



2. I am in the process of writing a review of an art book and I ran across a quote that started me thinking. The quote is by Carl Jung and says, "The dream is the small hidden door in the deepest and most intimate sanctum of the soul, which opens into the primeval cosmic night .... In dreams we pass into the deeper and more universal truth." Now I wonder how many of us have questioned whether that is really true. Has anyone ever proven that the content of dreams has more than superficial significance any more than the position of the stars at the time of birth or the lines in the palm of the hand? You can build something that seems like a science out of reading deep meaning into any of these things, but how do you know that any of them really have validity? Sure, you can even appear to to get some positive results out of each, but that does not make them valid necessarily.

In Japan there are a lot of people who sincerely believe in biorhythms. This is the belief that you have three biological cycles of 22, 27, and 32 days each, represented by sine waves starting at zero the moment you are born. The important, in this case dangerous, days are not the high or low points but where the curves cross each other. Now this is a real load of duck tires just about anyway you look at it. First, ask any woman if biological cycles that go over many days are so precise that they could be graphed with a sine wave. Or you can ask me and I will tell you that some biological cycles really are somewhat precise, but they are all precisely 24 hours in length and closely synchronized by the sun. A flower opening and closing is an example. Take away the sun--say move the flower into a cave--and the flower's cycle get all bollixed up.

But the idea that it is crossover points that are significant is ridiculous. Even assuming you can figure out the starting point of a cycle, it is like saying that I am particularly accident prone at an instant when I am 54.27% the way into my sleep cycle and just

that far into my breathing cycle.

Yet in Japan it has been shown if you are particularly careful on the days when the curves cross each other, you can significantly improve your safety record. And I believe it. However I also believe that if you roll three dice each morning and are particularly careful on days when two or more of the dice match, that will be every bit as effective. Being particularly careful on any randomly selected days will improve your safety record, but it is not the choice of days that does the trick, it is the number of them and the degree to which you are being careful. Just because a psychological theory yields some positive results does not make it a true reflection of reality. But it seems to me that deep down there is no real evidence that dreams have any but the most superficial connection with a person's mental state. Yet we seem to take it as an article of faith.

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### 3. THE VAMPIRE COMPANION: THE OFFICIAL GUIDE TO ANNE RICE'S "THE VAMPIRE CHRONICLES" by Katherine Ramsland (Ballantine, ISBN 0-345-37922-5, 1993, US\$29.95) (a book review by Mark R. Leeper):

I occasionally have this problem reading novels. I like to read just before bed. It relaxes me. Occasionally I even find myself falling asleep and waking up to find the book has fallen on the floor. That isn't the problem. The problem is that the next time I pick up the book I find I have no memory of what I read last evening. I can go back and skim and remember what I read, but that takes time. I have this tendency to lose continuity. I won't remember exactly who the characters are or what happened to them before. I have often wished I had the book on-line so I could search for some character's name and find what I have read about that character earlier. As you might imagine, I am not a big fan of mystery novels.

On the other hand one of the best books I ever read was N\_j\_a\_l'\_s S\_a\_g\_a, an Icelandic saga of the 13th Century about a blood feud that took place in the 10th Century. I read it a little bit at a time

over about five years. When it was over I felt I had been witness to a big chunk of history as well as a true epic. I never lost the continuity. Why not? Because the Penguin edition, translated by Magnus Magnussen, had this terrific appendix. For each character there was an entry telling what happened to that character, chapter by chapter. I could get quick reminders of what happened to that character in the last chapter and the chapter before and very quickly picked up the continuity, even if the last time I read a chapter was two month earlier. Without that appendix, the book would have been impossible to read. That book demonstrated to me the value of having a good guide to the characters in a book.

I read I\_n\_t\_e\_r\_v\_i\_e\_w\_w\_i\_t\_h\_t\_h\_e\_V\_a\_m\_p\_i\_r\_e when it first came out and enjoyed it, but never bothered with any of the sequels since they required memory of the first book really understand what was going on. For me the chief value of Katherine Ramsland's T\_h\_e\_V\_a\_m\_p\_i\_r\_e\_C\_o\_m\_p\_a\_n\_i\_o\_n will be as a memory aid in reading the books. The book also serves another function, namely it tells a little something of the allusions made in the novel. Here T\_h\_e\_V\_a\_m\_p\_i\_r\_e\_C\_o\_m\_p\_a\_n\_i\_o\_n may be a little less successful. In twenty-six words it explains who Leonardo da Vinci is. There is no way anybody could give a satisfying description of Leonardo in so short a space. At least it gives the reader a little bit that might prompt further reading, though to maintain the atmosphere there is no indication that Leonardo is real and that Laurant is a fictional character, though in this case it is obvious, of course since Laurant is a vampire and most people will already know of Leonardo (it would be hoped). But if that is the case, does a reminder of who Leonardo was serve any purpose? There are some notable factual errors. For example

we are told that H. Rider Haggard's novel is S\_h\_e:\_W\_h\_o\_M\_u\_s\_t\_B\_e\_A\_d\_o\_r\_e\_d. The correct title is simply S\_h\_e. Each entry is complete with a book and page reference. The page references are keyed to the paperback editions of the novels, making one wonder who is likely to read the novels in paperback, yet would still spend \$30 on a hardback guide to the contents.

Some of the entries are clearly of more interest than others, depending on how obscure the reference is. However, it is hard to tell an obscure real-world reference from one that is fictional.

This book pretends that the Rice stories are true and treats entries for fictional people and places identically to references to real people. Of course, fans of Sherlock Holmes have done the same thing for years--at least since the Thirties. People have been doing the same thing with Santa Claus for a lot longer. C. Northcote Parkinson did it for Horatio Hornblower in his biography of C. S. Forster's character. Nonetheless, even with Sherlock Holmes the practice gets tiresome. It is a matter of taste, but I would have preferred Ramsland not to follow the same affectation.

The main text is a sort of dictionary of people, places, and things referred to in the stories. Following that is a timeline going back to 4000 B.C. and up to 1992. It mixes events of the stories with publication dates of the books, again mixing fiction and reality. The next section is the "Vampire Atlas," showing maps of where events occur in the stories. I would like to think that some of these maps are somewhat unnecessary. Page 496 has a map of the Western Hemisphere showing things like where San Francisco is. Actually even there the maps are less than helpful. San Francisco is shown somewhat to the south of where it really is. St. Louis is shown a bit to the east of its actual location. Other maps show street layouts of San Francisco or New Orleans. It is hard to believe these high-level maps could be of all that much value in reading the stories. The book ends with a bibliography.

While there are a few irritations in how this book is written, just going through the pages impresses one with how much vampire lore really is packed into Rice's novels. At a cost of about \$30 Ballantine may have put the book outside the reach of many of Rice's readers, but for those who pay the price the 500+ pages of reference material in the book should enhance the experience of reading the series.

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4. OUT OF TIME by James P. Hogan (Bantam Spectra, ISBN 0-553-29971-9, 1993, US\$3.00) (a book review by Evelyn C. Leeper):

This could be described as a story that fell through a time warp-- it reads like the old "science puzzler" stories you used to see in the 1950s. A strange phenomenon has struck New York. Time is out of joint (with apologies to Philip K. Dick)--everyone's clock or watch seems to be running at a different speed, with the result that people find themselves losing time. For example, their watch says an hour has passed, but the clock at City Hall says two hours have passed. (One assumes everyone is syncing up with the sun, though this is never actually stated.) Joe Kopeksky is trying to find out why this is happening and how to stop it. Along the way he meets the same stereotyped and cliched characters one would have found in the 1950s: a German scientist (complete with thick accent), an Irish priest (complete with thick brogue), and so on. (If it is politically incorrect to write racially stereotyped characters, why is it apparently not politically incorrect to write nationally stereotyped ones?)

In any case, this is not a book one reads for the characterization. Hogan's solution is derived from one way of expressing the laws of physics, but he may be taking some philosophical concepts too literally for this to be strictly science fiction. There is a certain element of fantasy here (in my opinion), or at least the sort of scientific "babble-speak" that S\_t\_a\_r\_T\_r\_e\_k has become known for. This book is a definite departure from the usual literary bent of this series of novellas, and will probably disappoint the series' regular readers, while not reaching the audience for the 1950s nostalgia that it seems to be.

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## 5. GRUMPY OLD MEN (a film review by Mark R. Leeper):

Capsule review: This is a trite and formulaic comedy for people who think it is funny to see old men acting like naughty children. Good actors cannot save this thin script with shallow characters facing straw crises. Better films than this are being made for TV. Rating 0 (-4 to +4).

For years the town of Wabasha, Minnesota, has seen the battle of two now crotchety next-door neighbors, friends from youth and at the same time enemies most of that time. John (Jack Lemmon) and Max (Walter Matthau) seem to live to play nasty jokes on each other. In their 70s now, there is little in either's life but watching television, ice fishing, and tormenting the other. Then a likable, sexy kook moves in across the street and so the two old men have a new activity, staring out the window at Ariel (Ann-Margaret). And they have a new conquest to be rivals for. Ariel is someone who lives life rather than retreating from it the way John and Max do. She is like a mystical force in Max and John's

lives. The script never really explains her presence in Wabasha, nor is what she lives on,

The Odd Couple, The Fortune Cookie, and The Front Page. But

director Donald Petrie seems at a loss as to how to tap into that comic potential. The fault is not his and is certainly not his actors' but that of a poorly written screenplay by Mark Steven Johnson. At its best, the screenplay makes palatable some trite points about living life and taking risks. But the film indulges itself too much in showing old men cussing and using sexually explicit language as if that was in itself supposed to be hilarious. Actually we get to see that Lemmon and Matthau really do have a chemistry together still as we see them joking with each other in the outtakes run under the final credits. But when the cameras were rolling for real and they had to follow Johnson's script, somehow all the chemistry evaporates. Petrie did much better with Mystic Pizza a much more keenly observed regional comedy.

Grumpy Old Men is over-powered with a very good cast who just are not needed in the parts they have gotten. At 52 Ann-Margaret is starting to lose her figure but little of her appeal. And in addition somewhere along the way she has learned to act to the point I would almost classify her as under-appreciated. Burgess Meredith is incredibly wasted as a foul-mouthed nonagenarian. Daryl Hannah and Ossie Davis are around in smaller parts than they deserve and ones they should have let go to less familiar actors.

Grumpy Old Men is a very fluffy film people who think it is funny to see old men fighting like children and repeatedly calling each other "putz" and "moron." If you list ten crises that old men might face, two of them will probably be in this film. This one has a moment or two, but the rest fails to click. I give it a 0 on the -4 to +4 scale.

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Who dares not speak his free thoughts is a slave.  
-- Euripides