commander. It would be too dangerous. I’ll never have to play a game again. And that is victory” (293). Much to Ender’s dismay, however, he discovers that the teachers had been in control all along, that he had been tricked into participating in real war for almost his entire tenure at Command school, and that he had just inadvertently destroyed the entire bugger-race.

In *Ender’s Game*, I.F. wages war with the buggers in the name of preserving the current social order, as a mechanism by which late capitalism maintains its global influence and power. The buggers represent a way of being completely foreign to human-life and thus they become a threat to the global order. Here, war becomes the protective instrument of contemporary capitalism. As Chow suggests: “War, then, is acted out as a moral obligation to expel an

imagined dangerous alienness from the United States' self-concept as the global custodian of freedom" (36). She goes on, "the violence of war, once begun, fixes the other in its attributed monstrosity and affirms the idealized image of the self" (36). Seen in this light, the buggers embody an unimaginable alternative to global capital, a possibility for which the system is unable to support or imagine. And the appropriate response, at least in the war-normalized culture of global capital, is as Chow points out, "ferociously attacking others" (36).

Although the traditional novel of formation charts the gradual growth and maturity of its protagonist by highlighting the transition from childhood to adulthood, *Ender's Game* deviates from the norm for it depicts a protagonist who never really experiences childhood and who fails to ever fully grow into an adult. At the end of the novel, Ender and his friends are stuck in this limbo between child and adult, unable to fully identify with either. "We won the war," exclaims Alai, "We were so eager to grow up so we could fight in it, and it was us all the time. I mean, we're kids, Ender. And it was us" (302). He goes on: "The bugger war's over, and so's the war down there on Earth, and even the war here. What do we do now?" (303). Indeed, what do they do now? The suggestion is made that they will have to go back to school, but the novel ends with a simultaneous acknowledgment of the absurdity and subsequent negativity associated with this statement (303). As the last line of the novel reads: "They all laughed at that. Laughed until tears streamed down their faces" (304). Such an emotional ending captures the predicament of youth development in postmodernity. Ender is both aware of his exploitation by system, but also unable to do anything to escape from it. As his sister Valentine puts it: "Welcome to the human race. Nobody controls his own life..." (313). Thus, Ender's narrative of development is left incomplete, on edge, unfinished.

Despite this ambiguous ending, Ender's journey does not end with the last page of

Ender's Game: his character lives on in Card's sequel *Speaker of the Dead*, which was published just two years after Card's debut novel. In this sequel, Ender still does not reach adulthood but rather is stuck in this place of limbo, traveling the universe in search of a new home for the almost-obliterated Bugger race. This lack of a developmental arch, this constant motion without maturation, seems representative of the perpetual or "eternal present" of postmodernity theorized by Jameson and also nods towards what would become the inert stasis in which many of cyberpunk heroes of the future find themselves trapped. Ender's status at the end of the novel and beyond mirrors that of the "Ender's Game" story, and the *Bildungsroman* form itself. Just like the novella, *Ender's Game* attempts to reimagine the *Bildungsroman* of postmodernity but succeeds only in providing an account of that form in motion. Ender's final development is left in limbo, as the genre itself continues to struggle to find a formal register in which to capture the "essence" of the youth experience of postmodernity. Such a form appears, however, fifteen years later when Card revisits his Ender's Game story with *Ender's Shadow*.

Ender's Shadow: the bildungsroman of postmodernity

"Was it possible that he was not a natural human being at all? That his extraordinary intelligence had been given him, not by God, but by someone or something else?" ~Bean

Whereas the novella paints Ender as "barely human" and the novel highlights Ender's awareness of the exploitation of his humanity, the third version of the Ender's game story takes this awareness one step further, providing the developmental narrative of Bean, a character whose very humanity is questioned. First published in 1999, *Ender's Shadow* retells *Ender's Game* from a different character's point-of-view. "It's hard to know what to call it," writes Card in the Foreword, "A companion novel? A parallel novel? Perhaps a 'parallax,' if I can move that scientific term into literature" (*Ender's Shadow* 1). Card's scientific characterization is fitting for

a novel that charts the growth and development of a genetically enhanced, super-intelligent being. Indeed, *Ender's Shadow* reads like the cyberpunk version of *Ender's Game*, but it also advances the subtle cultural critique of the early versions of the story. What is implicit in *Ender's Game* is necessarily (or unsurprisingly) made explicit in *Ender's Shadow*. Writing after the cyberpunk fantasies of the 1980s have become reality and the world is even more pervasively entrenched in consumer capitalism, Card produces with *Ender's Shadow*, what I argue is a properly postmodern *Bildungsroman* narrative, a formal alternative to the Young Adult novel that both exposes and critiques capitalism's exploitation of youth culture.

That a postmodern revision to the *Bildungsroman* might resemble or subsume some aspects of the cyberpunk genre is not surprisingly given its formal history. Cyberpunk's emergence as a distinct mutation within the genre of science-fiction is often situated at the moment of William Gibson's 1984 publication of *Neuromancer*, and thus inaugurates what has been referred to by Larry McCaffery and others as the "mid-1980s cyberpunk phenomenon" (11). According to McCaffery, cyberpunk was significant in "its ability to represent an intense, vital, and often darkly humorous vision of the world space of multinational capitalism," manifesting itself "as the inevitable result of art responding to the technological milieu that is producing postmodern culture at large" (14). Much like the method of decentralized command recognized and employed by Ender, the cyberpunk writers of the 80s were very much aware of the power embedded within this type of structure. As Bruce Sterling explains, for the cyberpunks, "the technological revolution reshaping our society is based not in hierarchy but in decentralization, not in rigidity, but in fluidity," and "the tools of global integration—the satellite media net, the multinational corporation—fascinate the cyberpunks and figure constantly into their work" (346). Often imbedded within this fascination, however, is a critique of multinational

corporations and the socio-economic structure that is responsible for their existence—late capitalism. Indeed, Brian McHale identifies as one of cyberpunks most “pervasive features” as its projection of “paranoid vision of a world controlled by multinational corporations” and McCaffery suggests that cyberpunk brings awareness to the fact that “both the technological dreams and nightmares envisioned by previous generations of SF artists [are] already in place, and that writers as well as the general public need[s] to create ways of using this technology for our own purposes before we all become mere software, easily deletable from the hard drives of multinational’s vast mainframe” (McHale 316; McCaffery 12). Coming on the heels of the 1980s boom of cyberpunk SF, *Ender’s Shadow* participates in a similar sort of cultural critique, but it repositions that critique within the formal structure of a revised *Bildungsroman* narrative. As the novel progresses, it becomes apparent that Bean functions as both the nightmare and hero of the cyberpunk narrative. By transplanting this hero into the *Bildungsroman* form, the power of the cyberpunk critique is transferred to a genre with a more explicit critical investment in the future.

Ender’s Shadow traces the growth and development of Ender’s second-hand man and only friend in Battle School, Bean. As Card notes, this is not a sequel to *Ender’s Game*, but a retelling of the same story from a different characters’ perspective, or as he terms it, a parallax. Indeed, although the story recalls many of the same plot points as *Ender’s Game*, when taken from Bean’s perspective, the narrative reads much differently. Bean’s own developmental narrative contrasts sharply with that of Ender, and it reveals a very different picture of the postmodern youth experience. Whereas Ender is wrenched away from his childhood and forced to become an adult in preparation for the ever-present threat of war with the Buggers, from the moment Bean is born, he is engaged in a struggle for his life. For Bean, a homeless child on the

streets of Rotterdam, a carefree childhood existence is not possible if he wants to survive. Rather than a gradual introduction to the practical and moral knowledge of the world, the children in Bean's narrative are immediately exposed to the world's harshness early and with no filter. Their lives are not categorized by play and exploration but by hunger and violence. For them, life is a constant battle, an always active war-zone, and their survival depends on their ability to assume the roles and responsibilities typically burdened by adults, not children. Such a transformation is made explicit by Bean's plan to get food. On the street, all of the children were slowly starving, fighting each other for what little food the soup kitchen had to give, until Bean initiates a plan to allow them to work together. Bean convinces one of "bullies" to take in a group of smaller children as his "family" in order to get sympathy from the workers at the food kitchen. Soon, it became a rule to "let people with little children come inside first" (29). And Bean and his "family" began setting the standard for the other street children: "They had more energy. They were healthy, compared to street urchins who didn't have a papa. Everyone could see it. The other bullies would have no trouble recruiting families of their own" (30). Here, the children are forced to adopt responsibilities normally reserved for adults. Their survival depends on their ability to function in an adult world. However, as the story advances and Bean is transported to Battle School, his developmental narrative takes an unexpected turn, and *Ender's Shadow* slowly begins to recall many of the formal features of the SF subgenre known as cyberpunk.

As the epigraph to this section suggests, once Bean reaches Battle School, the reader becomes aware of Bean's less than conventional birth. The result of the International Force's (I.F) illegal scientific experiments in genetic mutations, Bean is the only child from this experimental practice to survive. Recalling what Timothy Leary defines as "the Cyberpunk

Person,” the “pilot who thinks clearly and creatively, using quantum-electronic appliances and brain know-how...the newest, updated, top-of-the-line model of our species,” Bean is gifted with an enhanced form of human intelligence, which makes him a classic example of a cyberpunk hero (247). Such intelligence, however, does not come without cost. As the teachers explain:

So that was the secret. The genome that allowed a human being to have extraordinary intelligence acted by speeding up many bodily processes. The mind worked faster. The child developed faster. Bean was indeed the product of an experiment in unlocking the savant gene. He had been given the fruit of the tree of knowledge. But there was a price. He would not be able to taste of the tree of life. Whatever he did with his life, he would have to do it young, because he would not live to be old (172-173).

Bean may be a super-human, “top-of-the-line model of our species,” but he also represents the nightmare vision the cyberpunks feared would result from irresponsible technological innovation. Bean’s “creator,” Valescu, does not even consider Bean to be human. To him, the embryos that he altered were not autonomous beings, but copies of other people. He, therefore, has no guilt about killing all of the children so as not to be caught by the authorities: “They’re only copies. It isn’t murder to discard the copies” (207). Under this rational, Bean’s very humanity is called into question; it becomes unclear whether he even has his own identity, given that he is a “copy” of his brother, Nikolai. As Graff suggests: “The difference between humans and chimpanzees is genetically slight. Between humans and Neanderthals it had to be minute. How much difference would it take for him to be a different species?” (181). This blurring of the line between human and machine is another fundamental characteristic of Cyberpunk, for as Istavan Csicsery-Ronay points out, “Cyberpunk is fundamentally ambivalent about the breakdown of the distinctions between human and machine, between personal consciousness and machine consciousness” and “the breakdown is initiated from the outside, usually by the pressures exerted

by multinational capitalism's desire for something better than the fallible human being" (191). Even though Ender is always aware of his exploitation by the I.F., he at least has a national identity and the rights of a citizen. Bean does not technically exist outside of the I.F., which complicates his citizenship status and makes it difficult for him to gain any sense of national identity. However, as a product of the system itself, Bean is also able to understand and expose the true motives of the International Force from the inside out.

While the economic reading of *Ender's Game* requires an allegorical reading of the Battle Room and Ender's command strategy, Bean makes that reading more explicitly available in *Ender's Shadow*. Indeed, Bean's explanations make clear that I.F. is actually functioning as an advanced form of the multinational corporation. By taking the best commanders from all nations of the world, I.F. constructs the ultimate multinational force, while at the same time ensuring their own survival. As Bean explains: "the main purpose of the Battle School was to get these kids off Earth so that they could not become commanders of the armies of any one nation or faction...By taking us, they have tamed the world" (157). I.F. may indeed be trying to "tame the world" and prevent another global catastrophe, however, Battle School also provides them with a mechanism of defense against the chaos, which may ensue the moment the Bugger War ends: "As soon as it was known that the Buggar threat was eliminated, all the pent-up hostilities would be released...The resources of the International Fleet would be co-opted by mutinying commanders from one faction or another" (156-157). But with their multinational force, even if there is a war between nations on Earth, the best commanders will be loyal to and controlled by I.F. Thus, the I.F. fulfills the role of the corporate villain exposed by cyberpunk narratives: "The villains come from the human corporate world and use their great technical resources to create a

being that program out the glitches of the human” (Cisery-Ronay 191). Not only is Bean a generically enhanced, super intelligent being, he is also, literally, a creation of the corporation.

Bean’s developmental narrative does not end with his smooth transition into adulthood—after all, Bean was *born* into an adult world—but *Ender’s Shadow* also does not conclude with Bean’s entrance into the social space of our postmodern world. Unlike the Young Adult novel of Trites analysis, which “marks growth largely in terms of the individual’s increased participation in capitalism,” Bean’s *Bildungsroman* conclusion reflects at least a glimmer of resistance. Indeed, despite being marked by a physical condition that will shorten his life-span to not much more than 20 years of age, Bean leaves battle school determined to continue fighting against the forces that threaten the future of mankind on Earth: “For Bean, the war with the Buggers was already behind him. All that mattered now was how things went on Earth. When a shaky truce was signed, temporarily ending the fighting, Bean knew that it would not last. He would be needed. Once he got to Earth, he could prepare himself to play his role. Ender’s war is over, he thought. This next one will be mine” (462). Overcoming his stigmatized position as “unnatural” or “nonhuman,” Bean regains his human subjectivity by being accepted into the Delphki family as their long lost son and refusing to allow his life to continue being dictated by I.F (466). Just as Ender’s character lives on through several sequels—perpetually traveling the universe unable to grow old or settle down to enjoy a traditional family life—Bean’s character also reappears in several sequels to *Ender’s Shadow*. But these sequels all feature Bean continuing to resist the forces bent on maintaining a constant state of war on Earth. Rather than “teach adolescents how to exist within the (capitalistically bound) institutions that necessarily define teenagers’ existence,” Bean’s *Bildungsroman* narrative champions independent thinking and intellectual action as opposed to “increased participation in capitalism” (Trites 19;18). As a postmodern

Bildungsroman, *Ender's Shadow*, with its cyberpunk roots and developmental arch, offers a formal alternative to the Young Adult novel, a alternative which suggests that growth in our postmodern world does not necessarily have to align with the values of multinational capitalism.

As Timothy Leary points out:

The world has become too dynamic, complex, and diversified, too cross-linked by the global immediacies of modern (quantum) communication, for stability of thought or dependability of behavior to be successful. The 'good person' today is the intelligent one who can think for him/herself. The 'problem person' in the Cybernetic Society of the twenty-first century is the one who automatically obeys, who never questions authority, who acts to protect his/her official status, who placates and politics rather than thinks independently" (246).

Ender's Shadow charts the growth and development of one such "good person"—Bean. Thus, when read alongside the Young Adult novel, the *bildungsroman* of postmodernity becomes a narrative of hope and resistance, the YA novel one of acquiescence.

Conclusion

"After reading a book in this series, the reader should not simply have learned something new: the point is, rather, to make him or her aware of another—disturbing—side of something he or she knew all the time" ~Slavoj Žižek, *Forward to "Short Circuit" Series*

Žižek's statement captures both the objective of my analysis and the sentiment of Card's "parallax" rewriting of his own work. As Card recalls: "For the reader, the parallax [of *Ender's Shadow*] is created by Ender and Bean, standing a little ways apart as they move through the same events. For the writer, the parallax, was created by a dozen years in which my older children grew up, and younger ones were born, and the world changed around me, and *I learned a few things about human nature and about art that I had not known before*" (3). How apt, then, that Žižek's own contribution to his Short Circuit series is his theorization of—the parallax.

“The standard definition of parallax is,” according to Žižek “the apparent displacement of an object (the shift of its position against a background), caused by a change in observational position that provides a new line of sight” (17). More importantly though, is what he identifies as the “philosophical twist”: “the observed difference is not simply “subjective,” due to the fact that the same object which exists ‘out there’ is seen from two different stances, or points of view. It is rather that, as Hegel would have put it, subject and object are inherently ‘mediated,’ so that an ‘epistemological’ shift in the subject’s point of view always reflects an “ontological” shift in the object itself.”(17). It is not that *Ender’s Shadow* necessarily tells a different story or makes a different critique than *Ender’s Game* but rather that, as I have tried to show in this analysis, it makes explicit the very critique that *Ender’s Game* subtly and implicitly forewarns. And such a change in perspective, an epistemological shift in point-of-view to one following the post-cyberpunk boom of the 1980s, causes an ontological shift in the story itself. Indeed, read through the lens of *Ender’s Shadow*, the critically acclaimed *Ender’s Game* narrative becomes something else. *Ender’s Shadow* emerges as the formal successor to the *Bildungsroman* of modernity, a form that *Ender’s Game* was not yet fully capable of realizing.

By repeatedly rehearsing the *Bildungsroman* narrative—the formal genre of modernity—over the course of three decades of capitalist development, Card’s literary work reveals a generic form in motion, a form attempting to adapt to the changing socio-economic world space of late capital. But in such a social space, as Jameson warns: “Aesthetic production...has become integrated into commodity production generally: the frantic economic urgency of producing fresh waves of ever more novel-seeming goods (from clothing to airplanes), at even greater rates of turnover, now assigns an increasingly essential structural function and position to aesthetic innovation and experimentation” (*Postmodernism* 5). Indeed, whether explicit or not, Card’s

exploitation of his own narrative demonstrates the transformative project of aesthetic creation in a postmodern, consumer driven society. That is, Card's habitually re-telling of the Ender's story can be read as a concrete cultural example of this integration of aesthetic and commodity production. *Ender's Shadow*—the aesthetic product itself—is at once an example of and a revolt against the very commodification that it represents. At the end of the *Ender's Shadow*, Bean is left fighting against the powers which sustain the globalized capitalist economy, while at the same time, aware that he will never be able to separate his own identity from that of the corporation. Thus, *Ender's Shadow* exposes the negative effects of postmodernity, while at the same time offering us a narrative of resistance. Furthermore, the *Bildungsroman* of postmodernity emerges in response to a postmodern mutation of its own formal structure—the Young Adult novel. Whereas the YA novel of postmodernity teaches an adolescent audience values, which encourage successful integration into a capitalist society, the *Bildungsroman* of postmodernity continues to allow for resistance. Through each iteration of the “Ender's Game” story, the formal features of the *Bildungsroman* of postmodernity become more distinct and this tendency towards resistance more pronounced. The reader walks away from *Ender's Shadow* with a newfound understanding of the “Ender's Game” narrative, an awareness of *Ender's Game's* exposition of the “disturbing” reality of multinational capitalism, a critique that was there all along.

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