

Introduction

... America has always been a land set firmly not in the past, but in the future. On a recent visit to England, I found dozens of wonderful bookstores chock full of the past — ancient history, rooms full of it, and great literature in such monumental stacks as to be overwhelming. In the usual American bookstore, history might occupy a few bookcases; great literature has its honoured place, but this year's paperbacks dominate. The past is not disregarded, but neither does it loom so large and run so deep in our blood.

Greg Bear, introduction to *Tangents* (1989).