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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: 'Apocalypse Pretty Soon'

From: Jerome Clark <jkclark@frontiernet.net>
Date: Sat, 06 Mar 99 12:50:40 PST
Fwd Date: Sat, 06 Mar 1999 19:20:32 -0500
Subject: Re: 'Apocalypse Pretty Soon'

>Date: Sat, 06 Mar 1999 00:03:53 -0500
>From: Gary Alevy <galevy@pipeline.com>
>To: UFO UpDate <updates@globalserve.net>
>Subject: Re: 'Apocalypse Pretty Soon'

>[List Only]

>The review is copyrighted by the NY Times.

>Listophiles,

>Whenever the NY Times newspaper prints something I agree with
>its the greatest newspaper in the world. This week they have
>been living up to every expectation. Check out this review of
>Alex Heard's new book, a book praised to the skies by Jerome
>Clark, Larry Hatch and Jim Mortellaro during the recent thread
>of discussion on UFO Update entitled "Apocalypse Pretty Soon".

>I went to this authors website and perused the material there
>and was not impressed and neither was the NY Times as the review
>below will demonstrate beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Patient and gentle listfolk:

Again, Gary Alevy's curious views -- we all recall his amusing effort to convict Allen Hynek of being a sinister agent on the basis of evidence invisible to the rest of humanity -- cause the head to shake and the mind to wonder at the varieties of human, or more precisely Alevyian, silliness.

We are informed that I have "praised to the skies" a book I have never read or even seen. (I'm betting that my partners-in-crime Larry Hatch and Jim Mortellaro haven't read or seen it either, much less dispatched hosannas heavenward.) We are also asked to believe that a single review by a single reviewer is absolutely the last word on the book in question, establishing its worthlessness "beyond the shadow of a doubt." I think we can safely infer that Mr. Alevy doesn't read many book reviews, whose judgments -- as those of us who do read reviews regularly (or have written books that were the subject of them) are well aware -- are widely various. As often as not, a review tells us as much about the reviewer as the reviewed. (As a current example, witness the radically disparate reviewer responses to Wendy Shalit's recent

book on female sexual modesty.) We may safely anticipate that Alex Heard's book, like any book, will generate positive reviews

as well as negative and mixed ones.

Moreover, as those of us who know our literary history are aware, all sorts of titles that went on to become enduring classics were poorly received at the time of their publication. Perhaps the most notorious example is Melville's Moby-Dick, first published in 1851 to tepid or hostile reviews, soon after forgotten, only to be revived in the next century, to be recognized as one of the unarguably great American novels -- some critics think the greatest -- of the past 150 years.

Now, I'm not comparing Apocalypse Pretty Soon to Moby-Dick, but I am drawing on the common sense -- and sense of proportion -- so conspicuously absent in Alevyian discourse. All I know is that I have read many Alex Heard magazine pieces. I think they are excellent. I also like his humor, his compassion, and his reporter's eye. I look forward to reading his book and making my own judgment on it. Of course if Gary prefers to have others do his thinking for him, that is his right, even if it makes me feel a little sorry for the dude.

Jerry Clark

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