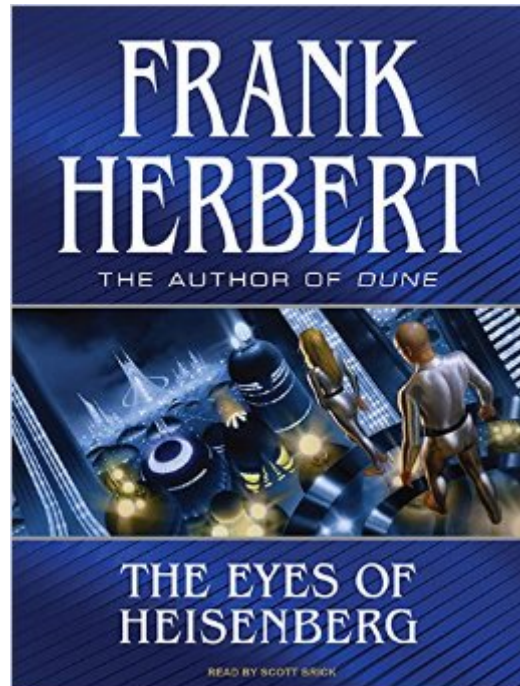


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The Eyes Of Heisenberg



Synopsis

Public Law 10927 was clear and direct. Parents were permitted to watch the genetic alterations of their gametes by skilled surgeons...only no one ever requested it. When Lizbeth and Harvey Durant decided to invoke the Law, when Dr. Potter did not rearrange the most unusual genetic structure of their future son, barely an embryo growing in the State's special vat-the consequences of these decisions threatened to be catastrophic. For never before had anyone dared defy the Rulers' decrees...and if They found out, it was well known that the price of disobedience was the extermination of the human race.

Book Information

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Authors, A-Z > (H) > Herbert, Frank #3505 inÂ Books > Books on CD > Science Fiction &

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Fantasy

Customer Reviews

Yes, the great author behind the Dune series also wrote other books. In The Eyes of Heisenberg, he investigates a world made up of normal humans and eternal beings. This was an earlier work, so you can see a number of themes that Dune explored so well in their infancy here. Normal humans are being genetically manipulated by scientists to help keep society running smoothly. Occasionally a 'super human' is created who can live forever. It is these "optimen" who really control society. Everybody thinks the optimen are naturally intelligent and wise - but they are actually no smarter or dumber than normal humans. They simply have thousands and thousands of years with which to refine their points of view and educate themselves as they wish. Of course normal humans begin to rebel against the restrictions in their life and by the end of the story, a male and female want to have a baby the "old fashioned way". I found a number of flaws with the story, and the

ending was rather abrupt and made you feel like it was rushed. The beauty of the story is with the character development and the interactions. Having worked for a biotech, the techno-babble about the DNA was interesting, but it unnecessarily confused things for most readers, and the intriguing events brought up are never resolved. It's as if Herbert originally intended to make a hard core story, but then wandered off into a personality drama and at the end wasn't sure what to do so sort of tied everything up randomly. If you're wondering what Heisenberg had to do with all of this, he's the Quantum Mechanics physicist who came up with the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle - "The more precisely the position is determined, the less precisely the momentum is known in this instant, and vice versa.

What with the stem cell-cloning debate raging Herbert's (1965) EYES OF HEISENBERG might find some new readers. Interesting that it took but 40 years for the author's old material to hit our front pages. Now that genetics is catching up with Frank's tale we should give him credit for what he got right. Exogenesis (growing embryos in a vat) could be right around the corner. Certainly there is much talk of modifying the morula (those first dozen or so germinated cells) while it still lies fertilized and growing in the petri dish. Herbert lists a dozen enzymes used by his genetic engineers to cut the DNA-RNA in a proper fashion. This is all standard practice today. The long living masters, the Optimen, in this tale, set millenniums in the future, have conditioned their genetic engineers to kill any embryo who may be immune to death. This is to maintain absolute control over their subjects, the Folk. Two of their subjects, the Durants, are a couple who are given the precious right to reproduce (to allow their sperm and egg to unite in a vat). But when their geneticist, Potter, sees a new mutation in his microscope, one that would produce immunity to death, he refuses to follow the Optimen rule. He says, "I cannot kill it. It is too beautiful." What Potter sees in the Durant embryo is one who could father a new race of long livers outside the Optimen's control--the perfect baby. The origin of the flash of mutating energy is left to the reader's imagination. Where Herbert must get the real credit is for reinforcing the role evolution has played in the development of mankind. Unlike today's neurophysiologists and geneticists who see the brain as a bag of neurons and the genome as a twisted loop of genes, Herbert presented the Durant morula, as floating in the quantum sea of energy.

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