

THE GEIS LETTER -----48

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

MAY 1998

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BE AWARE: All Letters of Comment [and e-mail] are considered for publication. Please mark or write DNQ (Do Not Quote) those parts you wish kept private. If you wish your address kept private, please mark it Do Not Print or otherwise indicate it is DNP.

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



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

---Arthur Lane Terego

Freedom of speech:

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

---Arthur Lane Terego



News

SFWA ONLINE UPDATE No. 15

05/04/98 An electronic publication of Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America

SFWA is pleased to announce the 1997 Nebula Awards:

At the annual awards banquet and ceremony on May 2 in Sante Fe, New Mexico, the following awards were presented:

GRAND MASTER

Poul Anderson

NEBULA - NOVEL

The Moon and the Sun, by Vonda N. McIntyre

NEBULA - NOVELLA

"Abandon in Place," by Jerry Olton

NEBULA - NOVELETTE

"The Flowers of Aulit Prison," by Nancy Kress

NEBULA - SHORT STORY

"Sister Emily's Lightship," by Jane Yolen

Letter

Vince Nowell

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4-1-98 'Re the question could the Bible be a tissue of lies, I prefer to say it contains some of the finest early fantasy writings in literary history.

'Now fantasy can be based upon interpretation of actual events -- the operative word here being interpretation.

'Historians have argued over factual (i.e., historical) interplays with the Bible for decades, even centuries.

There is no end of works on this subject. One of the best concerns the archeological excavations at Ebla, in what is now northern Lebanon, near the Mediterranean coast. The researchers, while concentrating on the richness of archeological finds, were also able to equate geographical place names and "recorded" material (such as trade data, production information, etc.) with places and incidents mentioned in the Bible, and nowhere else.

'Biblical accounts, especially Old Testament, were couched in terms and wording that were acceptable to the few scholarly minds of the time. Unfortunately, we do not have access to the original "wording" in the actual language(s) used, much less the idiomatic character of the language(s).

'These accounts were not initially intended as an end-all document for all time for all people, as these works had their origins in tribal stories and legends. It was the collecting of these (and other) Biblical books -- their anthologizing, if you will -- that started the process of trying to create guidelines for man to live by as the inspired Word of God.

'The story in Exodus of Moses leading the Hebrews (or Israelites) out of Egypt is a good example of the problem of reconciling historical fact to the Biblical account.

'First controversy: some scholars say the Hebrews of Egypt were a social class of servants, not necessarily an ethnic group. Where does the Israelite part come in, for they are traditionally the descendents of Abraham, specifically, of the Twelve Tribes of Israel through the line of Isaac and his son, Jacob. Were these enslaved people Israelites?

'Moses (a derivative of a common Egyptian name), is believed to have lived from the late 14 century B.C. well into the 13th, which would place him in Egypt during the reign of Pharaoh Ramses II (1298-1232 B.C.).

'Moses would have followed by a generation or so the short, tragic reign of Amenhotep IV, better known as Akhenaton (1379-1362 B.C.). I mention this because, outside of Biblical personages, Akhenaton is one of the first known proponents of monotheism, albeit that his "one god" was the sun itself. I have long suspected that Akhenaton's monotheistic principles may have been preserved by some underground group after the religion was supposedly expunged entirely by the priests of the rival god, Amun.

'As an enslaved social class, regardless of ethnicity, could the Hebrews have found attractive this radical belief founded upon peace and hope? If they were Israelites, wouldn't they have found monotheism itself familiar?

'Cutting to the chase, Moses, working under direct Divine instruction, as the story goes, decides to lead the Hebrews/Israelites out of Egypt. He requests, then demands of Pharaoh to let them leave. Rebuffed, he promises a series of plagues upon Egypt. The Nile turns into a "river of blood." (Mud can and has done that for centuries, i.e., coloring the river a reddish hue.) Frogs, flies, then lice infest the land, which is common. There is a pestilence among the cattle -- not unknown in ancient times, including in Egypt. Boils break out; what is still today called the "Nile heat" or "Nile itch," a rash that can become infected and form boils. Hail falls -- rare but not unknown. Locusts: a chronic problem for farmers along the Nile. Darkness covers the land -- possibly from the khamsin (or simoon), a fierce hot wind that tears up the sandy soil and raises dust clouds of such magnitude as to blot out the sunlight. The "plague" not explainable by some kind of natural law is the widespread death of the firstborn (Ex. 12).

'There are no records from the time of Ramses nor subsequent Egyptian chroniclers to validate these events. That isn't surprising for a Pharaoh whose ego thrived on broadcasting his military prowess to the exclusion of much else. Nor is there any historical record relating to the pursuit of the Hebrews (or anyone else) across the Red (or Reed) Sea, depending upon your choice of translations.

'That's another controversy, for the Reed Sea was toward the south, and off the beaten track for a fleeing group of emigres. Shallow enough, it could have been forded. (Construction of the Suez Canal has vastly altered the topography of the region.)

'Interestingly, there is known to be a pushing back of the waters of the Red Sea at the north end of the Gulf by occasional strong northwest winds, such that one could actually wade across the bed of the Red Sea at that point.

'Trying to reconcile the fantasy of the Bible's books -- stories fine-tuned by scholars mega-generations after they originated -- with historical re-

cords and/or scientific facts has become a major occupation for many.

'That's what makes Immanuel Velikovsky's *Worlds in Collision* so interesting. Some of the other tantalizing books in this area of study are Hugh Schonfeld's *The Bible Was Right*, Werner Keller's *The Bible as History*, and of course, Isaac Asimov's *In the Beginning*. And one cannot overlook the classical works of Flavio Josephus, the Jewish historian often accused of being an apologist for the early Christians, whose writings contain one of the few historical references to the existence of Jesus.

'Schools of historiography, the field in which I was trained, take widely different approaches to research. There is, of course, skepticism: if there isn't an acceptable (and by whose standards?) source, then the incident, fable, event, person, etc., did not exist other than as mythology.

'That was what Schliemann faced, being unacceptable as a true "scholar," when he vowed to find and unearth the ruins of Troy. (So did Stanley after returning from his finding Livingstone.)

'There is another perspective, the one to which I subscribe, that can be loosely termed the "wait-and-see" approach. Very simply, it is the viewpoint that in the future some credible evidence may come to light with which we can revisit the topic of controversy, and perhaps become enlightened toward arriving at some sort of proof. In the meantime, the fantasy makes good material for story-telling, contemplation, and heated argument.'

REG: Of course almost all of Moses' plagues can be rationalized, but if they were so common, what is the threat? Not much of an Almighty God if that's all He can do!

On the other hand, if the first-born of the Egyptians had died all at once, THAT would have made the history tablets! And not just in Egypt!

I believe the miracles of the Bible are Church Hyperbole & Propaganda. As are the miracles in other religions' sacred books. Being Nice and Diplomatic by calling them 'fantasies' is okay, but I think them not entertainments or fictions, but deliberate lies. Priests and Holy Men, being human, will always attempt to make their gods superhuman and all-powerful...and thus reinforce their dogmas and their (the Holy Men's) status and power.

⚡ ⚡ ⚡

speculation could indeed prove to be true, 30 years AFTER the accident.

The Daily Telegraph of London [1] recently reported a still-unfolding story that brings to light exactly this problem:

NEW evidence has emerged to support claims that the Ministry of Defence covered up the cause of one of Britain's worst air disasters - the 1968 Aer Lingus tragedy that claimed the lives of the 61 people on board.

Allegations that a stray missile from the Royal Aircraft Establishment's testing range at Aberporth, Dyfed, may have caused the crash - when the Viscount plane mysteriously plunged into the Irish Sea on March 24, 1968 - have always been dismissed by the MoD. But one of the salvage crew who looked for the wreckage has now come forward on the eve of the 30th anniversary of the disaster.

So 30 years after the accident someone who was involved in that crash investigation, Billy Bates, comes forward with key information. The Telegraph article quotes Mr. Bates:

"There were lots of Royal Navy ships in the area immediately following the crash, including minesweepers, which seemed unusual. They got there very fast. What was odd was the fact that we were turned away from an area they called Area Alpha. That was where the plane actually fell. Every time we offered to help search that part of the water - our job was to try to find the wreckage - we were told to look elsewhere. Only the Navy trawled that section and took away what they found."

In only 1 year virtually the same story surfaced in the TWA 800 case. Kevin Gallagher, with the New York Police Department Scuba Team, which was involved in the TWA 800 crash recovery, wrote an article in Police Magazine [2] wherein he reveals that within hours after the crash the Navy took control of the recovery operation, prohibiting all non-Navy divers from diving for four days after the crash. In James Sanders's book [3] an AP photo even shows the Coast Guard escorting NYPD units away from the area.

The reason given for the prohibition was that "the Navy wanted to locate as many bottom targets as possible."

Gallagher also reveals in his article that during that 4-day prohibition on diving by all non-Navy divers, only divers from Navy Explosives Ordnance Disposal (EOD) were allowed to dive.

Gee, the exclusive purpose of EOD is to locate, recover, and dispose of explosives ordnance! [4]

While motive for X to cover-up an accident by X is implicit, we have now additionally established the opportunity for the Navy to have removed the

primary missile evidence.

If the Navy did shoot down TWA 800 and wanted to cover it up by removing the physical presence of the missile, they would be wise to prohibit diving by non-Navy divers and send down EOD divers, and that's exactly what they did!

This evidence is as or more revealing than the 30-year-delayed evidence that just came to light in the Aer Lingus case, which the Daily Telegraph reported.

OTHER AER LINGUS / TWA 800 SIMILARITIES

The Daily Telegraph article reveals other striking similarities between the Aer Lingus and TWA 800 crashes.

The Telegraph reports that the Irish Minister of State at the Department of the Marine, Hugh Byrne, also came forward on the 30th anniversary of that crash, saying:

"There is not a question in my mind that either a missile or a 'drone' from Aberporth caused the disaster. It was caused by the MoD."

In the TWA 800 case, USA Today [5] quoted the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Thomas Moorer, stating at a press conference on the TWA 800 crash that "All evidence would point to a missile."

The Daily Telegraph article also reports that the MoD [6] "has always maintained that there was no military testing on the weekend of the fatal flight." However, a private investigative group, The Celtic League, "proved from documents provided by the MoD that there were missile tests at least until the early hours of Saturday morning." [1]

In the TWA 800 case we find the same pattern of claims by the military about activity that prove to be false.

For example, 6 days after the crash, a DoD spokesman said there were no military exercises in the area [7], yet after eight months of such denial the Navy did the right thing, coming forward to admit that exercises were taking place at the time of the TWA 800 accident. [8]

Recently released radar data even reveals the presence of suspicious, large "boats" in the crash area, all of which either ignore the crash or flee from the area. [9]

Contradictory claims by the military surrounding the TWA 800 crash abound. [10] Even as you read this, researchers are mapping out the locations and activities of multiple naval warships (both U.S. and allied) off

Long Island at crash time, based on the Navy's own data. It appears, as Tom Shoemaker's research uncovered last year [11], that there was a large-scale war game going on that day.

MORE EVIDENCE DISAPPEARS (c) 04/23/98 Ian Williams Goddard

The Federal Government and the major media keep saying that no evidence supports the TWA 800 missile theory. At the rate evidence to the contrary keeps disappearing, the GovtMedia's claim might actually become true someday in the near future.

The April issue of the Case Files newsletter [1] reports that the NTSB just altered the flight data recorder (FDR) report available at the NTSB website. [2] ALL the data that clearly indicated a missile impact [3] was just erased. While minor changes to other reports at the NTSB page prompted the publishing of notification of such changes, this major change was just slipped in (and the data slipped out) without any notice.

Even more, the new, altered version of the report states that the chart from which data was erased was created on January 09, 1997, giving the impression that it was never altered.

You may recall previous updates pointing to the analysis of the now disappeared data by retired Navy crash investigator Commander Bill Donaldson. His analysis demonstrates how the now disappeared data was proof of a missile strike [3]. The NTSB responded, saying the data in question was from a previous flight, which apparently survived a missile strike.

The NTSB response is now to just disappear the evidence.

If the Federal Government can't win the argument over the facts, they just erase them, then they assault with lies and ad hominem any who question them, and attempt to throw in jail anyone (such as James Sanders and Terrell Stacey) who dares to bring forward evidence that is to remain hidden. These are the desperate tactics of a diabolical and despotic government!

PATTERN OF DISAPPEARING EVIDENCE

In an article subtitled "When suspicious debris arrived in the hangar the FBI took it away," the Village Voice [4] just reported that a large segment

of a wing from TWA 800 with high-velocity punctures through it was flown, special delivery to FBI headquarters in D.C., after which it simply "vanished."

The chief medical examiner in the TWA 800 case, Dr. Charles Wetli, said "virtually all of the bodies had shrapnel" in them [5]. The question, "How could a dull, subsonic combustion of a center fuel tank (CFT) (which didn't even explode into the passenger cabin) put shrapnel into 'virtually all' the passengers?" is a question with only one logical answer: "A CFT explosion could NOT put shrapnel into 'virtually all of the bodies.'"

Well, it would be easy enough to prove where that shrapnel came from by the physical analysis of it.

Obviously the FBI realized the weight of such evidence, and thus, as Dr. Wetli reported:

"FBI agents were here and standing with us while we were doing the autopsies and taking the shrapnel that we found." [5]

It seems the FBI realized that the shrapnel was so important that they could not allow it to fall into the wrong hands (such as the untrustworthy hands of the medical examiners), so the FBI actually stationed agents over the shoulders of the examiners as they performed the autopsies so that the agents could instantly grab up every piece of shrapnel, it would seem so as to ensure that each and every piece could be carefully disappeared.

ONE THIRD OF PLANE REMAINS HIDDEN

A very big piece of the puzzle that has "disappeared," after large portions of it were seen being recovered, is the entire nose section of TWA 800 (which was part of the section of the plane that fell away first). Contrary to misleading reports in the media that imply all of the fuselage is in one hanger, the pulverized nose section is NOT with rest of the reconstruction [6], instead, it remains hidden from public sight to this day.

At the same time, all of the wings remain hidden, including the critical wing portion just cited that simply "vanished."

VISIT Ian Williams Goddard ---->
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for addresses of above-referenced webpages.

Letter

BUZZ DIXON

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4-27-98 There is, of course, more to fiction than just the surface story it presents. Recently I've started reading James Ellroy and am utterly fascinated by the man's writing. For one thing, I don't think I've ever encountered a bleaker, more nihilistic writer in my life. Andre Gide and Jean-Paul Sartre, move over. Second, when it comes to putting evil on a page, Ellroy makes Stephen King look like R.L. Stine (he of *Goose-bumps* fame) and would cause the great elder god Cthulhu to run and hide. Why? Because all of his books feature pill-popping, booze-swilling, hooker-boffing, car-crashing, black-mailing, bank-robbing, fur-heisting, contract-killing, breaking-and-entering ultra-violent misogynist racist psycho-paths *and each and every one of them works for the LAPD!* Yessir, Dick, the first series of books ever written in which the cops are a far greater menace to society than the crooks.

But...what makes Ellroy's work so utterly fascinating is this: Ellroy's mother was killed when he was about nine years old, an unsolved murder that has had severe resonances on him ever since. Literally every single book he has written has been an attempt to lay to rest some of the demons born of that murder.

Knowing that, his work is fascinating. Yeah, it's things that never happened to people who never lived, but behind it all is something far deeper, far darker, a peek into what one of Ellroy's characters once referred to as "the wonder." It's a kind of naked truth that one rarely encounters at all, much less in the pages of non-fiction.'

REG: Most of us have demons, but few of us have the guts or the raging need to expose them to the world, in fiction or elseaway. I'll confess, I haven't yet read any of James Ellroy, but will make the effort. Who publishes him?

Letter

Harry Warner, Jr.

423 Summit Av.,
Hagerstown, MD 21740

4-26-98 I'm glad that Arthur Clarke seems to be emerging from the [Paedophilia accusations] mess in

pretty good shape. One thing that has struck me is the unhappiness he must feel, no matter if he is completely exonerated, over the way his paradise has gradually turned into a wilderness. He moved originally to Sri Lanka because he loved so much the landscape and its native population. Then came the tumult over the island's political problems and now this accusation which seems to be linked with a prevalent form of male prostitution in Sri Lanka. Arthur must be wondering if his old age wouldn't have been more peaceful and more satisfactory if he'd spent it on the other island, the one where he was born and grew up.'

Your inability to shuck off your science fiction roots has company in Hagerstown. For the past year I've been reading mostly mystery fiction and the classics, but during that period I've been piling up used science fiction and fantasy books to such an extent that their very bulk is exercising a gravitic pull on me and I know I'm going to start reading through them before long. I don't care for most of the new releases that ater shelved in the science fiction section of the bookstores and libraries, because too much of it is really future fiction, not science fiction, set in the future of a few years hence and based on slight exaggeration of 1998's components, and too much of the remainder is fantasy. But there's still an appreciable amount of science fiction being written, and whole decades of good stuff from the past that I've never gotten around to reading.'

REG: Huh! Betcha I've not read more good sf in the past than you haven't!

Letter

Bill Bridget

4126 MOUNTAIN CREEK RD #6
CHATTANOOGA TN 37415

4-26-98 I like the idea of you moving away from the old tired conspiracy theory stuff with *The Geis Letter*. Phooey on what Enquiring Minds Wanna Know! The Tabloids have sold out and gone legit now and nobody knows for sure what is absolutely and equivocably untrue anymore.'

REG: Maybe if we try to think of conspiracy theory as science fiction...

Roy Tackett

915 Green Valley Road NW
Albuquerque NM 87107

4-27-98 "You do well to set your sights on fantasy for the next few issues. Particularly when you review such books as Corso's [*The Day After Roswell*] bit of fiction.

"You want to know what happened in Roswell 50 years ago? Nothing. And the folks in Roswell have been making money off it for half a century. But let the fools who believe in UFOs continue to come. Roswell needs the money.

"Future Thoughts: I'm keeping my eye on the BankAmerica-NationsBank merger. NationsBank just took over Sunwest Bank about six months ago and that is where I have an account. Right across the street is a BankAmerica branch. I wonder which of the two is going to close. Hmmm?"

REG: Probably Sunwest. But ultimately both will be closed and you'll be forced-encouraged to do your banking via the Internet, dealing in e-money, and Ghod knows where the bank will be located on the planet...or in space.

Letter

George "Lan" Laskowski
2466 Valleyview Drive,
Troy, MI 48098-5317

4-29-98 "I want to thank you for sending me copies of *The Geis Letter*. I keep intending to write, and there's no reason why I don't have the time, being home on medical leave from my teaching position, but somehow I manage to while away the hours reading, watching videos and spending time with my wife and family. I also sleep a lot, one of the side effects of radiation and chemo-therapy.

"Anyway, the latest letter (#47) brings a few comment hooks my way. I am glad to see you "sliding into the seductive ... pit of science fiction and fantasy." Good for you. I enjoy your reviews and enjoyed reading them when you did SF&F review columns in the past. I include such book reviews in my fanzine *Lan's Lantern*, much to the consternation of some segments of fanzine fandom who think SF fanzines should *not* include science fiction. Anyway, I hope you continue to provide your insightful comments

into the books you review."

REG: The faanzine fans and the sercon (serious-constructive) fans have been warring since fandom began. Since I have never been much of a social fan, I naturally gravitated to the sercon side, but with some humor, I think. [Time for a Rotsler toon!]



"I continue to be "seduced" by SF&F, though my reading had expanded to include classics of literature, mysteries, and Zane Grey westerns. Before starting the current novel I'm reading, *Touched by the Gods* by Lawrence Watt-Evans, I read *The Sea Wolf* by Jack London, *The Lost Horizon* by James Hilton, *A Passage to India* by E.M. Forster, and *King Solomon's Mines* by H. Ryder Haggard. Prior to that I gorged myself on Poul Anderson's works, since I am putting together a special issue of *Lan's Lantern* on him. If you have comments, stories, reviews, or articles about Poul, I would appreciate if you would send them my way."

REG: Your issue seems well timed, since Poul has just been awarded the title of Grand Master of Science Fiction and Fantasy by the Nebula Award Committee of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America. He joins a prestigious group which includes

Robert A. Heinlein - Jack Williamson
Clifford D. Simak - L. Sprague de Camp - Fritz Leiber - Andre Norton -
Arthur C. Clarke - Isaac Asimov -
Alfred Bester - Ray Bradbury - Lester del Rey - Frederik Pohl - Damon Knight - A.E. Van Vogt - Jack Vance.

"The Richard Calder series sounds extremely fascinating in a very morbid sense. If it is as densely written as you said, then I would put it into the same category as *Courtship Rite* by Donald Kingsbury. You have to pay attention to every word as you read, and thus it is slow going. But worth every minute spent on it! I suppose Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* is like that too (I haven't read

it), as is the "sequel" *Ciphers* (as Andy Watson and Paul Di Filippo contend) and Chip Delaney's *Dahlgren*. Some readers consider slogging through the first few chapters so they can acclimate themselves to a certain "style" too much work, and would rather spend their time reading something less strenuous. It is true that "Life is too short to read bad books" as someone has quoted to me, but you never know a book is really that bad unless you give it a chance, or find someone whose opinion you trust and decide to try the book in question. Anyway, I need to read *Gravity's Rainbow* first before trying to tackle any other of Pynchon's works."

REG: Reviewing is perspective, knowledge, character, sophistication... I think I'm reviewing better now than I ever have, for a lot of reasons, but mostly because I now "see" more in a novel, and understand more about the craft and art of writing fiction (while, *Catch-22ish*, I have no time left to actually write fiction).

Letter

Joseph T. Major

1409 Christy Av.
Louisville, KY 40204-2040

4-29-98 "Review of *The Day After Roswell* in TGL 47: And you were also the one who commented that on the cover of the March-April *Skeptical Inquirer*, Houdini looked like the young William Jefferson Blythe IV. Said magazine contains a review of Colonel Corso's *The Day After Roswell* that exposes a few of the errors of the book regarding known facts. Like he could not have inspired JFK to start the moon program with his stirring words in May, 1962 because that decision had already been made in 1961. Or, he could not have gone to Langley and intimidated "Wisener" of the CIA Covert Ops division to leave him alone because Frank Wisner was in London and the CIA was not yet in the Langley office. And digging further in the Web reveals that Corso is a buddy of the Shickshinny Knights of Malta and a promoter of the Romanoff claim of Michel Golenewski. And so on."

REG: Well, Clinton *does* look like the young Houdini...and they *are* both escape artists, after all.

Guess I missed that review.

Books Received

Some reviewed, others listed and described.

NOTHING BURNS IN HELL

By Philip José Farmer

Forge Books, 1998, \$22.95, 288 p., Hardcover, ISBN: 0-312-86470-1.

Here another fine book I've gotten myself into! A violent/funny private-eye novel that only Phil could write.

Granted, he writes a sometimes gratuitous travelogue about Peoria and environs, and details a host of sometimes grotesque, unsavory characters, most of whom his private-eye kills one way or another (or who kill each other), and granted the plot strains credulity...still there is a mockery in here I like, and a skilled writer's modest self-indulgence I enjoy, and some rather gruesome violence and cruelty...and incredible shooting...so on balance I like the novel in spite of good reason to not like it. It kept me turning its pages.

STARSWARM

By Jerry Pournelle

Tor Books, 1998, \$23.95, 352 p., Hardcover, ISBN: 0-312-86183-4.

Does the phrase 'Adult juvenile space adventure' make sense? A boy on a research outpost planet with a talking-to-him artificial intelligence chip in his head learns his scientist parents were murdered...

THE PREDATORS

By Harold Robbins

Forge Books, 1998, \$24.95, 348 p., Hardcover, ISBN: 0-312-85294-0.

This is the first Robbins novel I've ever read, and I cannot help but wonder, is this barrage of short, simple sentences (like being hit by an Uzi of words with an endless clip) his usual style? And is this transparent, plotless, detailed, lives-in-transit story with serviceable characters and lotsa sex and lotsa cock-cunt-prick-shit words (hey, I was surprised), also usual?

I assume so.

I detected utterly no subtext, no agenda, but lotsa tolerance of other races, ethnics, homosexuals, religions and customs.

The style stayed the same all through, and so I assume this novel was completed before Robbins' recent death. Simple to read, simple to understand. Not that there's anything wrong with that!

The ending---financial revenge, payback after thirty years---seemed simply an incident festooned with future

consequences and no real resolution.

Nevertheless, I enjoyed the novel, kept on reading to the end, and don't feel too ashamed.

SECRET REALMS

By Tom Cool

Tor Books, 1998, \$22.95, 304 p., Hardcover, ISBN: 0-312-86417-5

Virtual-reality warrior life in the mainframe...and then the real world enters. Looks good.

O PIONEER!

By Frederik Pohl

Tor Books, 1998, \$21.95, 256 p., Hardcover, ISBN: 0-312-86164-8.

On a planet colonized by six species, two married humans recently arrived get into serious trouble.

The villains in this novel seem to be 'reactionary, self-serving humans'...indicating Pohl is still up to his Liberal-leftist plotting. I'll have to read this to find out for sure.

CHINA BRIDE

By Henry Luk

Forge Books, 1998, \$22.95, 302 p., Hardcover, ISBN: 0-312-86521-X.

A Hong-Kong crime thriller written by one who knows the territory. This is a first novel. An American woman hero, action-adventure; has future Hollywood movie written all over it.

CYTHERA

By Richard Calder

St Martin's Press, 1998, \$23.95, 311 p., Hardcover, ISBN: 0-312-18074-8.

Extraordinary premise: 'wetbacks' from the future who are downloaded eidolons who walk the streets as holograms by day, and who become more corporeal by night...

Set in Bangkok, written in the same style as *Dead Girls - Dead Boys - Dead Things*.

To be reviewed asap.

AMERICAN GOLIATH

By Harvey Jacobs

St Martin's Press, 1997, \$24.95, 346 p., Hardcover, ISBN: 0-312-16771-7.

A novel inspired by the amazing, true 1860's saga of the Cardiff Giant.

THE MILLENNIUM BUG--How to Survive the Coming Chaos

By Michael S. Hyatt

Regnery Publishing, 1998, \$24.95, 273 p. plus index, Hardcover, ISBN: 0-89526-373-4.

Y2K Doom, and I kid you not.

It's difficult to believe government and corporate managers could have let the looming computer disaster happen, yet Hyatt details how and why it will

happen.

The litany of ignorance, Denial, complication, stupidity and inertia in banking, manufacturing, etc., and the various governments (local, state, federal) is wearying and depressing...and convincing. There do not appear to be magic bullet computer programs in the works to save us from the mess we're time traveling into. January 1, 2000 is coming, no shit! No escape. No time out.

But at least Hyatt shows the average person how to prepare for the economic crash which seems inevitable, worldwide, and the dislocations, shortages, deprivations and dangers which also will flow from computer crashes, garbled data, domino-effect unemployment, money shortages, etc.

Not a pleasant prospect, to say the least. Because this guy shows every sign of knowing what he's talking about (and has backup quotes and info from other experts).

The core of his advice is Survivalist (plan and prepare for the worst---the Meltdown scenario) and hope to be pleasantly surprised.

My expectation? The Brownout scenario: economic depression, water and power and communications maintained most of the time, the banks stay open with massive help from Congress and the Fed Reserve, and modified martial law will keep the peace. (With rampant speculations that Clinton let it all happen in order to be dictator-for-life.)

Now, just sit helplessly on the time track and stare with terror at the onrushing 1-1-2000 locomotive.

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

This book complements the Hyatt book reviewed above, and is in its way more impressive and convincing.

Mark Ludwig is a theoretical physicist, computer systems designer and systems programmer. He has authored books on computer viruses. He is, in a word, credentialed. [But he is also a dedicated Christian (see his *The Third Paradigm*) which I sense skews some of his judgments.]

He and Hyatt agree on the technical problems embedded in the Y2K bug and their seriousness. Both men aren't sure how much damage will be done to the world's computer systems on 1-1-2000.

But Ludwig adds the lead pipe prediction that most of the crisis will appear up to a year before the turn of the century---from 1-1-1999 (maybe manifesting as late as July)---because enough early birds will take their money out of the banks and stock markets and precipitate a crash, and when the rush starts everybody will panic and try to get their money out...then we'll get a National Emergency declared, with Clinton issuing dictatorial Executive Orders...

Further, Ludwig predicts that the government will use the Before Y2K Crisis to revamp the current money system to one of almost total electronic 'money' in order to ostensibly better cope with the crisis, but primarily to better tax and control the people in order to save itself and to maintain the debt structure.

Because of little known debt to liquidity ratios and because of the near total failure of the IRS, a hidden-taxes system embedded in a national value added tax will be installed during the emergency. Increased taxes will become invisible to most people.

The electronic monitoring of all personal 'money' use and the virtual outlawing of cash-paper money under this new non-paper system (actually the extension of a now-emerging, growing e-money system) will make everyone even more obviously a serf or slave or prisoner of the Master State, trapped in the system with no way to escape and no way to privately move wealth.

Ludwig has a matter-of-fact style of writing, marshals his facts and arguments, and if you read this book will likely scare the shit out of you.

The key events for testing belief in Ludwig's scenario will be how the government handles next year's expected runs on banks, the stock markets collapses, and the spike in interest rates. Especially if we see a radical change in the federal taxing method, and if e-money is pushed hard!

But I'm wondering if there aren't a lot of early early birds out there now, watching events nervously, poised to take their money and run!

THE DAZZLE OF DAY

By Molly Gloss

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

A subtle science fiction novel which tells of a group of future Quakers who embark in a huge, torus-shaped colony space ship, the *Dusty Miller*, on

a nearly 170-year voyage to find a planet of their own.

Their Earth has become too polluted, too alien, too hostile to them.

The writing is focused on introspection, personal relationships, with everyday life in the huge torus---love, deaths, ecology, food growing, tensions, illnesses---and not primarily concerned with the key tech problems of ship operation, ship survival, destination, colonization.

Tech problems and disasters do happen, but mostly off-stage, and it is their impact on the colonists' personal lives which counts most in this multi-generational story.

The chapter describing the scout ship crew's ordeal after the crash on the new home planet is exciting, but the injuries and deaths of two of its crew are (again) events told in stingy retrospect in comparison to the intense personal thoughts of one of the surviving crew and of the reacting colonists on the colony ship.

The lives detailed by Gloss are most often women, from the old woman in the first chapter saying goodbye to Earth, to the sister on the new (cold, inhospitable) home planet who tries to save a male crash victim of the failed, fallen shuttle craft which was still salvaging the interior of the still orbiting but long-abandoned colony ship.

Gloss has deliberately rejected male-dominated, male-valued Western Civilization in this novel and deliberately avoided any emphasis of violence.

So this is women's sf, and most male readers won't like it despite its rigorous off-stage science: the ship is real, the planet is real!

Gloss writes well and with insight, and I enjoyed much of her writing.

VAMPIRES

By Daniel Rhodes & Kathleen Rhodes, D.N.Sc.

Prometheus Books, Amherst NY, \$23.95, 1998, 194p., Hardcover, ISBN: 1-57392-191-2

Subtitled "Emotional Predators Who Want to Suck the Life Out of You," this book is little more than a good title and is without much content or legitimacy. Daniel Rhodes thinks there is a real transfer of emotional energy from 'victim' to 'predator', while co-author Kathleen Rhodes thinks that is a reach, and sticks to more precise psychiatric definitions involving 'personality disorders' ['neurotic' no longer being a recognized psychiatric term].

They give examples of aggressive, malicious, egotistic, selfish, cunning behaviors by people in public, at work, in personal relationships which are mostly semi-conscious tactics used by mean, greedy, power-driven, fearful, insecure individuals ...and somewhat uneasily call them vampiric.

A bad book.

THE SURVIVAL RETREAT - A Total Plan For Retreat Defense

By Ragnar Benson

Paladin Books, PO Box 1307, Boulder, CO 80306, 1998, \$15.00, Trade Paperback, ISBN: 0-87364-275-9.

I'll look into this further, but this one advocates low profile, hidden retreats and guns as an absolute last resort. You can't survive if you're a known target.

THE ART & SCIENCE OF MONEY LAUNDERING - Inside the Commerce of the International Narcotics Traffickers

By Brett F. Woods

Paladin Press, PO Box 1307, Boulder, CO 80306, 1998, \$18.00, Trade Paperback, ISBN: 0-87364-969-6.

This one I'll read as an expansion of my world reality; and as a reference if as a novelist I ever need this detailed info.

