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Subject: Re: Book Review: Emergence by David R. Palmer  
Posted by [Anonymous](#) on Thu, 07 Mar 1985 21:12:50 GMT  
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Originally posted by: brust&#64hyper.UUCP (Steven Brust)

Article-I.D.: hyper.122  
Posted: Thu Mar 7 16:12:50 1985  
Date-Received: Wed, 13-Mar-85 01:09:57 EST  
References:  
Organization: Network Systems Corp., Mpls., Mn.  
Lines: 13

> From: Hank.Walker@CMU-CS-UNH  
>  
> Do other people have their choices for  
> best first novel? Possibilities that come to mind are Brin, Varley, and  
> Forward.

Some possibilities that come to mind are Diane Duane's DOOR INTO (FIRE?  
SHADOW?) Dammit, which one came first? and MacAvoy's TEA WITH THE BLACK  
DRAGON. However, I think it comes down to two other possibilities:  
Pamela Dean's THE SECRET COUNTRY and Roger Zelazny's AND CALL ME CONRAD  
(aka THIS IMMORTAL).

- SKZB

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Subject: Book Review: Emergence by David R. Palmer  
Posted by [Anonymous](#) on Tue, 24 Sep 2013 18:33:31 GMT  
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Originally posted by:  
&#64RUTGERS.ARPA,&#64SRI-CSL:Hank.Walker&#64CMU-CS-UNH.ARPA

Message-ID:  
Date: Sun, 3-Mar-85 16:01:02 EST  
Article-I.D.: topaz.853  
Posted: Sun Mar 3 16:01:02 1985  
Date-Received: Wed, 6-Mar-85 02:43:13 EST  
Sender: daemon@topaz.ARPA  
Organization: Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick, N.J.  
Lines: 24

From: Hank.Walker@CMU-CS-UNH

"Emergence" is David R. Palmer's first novel. It was issued by Bantam in paperback last November. Emergence is based on the novelette "Emergence" and the novella "Seeking" which appeared in the January 5, 1981 and February 1983 issues of Analog magazine. Rewritten versions of these stories comprise the first third of the novel. These stories won Palmer a Nebula nomination, two Hugo nominations, and two John W. Campbell nominations for best new writer. And these were his first two stories! Emergence chronicles the adventures of 11-year-old Candy Smith-Foster. She is a disease-immune superhuman homo post hominem, "man who follows man", created by fetuses exposed to a flu epidemic. A biowar has wiped out homo sapiens. Hominems are divided into two classes, the AAs, recognized, studied, and given all the advantages in life, and the ABs, with ordinary upbringings that turned many into sociopaths. Armed with an AA address list, Candy sets out with her pet macaw Terry on a quest to find AAs, solve the mystery of why they have all moved away, while meeting up with other people, both good and bad.

Spider Robinson's cover blurb states "This is probably the best first novel I have ever read." I completely agree. The two Analog stories were easily as good as their awards competition. Do other people have their choices for best first novel? Possibilities that come to mind are Brin, Varley, and Forward.

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Subject: Re: Book Review: Emergence by David R. Palmer  
Posted by [draves](#) on Tue, 24 Sep 2013 18:33:32 GMT  
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Message-ID:  
Date: Mon, 4-Mar-85 02:17:21 EST  
Article-I.D.: harvard.420  
Posted: Mon Mar 4 02:17:21 1985  
Date-Received: Wed, 6-Mar-85 04:14:26 EST  
References:  
Organization: Aiken Computation Laboratory, Harvard  
Lines: 20

I enjoyed Emergence while I was reading it, but upon thinking back I noticed many problems with the book. I don't think the characterizations are that good. On the other hand, I can't remember a genius protagonist whose intelligence was very convincing. Most importantly, I found the plot twists at the end completely unbelievable.

Palmer could have found a better continuation to his novella and novellette.

Still, I did enjoy the book for some unfathomable reason. I get the feeling Palmer analyzed his intended audience of Analog readers and concocted a story designed to cater to their tastes.

Rich

--

"a picture in the head is a gory murder in an art gallery"

-- Stephen Kosslyn

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Subject: Re: Book Review: Emergence by David R. Palmer  
Posted by [bothner](#) on Tue, 24 Sep 2013 18:36:34 GMT  
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Message-ID:

Date: Wed, 6-Mar-85 18:45:15 EST

Article-I.D.: Shasta.3597

Posted: Wed Mar 6 18:45:15 1985

Date-Received: Sat, 9-Mar-85 10:23:14 EST

References:

Organization: Stanford University

Lines: 41

I read the 2nd novella "Seeking" last year (so I could vote intelligently for the Hugos), and later the 1st novella. It's a long time since I read anything else so painfully bad. The main problem is the sickeningly cute and precocious writing style. Palmer has a tin ear for language, style and mood. If he's deliberately trying to write that way because he's trying to imitate an 11-year-old genius, that only compounds his crimes (by adding intent to the insult).

> I get the feeling Palmer analyzed his intended audience of  
> Analog readers and concocted a story designed to cater to  
> their tastes.

Algis Budry wrote a very entertaining analysis of a phenomenon he called "fannish sf". This is sf which becomes very popular in the fan community, not because of literary qualities, but

because it strikes some chord in the fannish psyche. The same novels which win Hugos etc, might leave many people outside fandom totally cold. This controversial article appeared in "The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction", and was reprinted in one of the latest anthologies of "The Best from ...".

Budry's analysis was built around a (positive) review of the first volume of Julian May's four-volume "Saga of the Pleistocene Exile", but I think it is even more applicable to Palmer's novel.

The obvious point of resonance is that fans (Btw, I'm one myself) consider themselves "the people of the future", homo post hominem, just like Palmer's young heroine. Remember that most of us are intelligent, introverted, over-achievers who can easily project ourselves into this kind of protagonist. I, too, might have enjoyed the story, if only Palmer knew how to use the language.

Heinlein had many of the same themes in his novels, which sometimes had similar weaknesses (e.g. Podkayne). But usually, his straightforward writing style made his books enjoyable.

Another parallel is the 50's battle cry of "Fans are Slans", inspired by van Vogt's then-popular novel "Slan".

--Per Bothner

ARPA: bothner@su-score UUCP: ...!{decwrl,ucbvax}!shasta!bothner

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Subject: Re: Book Review: Emergence by David R. Palmer  
Posted by [gail](#) on Tue, 24 Sep 2013 18:36:36 GMT  
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Message-ID:  
Date: Fri, 8-Mar-85 16:45:33 EST  
Article-I.D.: ra.298  
Posted: Fri Mar 8 16:45:33 1985  
Date-Received: Sun, 10-Mar-85 07:34:56 EST  
References:  
Reply-To: gail@ra.UUCP (Gail B. Hanrahan)  
Organization: Calma Company, San Diego, CA  
Lines: 11  
Summary:

The search for Peter Bell was the driving force behind "Seeking" (the novella and the section of the novel Emergence).

What happened to Peter Bell? This is never resolved in the book. Will there be a sequel? (I liked the book, but I'm getting awfully tired of sequels...)

Gail Bayley Hanrahan  
Calma Company, San Diego  
{ihnp4,decvax,ucbvax}!sdcsvax!calmasd!gail

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