

THE GEIS LETTER -----47

The Future Is Never What It's Supposed To Be!

APRIL 1998

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As Editor, I do not usually publish all of a letter. Especially long ones.

Freedom of speech:

Everyone can speak; only the wealthy can make themselves heard.

---Arthur Lane Terego



Personal

"Shamelessly half-turning his back on his holy mission in life, Geis reverted to his prime love, ~~romance~~ science fiction, and..."

I've noticed of late that *The Geis Letter* has been sliding into the seductive (to me) pit of science fiction and fantasy, especially as to the novels I review. [Thank you, TOR. Thank you WIRED. Thank you BERKLEY...and others.] And currently (3-26-98) I'm reading a ST MARTINS GRIFFIN pyrotech trilogy by Richard Calder titled *Dead Girls - Dead Boys - Dead Things* which is so constantly on the complicated danger edge that I must pay close attention to every fucking word! Not a book I can read while watching TV.

But that's fine with me. I like having my mind blown expertly, cunningly, in my native tongue.

And I find myself choosing often to review nonfiction books for their use in writing and appreciating sf, fantasy and horror. And for their help in anticipating (lotsa luck!) the future.

Anyway, this tropism which must have been set in my psyche at age 10, is too pervasive and persuasive to resist.

Too, I have to a degree wearied of the current-event scene. Once you accept the obvious, that our government is essentially controlled by a corporate oligarchy and eagerly prostitutes itself to the corporate oligarchy, that our government can and does routinely and opportunely lie to us, play us for suckers and even kill us, what's the point of obsessing issue after issue? Nobody much seems to give a shit! [What, another instance of BATF-FBI-CIA-DoJ-DoD-Clinton cheating and lying or mayhem, with subsequent



Freedom of the press:
Whoever owns the press owns the freedom.

---Arthur Lane Terego

coverup? Ho-hum.] If you think about it, this sort of merde has been going on since at least the Civil War. Give people power and they inevitably abuse you with it..

It's depressing. The remnant idealist in me has suffered near-mortal wounds. I'm cynically convinced the correct citizen posture is: Just don't believe the assholes, don't for God's sake trust them, watch your wallet and vote against all the incumbents.

On the whole, for the next 46 issues of *The Geis Letter*, I'd rather be at least halfway into the spec. fic. niche. [An alien crevice in the literary wall?] I feel comfortable here, among friends, surrounded by billions and billions of words.

So, to repeat the obvious, *The Geis Letter* is now at least halfly future, sf, fantasy, and horror oriented...with a little (sometimes a lot) 'conspiracy' on the side.

That leaves me lotsa wriggle room, as for instance see the reviews next issue of *The Millenium Bug*, *The Second American Revolution*, *Civil War Two*, and *The Third Paradigm* ...examinations of unpleasant possible futures for the U.S.A. Books like that serve both my inner masters.

Any subscriber who doesn't like this modest shift in emphasis and wants his money back, let me know. (But considering the influx of subscriptions from sf fans from the *SF Review* days, this would seem a welcome shift. I dunno. I suspect some quantum mysteries here. Maybe Ghodly diddling.)

Say...does this mean I have to watch *Sightings* and *Ghost Stories*?

YES!

Letter

Andy Watson

Cambrian Publications,
PO Box 112170,
Campbell, CA 95011-2170

3-28-98 'Sorry you didn't enjoy CIPHERS by Paul Di Filippo. I usually warn people of two things to consider when approaching the book:

'1. If you hated Thomas Pynchon's *GRAVITY'S RAINBOW*, you will probably not like CIPHERS (which is an intentional "thematic" sequel to *GRAVITY'S RAINBOW*).

'2. You have to read the first three chapters -- through the end of Chapter 00000010 [Chapter "2" in octal notation; the first chapter is numbered

zero] -- to know whether you're going to enjoy the book as a whole. It takes that long to adapt to its unique style and to get a sense of the book's scope and potential. If you aren't enjoying it by the end of the third chapter then you might as well stop.

'Anyway, I included an excerpt of your comments plus information about THE GEIS LETTER on the Cambrian website:

http://www.cambrianpubs.com/Di-Filippo/Ciphers_feedback.html

'I continue to enjoy and value TGL, even if you didn't like CIPHERS. No big deal. Actually it was useful to be able to include a clearly stated objection to the book on the feedback page. If you wouldn't mind including a correction (perhaps in a follow up appraisal of the book if you feel any urge at all to pick it up again and read to at least the end of the third chapter), the price of the signed-and-numbered limited edition hardcover is \$48, not \$60. Also if you wanted to include the URL, web-savvy readers of TGL might find it helpful in getting more info about the book as well as being able to order it. Distribution of a small press title is difficult, so if someone wants to buy it through ordinary bookstore channels they might have success but it will be needlessly frustrating and slow. The URL for CIPHERS-related info is

<http://www.cambrianpubs.com/Di-Filippo/Ciphers.html>

'BTW, I was pleased to see the praise for Victor Koman in the same issue.'

REG: I wish all small presses well, and recognize the artistic intent of both yourself and Paul. But I think he asks the reader to be too much in his service in reading such a difficult, dense, esoteric, over-the-top novel, instead of he being in service to the reader, at least to the extent of using technique and style to make things at least initially comprehensible by compromising a bit on the crushing, puzzling info-load.

Ah, we live in lazy times.

Letter

PAUL DI FILIPPO

2 POPLAR ST
PROVIDENCE RI 02906

3-26-98 'Of course I was saddened that you didn't love *Ciphers*. But I'm not surprised that someone---any number of someones---might hate it. It is a deliberately dense book. I

think if you had penetrated it you would have found much to like. But alas, it was not to be.

'Style is like being able to spit through a gap in your teeth. To some it's cool; to others it's stupid & juvenile & interferes with "The Message". I don't write everything in the manner of *Ciphers*, natch, but when it seems appropriate I layer on the flash.

'And don't forget: your idol Bester was once derided as a useless stylist by those who might have preferred Capt. SP Meek!

'Otherwise, I enjoyed #46, as usual. Hell, I even enjoyed your review of *Ciphers*, since it was honest & blunt! Thanx!

REG: You're welcome. Would that other authors I excoriate be so warm and friendly.

Letter

Charles Platt

<cp@panix.com>

3-28-98 'Re conspiracy theories---I think it's important to distinguish between conspiracy and coverup. The TWA800 case and the Foster case were both coverups, so far as I can see. I would define a conspiracy as occurring BEFORE the event, requiring coordination and planning as well as secrecy.

'Since governments are notoriously incompetent when it comes to coordination and planning, conspiracies are inherently less plausible to me than coverups. There is a long history, however, of various governments attempting, with mixed success, to hide information from the public after the event. You don't have to be paranoid to believe in coverups; indeed, I would say that the immediate impulse, if there's an embarrassing event, is for government employees and politicians to cover it up.'

REG: Point well made.

I think most government conspiracies (or what appear to be conspiracies) from the pov of the suspicious citizens of today are rooted in perceived government goals and agendas--values, some might say--which are viewed as serving the corporate masters or the government itself, not the citizens who pay for it all...in money and lives.

There's a great deal of frustration and anger involved.



Reviewed By Vince Nowell

The Day After Roswell

By Col. Philip J. Corso (Ret) with William J. Birnes

Pocket Books, c.1997, \$14.95, Trade paperback, 341 pp, ISBN: 0-671-00461-1 (also available in Pocket Books hardcover edition).

This book is about the technological and military aftermath of the spaceship crash near Roswell, New Mexico in 1947. It is not expressly about what the U.S. government later labeled "extra-terrestrial biological entities" (EBEs). However, Col. Corso does report he personally viewed one of the alien corpses and has read some of the autopsy reports.

Reading the book is akin to listening to an old veteran tell war stories. Corso bases his credibility on his first-person, proactive accounts as the Pentagon's Army Chief of the Foreign Technology Division in 1960-61, and before that as a member of the White House National Security staff under President Eisenhower. His Pentagon job was to dole out to carefully selected government research-and-development contractors actual artifacts salvaged from the Roswell wreckage, with his instructions for them to begin reverse-engineering those items toward creating new weapons.

The top-secret items led to many accomplishments, including: image intensifiers (night-vision devices); fiber optics; supertenacity fibers (e.g., Kevlar); lasers; molecular-alignment metallic alloys; integrated circuitry and electronics microminiaturization; irradiation of food; portable atomic generators (ion propulsion drive); particle beam weapons ("Star Wars" antimissile systems); and stealth technology.

Why the emphasis on weapons? Because the U.S. and its allies---and the USSR!---believed EBEs to be hostile, posing an imminent danger to our world.

Corso argues effectively that the Cold War was not just an East-West arms race but also was both a political and military coverup to develop Earth's defenses against an obviously superior foe. This coverup was a joint venture of the major world powers on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

Corso's theses are mind-numbing, yet the writing is meticulously journalistic (if a bit repetitive in places). An appendix documents the Army's proposed lunar station, but there are no documents to support the rest of the book.

I guess one should not expect the author to have a basement-full of classified papers on hand for publication. After all, as he asserts repeatedly, the governmental UFO/EBE coverup continues to this day.

Review

The UFO Files

The Canadian Connection Exposed
Stoddart Publishing Co. Limited, 1997,
\$21.95, 207 p., Hardcover, ISBN:0-7737-3015-X.

Campagna works for the Dept. of National Defence in Ottawa and has acted as the Canadian representative to NATO in the area of electromagnetics in military aircraft.

He details the satellite role of Canada to the U.S. effort to investigate UFO activity in Canada, and then to refute and dismiss UFO sightings and experiences.

The Stefan Michalak 1967 on-the-ground encounter with either an alien UFO or a very advanced U.S. aircraft is presented in as much detail as exists and leaves the reader convinced the sickened, burned man was telling the truth.

There is some evidence that Dr. Vannevar Bush, a very high-ranked U.S. government scientist of the time, was in charge of UFO technology investigation, and much circumstantial evidence that U.S. and Canadian government disinformation, coverups and debunking programs existed, and still exist. The overriding question becomes: why go to the bother?

The implication, from Campagna's information, is that the Roswell crash of an alien UFO did happen and the U.S. has been secretly reverse-engineering advanced alien technology ever since.

Letter

Alexis A. Gilliland

4030 8th St. S, Arlington, VA 22204

3-26-98 Thank you for TGL 46.

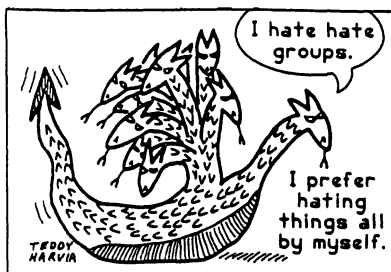
Putting aside Vince Foster, let us consider explosives [and the OKC bomb]. If you want to make a batch of 10 or 20 pounds, you may need a different recipe than if you want to make 10 or 20 tons. My speculation is that McVeigh simply poured the oil on top of the granular ammonium nitrate and let it percolate down through the granules, following the KISS rule, Keep It Simple, Stupid. He'd done some test explosions, and while his lab notebook hasn't turned up on the internet, I expect he would have tried a range of oil/ammonium nitrate ratios, from drained, oil-wet granules, which would not produce clouds of black smoke, to an oil-granule slurry which would. You say: "Had all of the bomb been made of granulated fertilizer, The Bomb would have been far less powerful" with unexploded and incompletely mixed fertilizer all over the place. Since the FBI didn't find more than a few grains of ammonium nitrate it would appear that your expert was mistaken about how McVeigh's recipe actually worked. (What possible interest could the FBI have in talking down granular fertilizer bombs?) Our difference appears to be that I look at the explosion and try to imagine how one man could have done it, while you look at a related recipe which McVeigh could not have used and try to imagine the evil conspiracy which provided him with the necessary logistical support.

REG: We still don't have enough verified facts in re how such a large 'fertilizer&oil' bomb had to have been made and if it could have done that amount of damage.

My current view is that we won't know for at least a decade.

The buzz here in Washington is that the '98 Disclave has been cancelled by the hotel. They knew about last year, but the hotel from the year before---when they got around to checking with it---reported some "nudity" in the halls, and bang, there goes the convention. Joe Mayhew, this year's Con Chair, had a mild stress-related heart attack and will probably run cons no more forever. Sigh. Three cartoons are enclosed for your possible use.'





Review

Dead Girls Dead Boys Dead Things

By Richard Calder

ST. Martin's Press, 1988, \$15.95, 407 pp., Griffin Trade Paperback, ISBN: 0-312-18078-0.

Labeled a trilogy, I consider this a three-part novel. A novel I should hate but cannot, for as much as I subscribe to the dictums of Jack Woodford and Isaac Asimov: "Let the author be invisible"---and as much as I dislike info-overload and 1000-word paragraphs and hundreds of arcane and esoteric words I've never seen before---there's more than enough strange, weird, brutal, sex-death, quantum time warp-universe content and coherence buried in the word flash, info flare and style flourish to capture my mind and hone my curiosity. I'll sit still for a show-off writer if he gives me this much meat on the plate.

The novel resists reviewer description, but I'll batter my way in: A next-century Euro civilization which loves nano-structured intelligent robots-androids, inspires a line of supreme Cartier creatures created and fiendishly nano-programmed (with a little mutated quantum uncertainty on the side) by Dr. Toxicophilous, and they unleashe a satanic sex nano-loaded retrovirus which turns human girls at puberty into Dolls---short-lived, androidal, beautiful, irresistible, vampiric whose bite infects human men with the virus but doesn't change them (well, only a few of them), who in turn infect human women who give birth to girls doomed to be Dolls...

In spite of attempted interment and imprisonment, virus-laden boys and girls escape, spread the virus throughout the world...

A species of virus-created men called Elohim arises who are per-

versely dedicated to killing as many Dolls as possible to allow humans and robo-androids to coexist: a mutual birth-death pact.

Swimming in this (mostly Thailand) futuremix of capitalist hell and death and sex and warp and perversity are the central characters and lovers, the boy Ignatz Zwakh and the Doll Primavera, escaped from England, apparently brother and sister, but Ignatz is something special, with personas and destinies to come.

Nothing I can write (or am willing to write here) can prepare the reader for the naked id thinking of Richard Calder; he has no limits, no hesitations, no censors. Most women will shrink in horror from the detailed, fiendish slaughters of Dolls, and most men will clench their teeth at the naked infliction of pain and death.

Is this man all about merciless killing of beautiful young faux women, the embroidered descriptions of horrible wounds...?

But are these changed girls---these now inhuman Dolls---really remnant humans? They seem to welcome their dooms with altered instincts, to flaunt their naked breasts, their umbilicals and vulvas as the knives and bullets and flechettes pierce and rend...and if only intelligent robo-androids, dead things, is it a crime to kill them? To save mankind from eventual extinction?

To allow for the detonation of the space-time bomb which will wipe out this universe-spanning, life-threatening warped nanovirus?

Is Calder rubbing our noses in malekind's hidden misogyny? Is he cleverly pointing at female masochism? [Just try to stop yourself from reading this novel!]

Maybe. There are levels and layers of masked meanings and intents, futures, timescapes, worlds, identities which lure the swamped reader on on and on...

Near the end this novel for me became a reading ordeal, a crucible, and I realized to fully understand and encompass and appreciate this monster novel (and monster author?) I'd have to reread it several times, at great leisure, and take a ream of notes.

That won't happen.

But I consider Richard Calder a remarkable creator, a very challenging writer, perhaps a cynical genius.

And I hope St. Martin's Press will send me his next novel, *Cythera*, to be published in May.

Update

Arthur C. Clarke

Date: 07-Apr-98 05:50 PDT

Police: Arthur C. Clarke has not violated any laws

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) -- Sri Lanka's top detective said Monday there was no evidence that science-fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke is a pedophile despite allegations published in a British tabloid in which he was quoted discussing alleged encounters with young men.

"We have recorded every statement that Dr. Clarke made, and we are satisfied that he has not violated any Sri Lankan laws or committed any crime," Deputy Inspector General of Police, M.S.M. Nizam told The Associated Press.

Clarke, 80, who has lived in Sri Lanka since 1956, publicly dismissed the allegations published Feb. 1, a few days before he was supposed to have received an honorary knighthood during a visit by Prince Charles.

The ceremony was indefinitely postponed at Clarke's request to avoid embarrassing the royal visitor.

Nizam, who heads the crime investigation branch, said he has sought the attorney general's opinion on how to proceed. The attorney general can advise the police to close the case or to file a case against the British newspaper and the reporters.

Police interrogated three of the four men quoted by the paper as claiming to have had sex or discussing sex with Clarke.

"Two of them told us that they were given money to say what they allegedly said," Nizam said.

Nizam questioned Clarke at his home last week.

Clarke was unavailable for comment Monday, but he told The Associated Press last week that he intend to file a defamation case against the British newspaper.

"I know I have done no wrong, and I know I am going to win the case. With the money that I will get, I am going to make an underground swimming pool for people in Sri Lanka," he said.

The British-born Clarke is the author of the science-fiction classic "2001: A Space Odyssey" and 80 other books.

Update courtesy Richard Newsome

★★

From: K-Mac@worldnet.att.net
(Michael Kube-McDowell) Michael
Paul McDowell, writing as Michael P.
Kube-McDowell -- Member SFWA,
Inc. * Member WGA, East, Inc.

Subject: UPDATE: **Arthur C. Clarke
Exonerated - Tabloid Charges "De-
molished" by Investigation**
Date: Thu, 02 Apr 1998 17:36:26 GMT

My esteemed colleague and
collaborator Sir Arthur Clarke has
asked me to help circulate and
propagate the following notices, and
I'm more than happy to do so. These
were undated, but were received here
on April 2, 1998.

STATEMENT BY SIR ARTHUR'S EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The disgraceful allegations made
against Sir Arthur by a British Sunday
paper have now been conclusively
demolished. The local broadcaster
who had taped some of the most ser-
ious charges has now sworn, under
oath, that they were completely false.
And Sir Arthur is very grateful to the
IGP and the Crimes Department of the
Sri Lanka Police for locating and
questioning the other persons
mentioned.

The attempts by the paper to link
Sir Arthur's name with dubious organi-
sations and individuals suspect-ed to
be involved in child-abuse cases have
also been proved to be fabrications - or
downright lies - by the reporters
concerned, who are now themselves
under investigation. (One had lost his
job attempting to sell a fraudulent
'scoop' to a British tabloid!)

In a last-ditch effort to maintain
credibility, the London paper now
claims to have an incriminating tape.
This is in fact a tape which Sir Arthur
insisted on making himself, and giving
to the reporters, expressing his abhor-
rence of any form of sexual exploita-
tion - especially that involving children.
Some of his statements have been
deliberately taken out of context, to
convey the exact opposite of his
meaning.

It now seems probable that this
whole affair was an attempt to embar-
rass the Government on the eve of
Prince Charles' visit for the 50th
Independence Day Celebrations (when
he would have formally
invested Sir Arthur with his knighthood
'for services to literature'.)

Fortunately, there was enough
time for the authorities, here and in the
UK, to ascertain that the charges were

groundless. Sir Arthur attended the
Independence Day Banquet and was
warmly greeted by H.E. the President
and the Prince of Wales. The photos of
Prince Charles and Sir Arthur laughing
and shaking hands speak more
eloquently than many thousands of
words.

It has since been discovered that
certain persons and individuals here in
Sri Lanka have been engaged for
several years in attempts to discredit
Sir Arthur for their own purposes. So
although the case against him may
now be regarded as closed, another
investigation is now under way in
Colombo to look into this. And, of
course, in view of the immense dam-
age done to Sir Arthur's reputation,
his London and Washington lawyers
are now considering what further
action he should take.

STATEMENT BY SIR ARTHUR CLARKE

Since the Independence Day
Banquet, at which I was very happy to
have received sympathetic greetings
from dozens of ambassadors and
other dignitaries, I have also received
a flood of good wishes from friends,
known and unknown, all over the
world. And here in Colombo, perfect
strangers now go out of their way to
wish me well - and to congratulate me
on the millions in damages they fully
expect me to collect. It has even been
suggested, ironically, that in the long
run my legal income may far outstrip
my literary one...

That remains to be seen, but if I do
receive any of the compensation to
which I feel morally entitled, it will all
come to Sri Lanka. And it will be used
to support genuine children and young
persons' organisations here, as well as
the Ragama Rehabilitation Hospi-tal, of
which I am honoured to be Patron.

The first months of 1998 have
been the most unpleasant of my life,
but I am now certain that out of evil
may come forth a great deal of good.
And I hope that I have been able to
protect other innocent persons, who
may not be in a position to defend
themselves from scoundrels willing to
destroy a reputation for the sake of a
headline.

--- Sir Arthur Clarke, Kt., CBE



South China Morning Post [Hong
Kong]
Friday April 10 1998
**Clarke child sex inquiries ongoing, say
police**

SRI LANKA Police yesterday rejected
an assertion by British science-fiction
guru Arthur C. Clarke that he had been
cleared of child-sex accusations, and
dismissed claims of a conspiracy to
frame him.

Police Deputy Inspector-General
M. S. M. Nizam said that contrary to a
statement issued on Wednesday by
Clarke, authorities were still pursuing
the investigation against him.

"Why should we ask for Interpol
help if we have dropped the case?" Mr
Nizam said. He rejected claims made
in a one-page statement by Clarke
of a "long-standing conspiracy" to
discredit the author.

Update courtesy Richard Newsome and
Vicki Rosenszweig

★★

Sunday Mirror, [London] April 12 INTERPOL ASKS FOR OUR FILE ON CLARKE

A damning dossier on Arthur C.
Clarke is to be handed to Interpol by
the Sunday Mirror, after they
requested it.

Clarke, 80, who wrote the sci-fi
classic 2001: A Space Odyssey, this
week claimed he would soon be on his
way to London to receive his
knighthood after being cleared of our
allegations that he paid for sex with
young boys. But Sri Lanka's deputy
Inspector General of Police, Moham-
ed Nizam, said last night: "The investi-
gation is continuing.

"I look forward to receiving the dos-
sier from The Sunday Mirror, via
Interpol."

We revealed in February that
British-born Clarke preyed on young
boys on the exotic island. He was due
to be knighted by Prince Charles just
three days later, but postponed the
ceremony to avoid embarrassing the
Prince.

Our exclusive story told how
Clarke's interest in paedophilia
stretched back over the 40 years he
has lived on the island, where poverty-
stricken boys are easily persuaded to
have sex with men for 1,000 rupees,
just 10 pounds.

Clarke told our investigators boys
are ready to have homosexual rela-
tions as long as they have reached

puberty.

He insisted: "I have never had the slightest interest in children, but once they have reached the age of puberty it is OK."

"I think most of the damage is done by the fuss made by hysterical parents. If the kids enjoy it and don't mind, it doesn't do any harm... there is a hysteria about the whole thing in the West."

Earlier this week, Clarke claimed his investiture would go ahead. He said from his home on Sri Lanka: "I'm extremely pleased this has been cleared up. I will definitely be coming to England now. It will be my second visit to Buckingham Palace. I met the Queen there for my CBE."

But an official at the Palace said: "There are no arrangements for him to come here yet. We will take further advice at the time." And a spokesman for Downing Street said: "We understand the investigations are continuing."

Deputy Inspector Nizam, one of Sri Lanka's top detectives, said: "The investigation is not at an end. We are keeping an open mind. Once we receive your dossier we will decide what to do next."

Update courtesy Richard Newsome

REG: Sri Lanka police officials changed their tune between April 7th and the 10th. Wonder why?

Note that Clarke's opinions about paedophilia are not an admission that he ever had sex with early or mid-teen boys. I think the *Mirror* is quoting out of context and adding its own scandal spin.

I note that Arthur C. Clarke is using his Knight title now, since the induction ceremony is apparently only...ceremonial. The Knighthood is official.

Letter

Dave Szurek

3-31-98 'I hardly believe everything I read in the papers, but what makes your sources any more reliable than the mainstream ones? I'm not saying they aren't and I'm not saying are, but I'm just posing the question.'

REG: Ah, there you have put your finger on it. Our 7 billion people and our tech civilization has removed the tribal individual from contact and

influence with those people and events and forces which rule his life. With rare exceptions we are dependent on people we never know for our jobs, our food, our transportation, our water, our information, our future---our reality.

Providing us with our reality (or the 'information' from which we construct our personal and group reality) is an industry, now, with thousands of aspects...and dozens of powerful agenda competitors vying for our belief and imposing 'facts' and belief and faith where possible.

Modern life is inherently dependency, a form of slavery or serfdom, and it forms in our minds an unconscious terror of an unnamable Doom. What if the food/transportation system is destroyed? What if the power grid is destroyed? What if the money system is destroyed? Stop thinking about it!

'I am one of the many old-timers who has stopped reading S-F or for that matter most genres of fiction. Things that never happened to people who never lived lost its appeal for me years ago. I am still open to speculative theory and speculative non-fiction, but that's not exactly the same thing. Then again, one never knows when a piece of fiction will be misrepresented as fact.'

REG: The dreaded fiction burn-out! But I admit to still wanting-liking to be hooked into the basic power of story. And I admit to periodically wearying of the endless onslaught of disagreeable non-fiction facts, scandals, crimes, disasters...and possibilities (always a form of fantasy). I run with endless hope for quality to the nearest comedy, suspense, mystery, sf, horror in reading and in viewing.

Future Thoughts

4-10-98

Disturbing news which portends ill for the economy: The country's 2nd largest bank, Citicorp, and the powerhouse Travelers financial conglomerate have decided to merge into a super financial monster entity called by an analyst, "a universal bank" which will be the first concentration of buying and manipulation power capable of taking advantage of large scale "buying opportunities" as they emerge in Japan and the rest of the 'Asian contagion' financial disaster areas.

This merger will 'force' other such

mergers and acquisitions by other combos.

4-12-98 No sooner said than done: The *Wall Street Journal* via Compuserve reports two more mega bank mergers---BankAmerica + NationsBank to form the #1 bank in the country---and Bank One + First Chicago NBD to create the #5 largest in the nation.

The much hyped "beneficial deregulation" of banking by congress and the selective scrap-heaping of anti-trust enforcement by recent administrations has been a shell game: the true goal of "deregulation" from the beginning has been the concentration of financial power into ever fewer hands, actually the opposite of competition. We are seeing the formation of cartels and monopolies.

On another front: it strikes me that with 43% of American families 'into' the stock markets, and with millions of individuals ever deeper into debt, we have a two-tier economic population: those who can and do save and put the money into equities and mortgages, and those who are Spenders and Debtors who don't make enough to save..

Most Wall Street professionals are getting very nervous with stock market price/earnings ratios at all time highs (yea, higher than in 1929)---double historic, normal, safe ratios. The current stock markets are vastly, dangerously overpriced, and vulnerable to an inevitable crash.

The subsequent panics will be terrible and will cause awful changes in this country.

I suggest one future may be two-tier citizenship: one class of wealthy, secure citizens who retain all freedoms, rights and privileges, and an other class who, in exchange for a guaranteed wage or salary, housing, leisure activities, and health care, sign a paper obligating them to live, work and/or fight for the govt. where and when the gov. decides...for a predetermined span of years. Five years minimum, without the right to vote.

Is that indentured servitude? A form of slavery? That would look pretty good to millions and millions of people unemployed for years, starving on the dole, wearing rags.

The future of our economy and of our country, I suggest, is not the 'New Era' endless climb to ever new highs of prosperity and wealth it is supposed to be.



Books Received

Some reviewed, others listed and described.

DEAD GIRLS DEAD BOYS DEAD THINGS By Richard Calder

ST. Martin's Press, 1988, \$15.95, 407 pp., Griffin Trade Paperback, ISBN: 0-312-18078-0.

See review, page 3

HOCUS POCUS By Kurt Vonnegut

Berkley Books, 1990, \$7.50, Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-425-13021-5.

This is trumpeted as "Terribly funny" "Hilarious" "Comic" etc. But I think that's oversell. Vonnegut's shtick has always been death, satire, black humor, graveyard humor, and portraying humans as they really are--absurd, pretentious, hypocritical, cruel idiots. That's enough if done right--and he does it marvelously--to create the shock of humor. For me it is wry, chuckle humor.

This novel is "dedicated" to the American barbarism of the Vietnam War. And deadly government/corporate imbecility. So it goes.

THE DAZZLE OF DAY

By Molly Gloss

Tor Books, 1998, \$12.95, 256 pages, Trade paperback, ISBN: 0-312-86437-X.

ROGUE STAR By Michael Flynn

Tor Books, 1998, \$25.95, 446 pages, Hardcover, ISBN: 0-312-86136-2.

MASTER OF MASTERS

By Larry Townsend

L.T. Publications, PO Box 302, Beverly Hills, CA 90213, 1997, \$14.95, 185 pp., Trade paperback, ISBN: 1-881684-13-X

Far future science fiction about interstellar homosexual SM outcasts seeking a planet to call their own.

Larry Townsend writes well, with a smooth, discreet style, with surprisingly little graphic sado-masochistic/homosexual detail. He is concerned with the philosophy and personal ramifications of sado-maso and slavery, and especially with man-man love.

He tries hard to establish a real far-future interstellar civilization in which mother-Earth has been destroyed in the distant past.

True, these chapters were written, one per year, from 1972-1979 and appeared often in sado-maso-bondage magazines, and each chapter has a SM sex episode, but, again, the novel is actually not primarily a stroke book. Not to the extent that my own (hetero) sex novels from 1960-1990 were.

OF MEN, ROPES AND

REMEMBRANCE By Larry Townsend

L.T. Publications, PO Box 302, Beverly Hills, CA 90213, \$12.95, 148 p., Trade paperback, ISBN: 1-881684-15-6.

About 18 homosexual SM short stories and a letter debate from *Bound & Gagged* magazine. This is a genuine gay subculture which is coming out more and more, a kind of intense love that finally dares speak its name.

THE ANARCHIST COOKBOOK

By William Powell

Barricade Books, PO Box 1401, Secaucus, NJ 07096, 1971, \$25 cash or check only to publisher, 160 p., 8 1/2 x 11 trade paperback, ISBN: 0-9623032-0-8.

Not being interested in homebrew drugs (how to grow, harvest, distill, etc.) or in homemade bombs, booby-traps, firearms, etc., or other lethal weapons, I found the Introduction by Peter Bergman, a history of anarchism and nihilism, resistance and etc., to be of most interest.

Bottom line? This info should be available as a resource should any government become oppressive and dictatorial and ripe for overthrow. One might say that the level of subsurface (and manifest) resistance and discontent in a society is a rough measure of a government's illegitimacy. You be the judge of the current equation.

On a more pragmatic note, this book would be a valuable reference work for a writer.

THE THIRD PARADIGM - God and Government in the 21st Century

By Mark A. Ludwig

American Eagle Publications, PO Box 1507, Show Low, AZ 85901, 1997, \$12.95, 301 pp., Trade paperback, ISBN: 0-929408-18-7

CIVIL WAR TWO - The Coming Breakup of America

By Thomas W. Chittum

American Eagle Publications, PO Box 1507, Show Low, AZ 85901, 1996, \$12.95, 201 pp., Trade paperback, ISBN: 0-929408-17-9

THE SECOND AMERICAN REVOLUTION - First Shots Fired

By Marc Ridenour

American Eagle Publications, PO Box 1507, Show Low, AZ 85901, 1997, \$12.95, 161 pp., Trade paperback, ISBN: 0-929408-19-5

THE MILLENNIUM BUG - Gateway to the Cashless Society?

By Mark Ludwig

American Eagle Publications, PO Box 1507, Show Low, AZ 85901, 1997, \$12.95, 176 pp., Trade paperback, ISBN: 0-929408-20-9

REVENGE OF THE LATCHKEY KIDS An Illustrated Guide to Surviving the 90s and Beyond

By Ted Rall

Workman Publishing, 1998, 224 pages, illustrations throughout, Hardcover \$18.95 ISBN: 0-7611-1040-2, Trade Paperback \$10.95 ISBN: 0-7611-0745-2.

A CONTAGIOUS EVIL - The Mind of a Serial Killer

By Larry Townsend

L.T. Publications, 1733 Sunset Plaza Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90069, June 1998, \$12.95, 243 pages, Trade Paperback, ISBN: 1-881684-14-8.

PEGASUS

As Told By Marianna Mayer

Illustrated By Kimuko Y. Craft

Morow Junior Books, 1988, \$16.00, 38 pages, 9x11 Hardcover, ISBN: 0-688-13382-7 TR

The brief myth-fantasy story of a young hero facing death in attempting to slay the beast Chimera, and who enlists the aid of the great flying horse Pegasus, is well told by Marianna Mayer. But the star of this large-size display book is the award-winning artist K.Y. Craft, whose 15 full page paintings and 4 double-page paintings (and magnificent wraparound dust jacket painting of Pegasus), all in full color, all in the difficult oil over watercolor technique, are the reason this book exists. More than enough reason.

THE BEST OF ANNALS OF IMPROBABLE RESEARCH

Edited By Marc Abrahams

W.H. Freeman and Co., 1998, \$14.95, 208 p., 8 1/2 x 11 Trade Paperback, ISBN: 0-7167-3094-4.

This is a send-up of science and scientific thinking, research, analysis, conclusions, findings, certainties, laws and that scientific holy of holies, cause and effect. Nothing is spared in this whimsy-skewed, cross-eyed collection of absurd, short articles and japes, satires, skewerings and roastings of fatheadedness from the science humor journal *Annals of Improbable Research* (which gives yearly the uncoveted Ig Nobel Prizes).

For example, there is proof, by God, that apples can be compared to oranges, and an impressive exploration of the aerodynamics of potato chips.

Read this collection and you'll be in constant chuckles, if not outright guffaws. And you'll never again read a

I HAVE
DIRECTION!



newspaper story of the latest research findings without wondering, remembering...and grinning.

PS: There is even a lot of good advice.

DOCTOR CYBORG #1, #2, #3, #4, #5
Written By Allan Gross; Art By Mark Wheatley, Marc Hempel and Damon Willis; Cover By Mark Wheatley, featuring Allan Gross

ATTENTION! Publishing, 7844 Saint Thomas Dr., Baltimore, MD 21236, \$2.95 each, comicbook format.

Not your ordinary comic story, nor even your usual graphic novel. *Doctor Cyborg* is an illustrated conspiracy-mystery sf intellectual story...the personal hobby horse of Allan Gross playing with our heads.

Adults only, because damn few kids have the knowledge and perspective and intellect to find this storyline and its background interesting.

Doctor Cyborg exists in a world of androids, robots, a manipulative, secretive, ruthless U.S. government, fantasy science, and characters with sometimes multiple personas (one of which is a shape-changer), and in a plot structure of "It Was All a Dream" mein, though Gross gets away with it in my view.

The "Cyborgasms" editorial in each issue---usually a convincing exploration of a Conspiracy or Historical Mystery such as the Essenes and the Dead Sea Scrolls, Who or What is God?, Who Really Wrote "Shakespeare's" Plays?, The Academic Mafia---is not meat for any but exceptional teenage musing, but valuable and revelatory for such adults as I.

A few words about the artwork: Very fine. Mark Wheatley is a hell of an artist, and I especially admire his talent in panel structure, layout, placement of dialogue, narrative boxes, action sequences, povs, perspectives, panel mergings, subtle facial-body expressions... The skills and talents involved in precisely leading the reader-viewer by the eyes through these stories are manifestly of the highest order. I emit admiration and kudos.

THE FRANKLIN COVER-UP
Child Abuse, Satanism, and Murder in Nebraska—By John W. DeCamp
AWT Inc., PO Box 85461, Lincoln, NE 68501, \$9.95, Second Printing, Dec. 1996, 411 p., Trade paperback, ISBN: 0-9632158-0-9.

A cursory scan tells me this is a dynamite book involving crimes in very high places. I'll review it some-time in the next few issues.

THE OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING and the POLITICS of TERROR

By David Hoffman

Feral House, 2532 Lincoln Blvd, Suite 359, Venice, CA 90291, \$18.95, 1998, 539 p., Trade Paperback, ISBN: 0-922915-49-0.

A just-published must-read! This appears highly documented, with exact quotes and with precise details.

WACO—The Rules of Engagement
Fifth Estate Productions, 1997, \$24.95, video, running time 136 min. Available from Paladin Press, P.O. Box 1307, Boulder, CO 80306

Yes, I'll view and review this in #48.

THE TACTICAL ADVANTAGE
A Definitive Study of Personal Small Arms Tactics

By Gabriel Suarez

Paladin Press, PO Box 1307, Boulder, CO 80306, \$20.00, 1998, 205 p., Trade Paperback, ISBN: 0-87364-975-3.

Suarez, a law enforcement Medal of Valor winner, in this book profusely illustrated with drawings and photos, shows and tells how to behave when guns are involved and searching corners, rooms, hallways...the proper choice of and use of cover, close-quarter tactics, darkness...

A book of timeless value to homeowners, as well as pros. And to writers needing to authentically detail an action sequence in a story or novel.

MAGICK FOR BEGINNERS

By J.H. Brennan

Llewellyn Publications, PO Box 64383, St. Paul, MN 55164-0383, \$9.95, 317 p., Trade Paperback, ISBN: 1-56718-086-8.

High and Low magick, and ways to participate. This book makes me curious.

Review

THE MERRO TREE

By KATIE WAITMAN

Del Rey/Ballantine, 1997, \$5.99, 437 p., Paperback, ISBN: 0-345-41436-5

I see why Del Rey heralds this as their Discovery of the Year. Katie Waitman is a superior writer in every way. And she is what Isaac Asimov most valued in a writer---invisible.

She does not put herself between the reader and her story (LOOK AT ME!); her choice of detail, character, history, culture is so right and true that most readers will not be aware of the writer in any way---unless you are a fellow author who can appreciate the

skill and talent involved.

Thus her story about Mikk of the planet Vyzania, an extraordinary performance master of the arts of the sentient-filled galaxy, flows so smoothly and yet with such richness and tension that the pages melt away.

Mikk, emotionally traumatized by his selfish mother, is salvaged by the great performance master, Huud Maroc, and develops amazing talents for juggling, dance, singing, languages...

In defiance of the galaxy-wide performers Council which imposes rules and conditions on the host planets and the space-traveling performer troupes who entertain hundreds of different intelligent species, Mikk performs the forbidden 'songdance' of the Somalites (a species dedicated to philosophy and mysticism) who were recently extinguished when their sun went nova.

The penalty is likely death.

The novel is structured mostly of life-story flashbacks from his imprisonment before and during trial.

A key player in this is a hostile, troubled NY Times drama critic from Terra, an Earth not used to being one of a galaxy-full of sentient species.

And dozens of other individuals of different species. Some very strange.

Waitman is very inventive, and must have filled volumes of notes about her galaxy of sentients. She smoothly slips it all into the text; tales, character bits, physical descriptions, culture pieces, social notes...all interesting, impossible to skim.

Waitman is a warm, nurturing, gentle person, but she doesn't flinch from the harshness and cruelty of mankind, etekind and the indifference of the universe. She values life, intelligence, above all the free expression of talent.

And does she have some surprises for the reader! There is a powerful love story in here which will be impossible to accept and impossible not to believe and wish to be fulfilled. Mikk is, after all, an alien!

One of the inherent problems of science fiction---making coherent and 'human' the interactions of true aliens---is fudged, necessarily: most of these creatures behave with the emotions of humans---greed, power lust, love, hate, ego, fear, jealousy, envy, etc.

And the civilization level seems to be present-day (Second and Third world) Earth with the add-on of the Internet and ftl spaceflight. There is a 1920ish flavor to most of it.

Finally, I think the cover painting for *The Merro Tree* is wrong for the novel, inadequate. ■■■