Assignment #19

READ**:** The readings for our next class are a selection of book reviews, from the *NY Times Book Review*, *The Washington Post*, *Nature,* and last year's 21W.035 class.

The book review-essay is a hybrid genre (as the hyphen indicates)—in which the reviewer uses the opportunity of the review to develop an idea. That is, the book under consideration becomes the focal point for a discussion of an idea related to the book's themes. **Most of the essay describes the book, but the reviewer does so in a way that makes the book part of a wider conversation about some issue.**

NOTE: Some of the sample reviews are more review than essay, and some are more essay than review, but the student example should give you a good idea of what I'm looking for. All should give you ideas about possible ways to structure a review.

Here are the reviews we'll be reading and discussing:
- Elizabeth Royte's "Signs of Life," a review of a book about organ harvesting from cadavers
- Marcia Bartusiak's "Go Up, Young Man," a 1995 review of a book about colonizing the galaxy
- Also by Royte, a review of *The Poisoned Earth*, a biography of Rachel Carson.
- Richard Fortey's review of David Toomey's *Weird Life*, about strange life forms on earth
- Stuart Pimm's review of E.O. Wilson's *Letters to a Young Scientist* which contains career advice, among other things, by the eminent socio-biologist.

Plus 1 essay from last spring's 21W.035 class:
- Mengfei Yang's review of *The Existential Pleasures of Engineering* by Samuel Florman.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION
What do you notice about these reviews? How do the reviewers express judgments? How do they describe the books? How do they add something of their own perspective to the reviews? What kinds of themes do they emphasize?

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