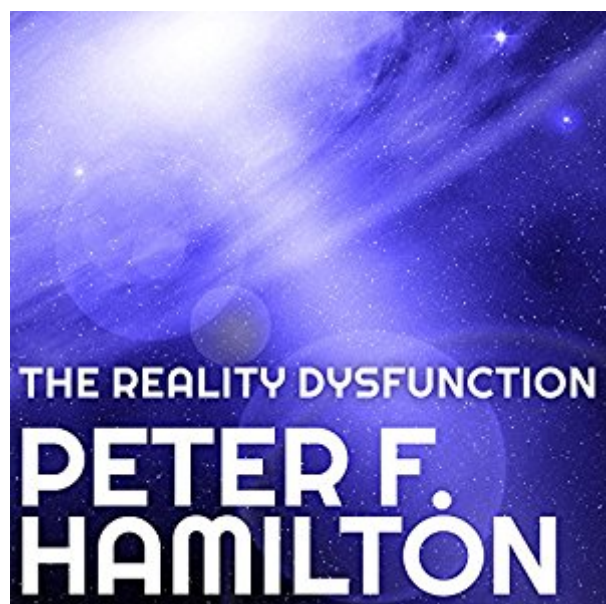


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The Reality Dysfunction: Night's Dawn Trilogy, Book 1



Synopsis

In AD 2600, the human race is finally beginning to realize its full potential. Hundreds of colonized planets scattered across the galaxy host a multitude of prosperous and wildly diverse cultures. Genetic engineering has pushed evolution far beyond nature's boundaries, defeating disease and producing extraordinary spaceborn creatures. Huge fleets of sentient trader starships thrive on the wealth created by the industrialization of entire star systems, and throughout inhabited space the Confederation Navy keeps the peace. A true golden age is within our grasp. But now something has gone catastrophically wrong. On a primitive colony planet, a renegade criminal's chance encounter with an utterly alien entity unleashes the most primal of all our fears. An extinct race that inhabited the galaxy aeons ago called it the Reality Dysfunction. It is the nightmare that has prowled beside us since the beginning of history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've read an awful lot of science fiction over the years, and recently returned to the genre after a lengthy absence. In doing so, I made a concerted effort to upgrade my reading list and familiarize myself with the new generation of sci-fi writers. My recent experience has been a real revelation. Whereas in the past, most of the science fiction I consumed was very easy to read and understand (Asimov as an example), some of the works I've sampled in the last year or two have quite literally been over my head. I read Dune (multiple times) many years ago. I proceeded on to the Dune sequels, but after two or three they became so philosophically dense that I lost interest. I recently

read Herbert's widely acknowledged masterpiece *The Dosadi Experiment* and again was forced to admit that I was incapable of appreciating it fully. Ditto for much of Philip Dick's writing. In an effort to read all joint Hugo/Nebula Award winners, I ran into a few other such works. Some of the new generation of sci-fi writers have published undeniably outstanding novels that I simply couldn't enjoy fully. Charles Stross, Neal Stephenson and Ian McDonald come immediately to mind. These cats are just too intelligent for me to relate to (and I have a post graduate degree!). Others, such as Joe Scalzi, David Brin and Joe Haldeman crank out easily understood and entertaining work (in the mode of Asimov), but without all the heavy lifting some of the previously cited authors require. All of this to say, that in Peter Hamilton's *The Reality Dysfunction* I discovered what I felt was a very happy medium: Vastly entertaining, but with just the level of challenge and difficulty that I could master without detracting from my enjoyment of the reading experience.

This review applies to the entire trilogy, since it's essentially one giant novel, I'm writing this (and given it 5 stars) since I feel some of the reviews here are not balanced or correct. This trilogy is not perfect, a few problems:

1. The start is slow, and it didn't give the reader a good overview of the technology, economic and political structure of the Confederation (We didn't meet Confederation president until book 2, the working of neural nanonics and the truly destructive power of the antimatter isn't shown until book 3). A lot of the time is spent on a farm planet, which is boring.
2. The bad guy Quinn Dexter is way over the top and annoying with all his insane rambling about God's Brother. It's too convenient that he is the one discovered the Ghost realm and becomes nearly invincible. The good guy Joshua Calvert is also too perfect, good instinct, good piloting, get all the girls, it makes him less human.
3. The aliens are not interesting until much later in the trilogy. In book 1, both Kiint and Tyrathca are like human characters with an alien costume. So for book 1 and 2 I'll probably give 4 stars, however book 3 more than made up for that, it's 5+ with all the interest plots such as:

1. Explore the human side of the possessed
2. Backstabbing and power struggle inside the possessed regimes
3. Big space battles and ground attacks
4. A journey to the other side of the Orion nebula with discovery of alien history and culture
5. Various omnipotent alien powers

Overall this is a book with very good and realistic description of future science, technology and society, interesting plots and less than ideal portrait of characters. Now on to some of the critics of this trilogy:

- 1.

The only reason that I'm giving this series of books three stars (I'm actually reviewing the whole series of six, not just the first -- it's one long novel in six volumes) is because I actually read the

whole thing. I recall a conversation in which a fellow told me that he'd just read five Leo Frankowski novels in a row, and boy! were they bad! I myself have never even read a sentence of Leo Frankowski's writing, so I don't have an opinion on it; my question was, if they were so bad, why did you read five of them in a row? The reason I read the whole *Night's Dawn* epic is that I was reading it on breaks and at lunch at work. It took really a long time, and I started bogging down toward the end. I've glanced at some of the other reviews of this work, and have many of the same criticisms. My greatest complaint about this story is that there is just entirely too much of it! Hamilton could probably have gotten his point across in a third the space (though I suspect that would still have felt bloated): this thing has too many characters, too many subplots, and too much of it comes across as filler. The plot moves forward with a glacial ponderousness, and the end still feels as though he got rushed and came up with sort of a *deus ex machina*. I must say, though, that I think Hamilton has gotten much better since he wrote this. I read the *Pandora's Star* books, and liked them much better than *The Reality Dysfunction* et. al. I've noticed other reviewers mentioning Hamilton's inability to get outside the Queen's English. I think it's worse than that. These books are filled with sentence fragments, and every now and then he uses an adjective in a way that suggests that he wrote this monstrosity with a thesaurus on the desk next to the keyboard.

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