



## GODS OF GEEKDOM

# ORSON SCOTT CARD

I'm not completely sure how this chapter ended up with two geek gods who are out there on the right-hand fringes of the U.S. political landscape, but I suppose that is what an extreme lack of planning will get you. Card's relatively recent comments on homosexuality and gay marriage have been controversial, and when combined with a recent big budget movie adaptation of *Ender's Game*, it knocks his geek factor rating all the way down to a 3.

Still, we cannot let Card's very conservative religious beliefs distract us from the fact that he produced some of the most powerful literary commentary on the human instinct to use conflict with another group to enhance or sustain their identification with a group. While the short story and film versions of *Ender's Game* are primarily about the war against

the aliens and the morality of using a child to win that war, the novels, along with the sequels such as *Xenocide*, explore the social, political, and moral implications of the extremes of othering that led to the extermination of an entire alien race. The clash between the political, pragmatic, and moral are laid bare as he follows Ender's journey through the aftermath of the war, and in many ways, you can see that Card himself has been disturbed by his own novel and is sharing that internal conflict. While one may not agree with some of Card's beliefs, the political activities of a significant portion of any population are primarily driven by moral or religious beliefs and much of Card's writings explore the mind-set, logic, contradictions, and dilemmas these people must confront.