



The Final Programme

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Jerry Cornelius is a scientist, a rock star, and an assassin. He is the hippest adventurer of them all: tripping through a pop art nightmare in which kidnappings, murder, sex and drugs are a daily occurrence. Along with his savvy and ruthless partner-in-chaos, Miss Brunner, Cornelius is on a mission to control a revolutionary code for creating the ultimate human being, a modern messiah— the final programme.

The first book in the Cornelius Quartet is the groundbreaking introduction to the misadventures and vendettas of Jerry Cornelius, one of modern literature's most distinctive characters, the product of a bewildering post-modern culture, and an inspiration for generations of characters since.

"Michael Moorcock, rechazando las disputas de límites que han reducido la novela a una confusión de subgéneros en conflicto, recobra en estos cuatro volúmenes una vitalidad y una amplitud proteicas que pudieran llamarse dickensianas si no pertenecieran tan por completo a nuestro tiempo volátil. En verdad, ninguna obra reciente de ficción ha manejado mejor las contingencias vertiginosas de la imaginación del medio siglo que esta brava arlequinada de juegos de identidad, realidades falsificadas, historia paródica, y un pobre y ordinario apocalipsis" (W.L. Webb, The Guardian).

"Moorcock ha creado una figura capaz de moverse a través de las versiones míticas de los problemas de hoy, sin intentar situarlas o situarse a sí mismo en contextos simplificados. Una ficción semejante, en un mundo de imaginación escasa, es un don necesario" (Harpers Bazaar)

Michael Moorcock nació en Inglaterra, ha publicado más de 50 libros y fue animador principal de la célebre revista New Worlds, que introdujo el término "ficción especulativa"; una literatura "moderna, coherente y vital".

En EL PROGRAMA FINAL, primera de una serie de cuatro novelas independientes, anticipa la herencia decepcionante y caótica de la década del 60, un dorado presente en el que todo parecía instantáneamente posible.

The Final Programme Details

Date : Published October 1968 by Allison & Busby (first published March 1968)

ISBN : 9780850310122

Author : Michael Moorcock

Format : Hardcover 168 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction, Fantasy, Science Fiction Fantasy, Novels, Spy Thriller, Espionage

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From Reader Review The Final Programme for online ebook

Charlie Parry says

With a name like Moorcock, it would be a shame to find a tame plot between the covers. Thankfully, this famous SciFi author delivers the goods, in a mind and gender-bending vision of the near future (or, more precisely, altered present) 196- London (and well beyond) and the crumbling inhabitants therein. We follow the gallivanting protagonist as he reels confidently from one tight spot to the next, getting deeper and deeper over his head until we the reader can feel the pace, plans and speed as a palpable sensation. We have Nazis. We have lost tech. We have a sex and drug culture rivaled only by (though with different outcomes than) Idiocracy. It goes places in one page that could take other books chapters to ham fistedly explore. While a short book, the rapid progression of ideas, unrelenting inventiveness and seemingly effortless, vibrant descriptions makes for another engrossing, hard to put down read. I defy anyone to figure out where the journey will remotely end, even 3/4 of the way through!

Erik Carlson says

Of late, I've become obsessed with the psychedelia of the 60's and the thought experiments of writers pushing the limits of fiction, expectations, and LSD-infused flow of narration. Moorcock, who I discovered through Elric, creates an anti-hero who is part Bond, part Kerouac, and part Mephistopheles. The end result though is a tale which jumps and starts and reads more like Austin Powers. That said, Moorcock is a powerhouse in British Science Fiction and many of his throw away ideas are the plots of many modern series. The experience is worth the thrill, but it's not something you'll likely repeatedly revisit.

Willow says

I think this book has some hilarious dialogue. In fact, the bossy Miss Brunner is great! But this was a very tedious read. It's like one long, rambling joke. Parts of it are funny, but most of it is pointless. There's no depth to any of the characters. There's no plot. I think Moorcock was trying to shock people with things like incest and fratricide, but since I'm not easily shocked, I almost fell asleep.

I love the movie though. I've read Moorcock hated it...figures.

Chumbert Squirls says

I was really excited to read the classic series that inspired such excellent works as Casanova and the Invisibles, but the inspiration turned out to be almost nothing like its contemporaries. This Jerry Cornelius novel is the only one with a fairly conventional format and more or less of a story. Despite its superspy backdrop, The Final Programme is a portrait of a desolate consumeristic society on the verge of revolution. This book would be really neat if Moorcock actually knew what he was doing. It's mildly enjoyable, but don't bother with it. Read its superior successors.

Andre says

Sort of a precursor to some of the manic, psychedelic storytelling of Grant Morrison comics and similarly hard to follow. I really wanna like a novel when it's written by Michael Moorcock about a rock star secret agent in the swingin' sixties but it just didn't do it for me.

Simon Mcleish says

Originally published on my blog here in September 1999.

The Final Programme must have seemed, in the mid sixties, to be the epitome of British New Wave chic. Yet, unlike so much of the literature of the period, it and its sequels have not dated. Like the TV series The Avengers, it contains a distinct vein of self parody, paving the way for Moorcock's attacks on the book in the later Jerry Cornelius novels.

The best cult sixties TV series - The Saint and The Prisoner are other examples - are in fact what come to mind most readily when reading The Final Programme. That is perhaps fitting, since one of Moorcock's aims in the book seems to be to explore the boundaries between high art and popular culture. He picks up ideas and atmosphere from sources like TV and meshes them into structures from the important literature of the century (though this becomes more obvious in the later books in the series).

The background to The Final Programme is the bitter enmity between debonair dilettante man of action Jerry Cornelius and his brother Frank, drug crazed despoiler of their inheritance, an immense French château filled with booby traps by their father. Here drug culture references come into the story, as he was an expert in hallucination, working with drugs and "hallucinomats", hypnotic machines. (Remember how important both these ideas were in The Avengers.)

Frank has barred Jerry from the château, and imprisoned their sister Catherine, for whom Jerry has an incestuous passion. Joining with the mercenary Una Persson, who aims to get her hands on their father's secrets and use them to take over the world, Jerry attacks the castle.

Vampirerichard says

After more than 20 Moorcock books this is the first book I really did not like. I Always liked Moorcock's writing style, weird situations and fantastical worlds. I always get right into the story and feel for (and with) the characters. But not this time. I couldn't get into the story, it never started making any sense and it just didn't interest me. Besides that it's advertised as SF, but it wasn't SF enough for me.

Luckely there are enough Moorcock books left for me to read. But i'll definitely skip the Jerry Cornelius series.

Mason Jones says

I can't remember if I read this back in the day or not, when I was reading all of Moorcock's books. If so, it's been long enough that this didn't ring much of a bell. In any case, it's definitely an odd bird, sort of a bizarro-world James Bond sci-fi thing, if Bond were a late-60s guitar-playing rich London fashionista who feeds off other people, especially those with whom he's having relations. We get a shaggy tale of Jerry Cornelius as he hooks up with dubious characters to try to rescue his sister from his insane brother, fails, almost dies, tracks his brother to a Nazi cave in Lapland, falls prey to a vampiric woman, then winds up her partner as the world dissolves into a vaguely-described apocalypse. So there you go. I enjoyed it, but perhaps not enough to read the others in the series, at least not right now. Your mileage will most definitely vary.

Lucas says

I was at first very hesitant to pick up a 'Cornelius' novel because of all of the bad things I've heard about 'Cornelius' in general, about how disjointed and confusing he could be. This novel though was amazing. I am very thankful that I have read so much Moorcock lately because it made things so much easier to follow. Everything got so much easier after I noticed it was the last three Elric books condensed and transposed. Phase 1 Part 2 contains a scene for scene transposition of "the Dreaming City" part 2; one could argue for a transposition of the first parts as well. The next place the Déjà vu is obvious is in phase 2 parts 8 and 9 which is taken quite a bit from "While the Gods Laugh" You could easily argue the whole of phase 3 being greatly condensed version of The Bane of the Black Sword with the Hero moving away, getting married and trying to stay out of the apocalypse. For the overall connections to The multiverse Jerry's world is being consumed by chaos, and Jerry, as chaos' champion has absolutely no checks, in the form of an alternate self (Moonglum, Jhary, or another companion) so his attack on law is never opposed, and his sensitive nature is allowed to subside. Ms. Brunner represents the very weakened forces of chaos on this world, but after her and Jerry merge we now have something that quite resembles Ariocho...If you decide to read Cornelius I recommend getting a full grounding in Moorcock first, without it the mix of tongue in cheek, self depreciation, and interconnection could be a torturous maze of nonsense and confusion.

Tim says

Today, we're concerned with The Final Programme and Moorcock's status as one of speculative fiction's foremost prophets of catastrophe. Like his New Worlds compadre J G Ballard, his work confronts us with apocalypse after apocalypse.

Unlike the Sage of Shepperton however, Moorcock gives the impression of revelling in The End; if the world is making its merry way over the final cliff, why not be the Pied Piper?

And pied piper, holy fool, party-hardy Prospero - these are all accurate-yet-partial descriptions of the anti-hero of The Final Programme, Jerry Cornelius. His is an alternate Cold War world in which existing certainties have collapsed and the moral order has been superseded, where technology seems only able to precipitate disaster and the arts to celebrate the end.

And Jerry is a man whose response to civil collapse is to hold a season-long swinging sixties party as a new form of social organisation.

If this makes him sound like some kind of Nietzschean Austin Powers, it's not altogether far from the truth. This dandy, sexually flexible assassin and playboy wanders through spy thriller scenes - glamorous international locations, underworld plots, secret lairs and the like - obsessed with love and revenge.

His nemesis (and antithesis) is Ms Brunner a vampiric computer programmer and authority figure who wants to calculate the answer to everything in the titular program. Shades of Deep Thought, perhaps...

Moorcock has a serious, bleak point to make about the impossibility of sustaining life in a society seemingly in love with death, but *The Final Programme* is also a great deal of fun, as sixties London frantically frugs its way towards the Eschaton.

And while the book is inevitably rooted in its own mid-sixties cultural moment, its exhilarating nihilism is still both a challenge and an inspiration to anyone seeking to make anything anew amid the febrile wreckage of the old.

Stevenson says

One of my all time favourite reads. Essentially a rewrite of an early Elric tale reconfigured as a Pop-Art nightmare explosion. Hugely influential at the time, at least in "underground" circles, it still retains a mythical power.

The plot concerns the creation of the new messiah - a pressing question in the sixties, if you consider the rise of alternative political and religious organisations throughout that epoch. While fairly simplistic and straight forward it is carried off with such energy and humour that makes it a craking read.

The characters are not fully developed in the way that we now have come to expect from novels - it doesn't deal with questions of individual psychology - rather they are ciphers, or archetypes. The pace and the themes give the whole novel a mythic quality without the need to descend into the simply epic and over blown.

The Final Programme was the first novel in the Cornelius Quartet and it is the best place to start having a straight forward narrative structure that gets successively broken down over the course of the series.

Nate D says

In the apocalyptic end-point of swinging-60s London, the universe parties and pleasure-seeks itself into oblivion as an eternally bored hipster and amoral vampiric scientist set in motion the renewal and continuance of human existence. With its offhandedly-cursory-yet-pretentious philosophizing, horrendously uneven wobbling between bizarre action set piece and graspings at significance, weird jokiness hiding its overearnestness, and a rather unlikeable super-cool protagonist, this one earns a deserved fair share of detractors. In many ways, it's dreadful. And yet there's something so weird, and so desperate to touch the real that lies far outside any shred of conventional character, progression, or resolution, that it's also kind of remarkable. It's almost a kind of psychedelic outsider religion with no care for reader identification, or really

even human life in the overarching and inescapable cosmic cycle of destruction and renewal. Its casual incompetence belies a brutal and fine-honed urgency, of a kind. Easy to write off as terrible, but more ambiguous than that, really.

This also became an equally uneven, but perhaps more concisely entertaining movie, which preserves many of its more expectation-confusing qualities.

D-day says

Awful self-indulgent crap. I think out of all the books I have read, this is the one I disliked the most.

Susan Budd says

For a 1960's science fiction novel laced with sex, drugs and rock & roll, I didn't enjoy this book nearly as much as I thought I would. *The Final Programme* was my introduction to Michael Moorcock and I will probably not be reading the other three books in this quartet. I say 'probably' rather than 'definitely' because the book wasn't actually bad. But it was a chore to read to the end.

The fact that the story was not compelling had little to do with my boredom. I don't need a plot or well-developed characters to be happy. Create the right atmosphere and I'm good. And the atmosphere of London in the Swinging Sixties should have kept me plenty amused. But it didn't. The outrageous sci-fi elements and Eastern philosophy also should have held my interest. But they didn't. Looking back on the reading experience as a whole, I can say the book was not without its fun, but there were no actual moments when I was having any.

There's one scene that stands out to me as a good example of my ambivalence about this book. It is a psychedelic scene where Jerry Cornelius is tripping on a hallucinogen-laced needle shot at him by his brother during a raid on his eccentric family's booby-trapped mansion. Sounds like fun already, right? Well, it sounds like more fun than it is.

"He was riding a black ferris wheel of emotions. His brain and body exploded in a torrent of mingled ecstasy and pain. Regret. Guilt. Relief. Waves of pale light flickered. He fell down a never-ending slope of obsidian rock surrounded by clouds of green, purple, yellow, black. The rock vanished, but he continued to fall. World of phosphorescence drifting like golden spheres into the black night. Green, blue, red explosions. Flickering world of phosphorescent tears falling into timeless, spaceless wastes. World of Guilt. Guilt—guilt—guilt...Another wave flowed up his spine. No-mind, no-body, no-where. Dying waves of light danced out of his eyes and away through the dark world. Everything was dying. Cells, sinews, nerves, synapses—all crumbling. Tears of light, fading, fading. Brilliant rockets streaking into the sky and exploding all together and sending their multicoloured globes of light—balls on an Xmas tree—x-mass—drifting slowly. Black mist swirled across a bleak, horizonless nightscape" (98).

I love psychedelic imagery, but this passage strikes me as uninspired, pedestrian. It's not bad. It's just that it has potential to be good and it doesn't live up to that potential.

Then there's the general atmosphere of Swinging London ~ the neon signs and pinball machines, Beatles music and mod fashion. This also should have been much better than it is.

"It was a world ruled by the gun, the guitar, and the needle..." (111).

Perhaps substitute a lava lamp for the gun and a bong for the needle, but no, it's not the trappings of the scene; it's the style that loses me. I'm okay with an evil James Bond. Apparently I'm even okay with incest and assassination. But I'm not okay with writing that falls flat. Moorcock never quite creates the mood that would breathe life into his novel.

Still, there are things I liked about the book. It was campy and I like that ~ in small doses. I also understand from John Clute's introduction that the Jerry Cornelius stories are a sort of template for New Wave sci-fi and it was good to get a feel for the subgenre. I can see how this book could easily become a cult classic, but it's not a cult I'm likely to join.

Rick says

Imagine if you can, that you have lived before. But not just once or twice, but an infinite number of times. You have lived an eternal number of lifetimes. Each life is different, but a lot of the same conflicts and obstacles occur in each lifetime. But these conflicts are not the same, they are variations on a theme, like movement of a symphony - except it's nothing like a symphony. You might be beginning to grasp the insanely chaotic mess of interwoven tangles the tapestry of life that belong to Jerry Cornelius. Except he's not alway Jerry Cornelius is he? *The Eternal Champion* is really a vast chronicle that really starts no where, ends in the middle and continues in new facets that are (and are not) variations of the original theme. In Jerry Cornelius the reader will find reflections of Elric, Hawkmoon and Corum. And yet Jerry Cornelius is nothing like any if these aspects of *the Eternal Champion*. Jerry Cornelius is often cited as the first cyberpunk hero, but he's really just a variation of the post-modern anti-hero savior archetype that the author has created and recreated again and again. Filled with fast-paced dialogue and an endlessly shifting sense of priorities, this book is funny, sexy, loud, irreverent and rebellious, all while beings endlessly entertaining. Written in the mid to late 1960s this book is enormously revealing about the culture in which it was developed. The setting is now a seemingly alien environment that could be hundreds of years in the future instead of the "now" of the time when the book was written. In any case the world of Jerry Cornelius is not are world, this isn't our reality. But then can anyone expect that it would be with the protagonist being *the Eternal Champion*.

Brandon says

I won this from Goodreads Giveaways because I'm awesome!

What a fun strange little book. I'm still trying to wrap my head around it. I'm not sure I could synopsise what happened, but it was a fun post-apocalyptic (I think) ride. The main character, Jerry Cornelius isn't a very good dude, but for some reason you want to like him. There are some big questions that go unanswered and a few big jumps in time with the missing time left a mystery, but I really didn't mind about those things, so I'm sure it was purposefully designed that way. And the end is just wacky craziness. I'll be checking out the next in the series.

Dave says

A work of surreal fiction which only has the thinnest guise of being pulp sf, THE FINAL PROGRAMME is an acquired taste, to put it mildly. Author Michael Moorcock has little interest crafting a coherent narrative in this work; rather, Moorcock is interested in generating a sense of instability, the sense of that ravelling which everyone in the novel seems to be experiencing. As such, the novel bounces from episode to episode, with only the barest of explanations being offered as to why anything is happening at all.

Keith Edwards says

My wife had never seen Casablanca. This struck me as an injustice and so I dutifully sat her down, put in the dvd and teared up when they sang Le Marseilles to drown out the Nazis singing German drinking songs. before we even got to that iconic scene however, my wife in near exasperation exclaimed that she felt like she had seen this movie before, because so much of the dialogue, staging and characters had been referenced, quoted, and parodied in so many other movies and TV shows since 1941.

Reading The Final Programme should have been like that. And judging by the reviews on Goodreads and Amazon, for some people it is.

But it's a testament to Michael Moorcock's skill as a writer that this book, written in 1965, first published in 1968 doesn't feel dated. It has all the hallmarks of the early counterculture that it was a harbinger to, the blithe attitude towards sex and drug use, open homosexuality and bisexuality, the fierce social commentary and everything else that should, by all rights, make this a screaming artifact of a bygone era. Instead, it's a rich, fun wild ride, full of brain melting ideas, speeches about eternal recurrence and identity, tossed off like casual banter about the weather, and a sly nod and wink to the reader that yeah, this is all a lark, but a serious lark.

(It's also possible that I have a soft spot for weirdo counterculture fiction from the 60s, as I'm also a big fan of Illuminatus! and Mumbo Jumbo).

What struck me as someone who hasn't read the Cornelius Quartet before (and not much Moorcock at all), is how influential this series really is. Jerry Cornelius is a direct forefather to Casanova Quinn, bent gender and all. I'm honestly surprised his initials aren't JC, frankly.

I'm not going to talk about the plot, because it's fabulous pop art kitsch of the highest order. I want there to be a long lost movie made of it, starring John Philip Law, in full on Danger: Diabolik mode. And telling it in spare synopsis form would make it sound even more ridiculous than summaries usually do.

There's plenty to be had in the Final Programme, for Moorcock enthusiasts, the references to other works about the Eternal Champion's exploits. But even if you don't know about the cosmic battle that [lays out, a hundred times in different guises and permutations over the course of dozens of the author's novels, there is still a lot of fun to be had. And really, that's the adjective that best sums up this book: Michael Moorcock clearly had a blast writing it and now, it's back for you and I to have fun reading it again, for the first time.

Kudos to Titan Books for bringing out these new editions of fantasy and sci-fi classics by a genuine master of the craft. (I hope they do The Dancer at the End of Time series next, as that one is a personal favorite).

Carleton Burch says

I starting this hoping to get something along the lines of William Gibson. Instead, I got Austin Powers without the humor. A series of vaguely related vignettes that are vaguely science fiction-ish. Very, very dated.

Tosh says

A Jerry Cornelius novel! The first in the series. Perhaps even a British comic strip as well as a film. No, I never heard of the series, or of Jerry Cornelius, till very recently. Written by the noted science fiction author Michael Moorcock, this novel reminds me very much of the works by Terry Southern. They both share an anti-everything approach to life, as well as being very much part of the 1960s culture. In fact, "The Final Programme" could have 'only' have been written in the 60s. This 1965 novel is very much a snapshot of its time and has a strong sense of placement, which is London.

Cornelius is an assassin, that resembles a secret agent, and if he lived in a real life or of course in a fantasy world, he would have known about Barbarella. He lives in Notting Hill London, and has various transportation machines - boats, cars, etc. In this novel, he battles his brother Frank, and eventually, and of course, things happen. The main villain is a certain Miss Brunner, and Well, you have to read the novel.

The book is very dated. Yet that is part of the charm of reading it in 2016. Here, you get a perspective of Swinging London circa 1965, as well as perhaps an early image of a David Bowie - a character that perhaps Moorcock had a hand in. For those who love Emma Peel, John Steed, The Prisoner, and the Man from U.N.C.L.E. - this is the novel for you.
