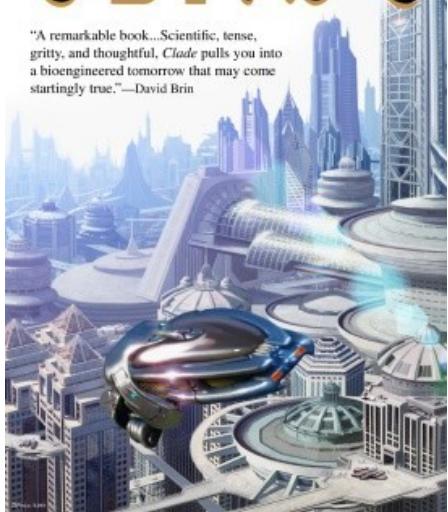


MARK BUDZ

CLADE

"A remarkable book...Scientific, tense, gritty, and thoughtful, *Clade* pulls you into a bioengineered tomorrow that may come startlingly true."—David Brin



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IT'S A POST-ECOCAUST WORLD.

WELCOME TO IT.

In the San Jose of tomorrow, all of nature is gengineered—from the warm-blooded plants to the designer people. But even in a rigidly controlled biosystem, with its pheromone-induced social order, the American dream is still the American dream. Caught between these new-old worlds, Rigo is on his way up—he's going to be part of tomorrow, even if it means he has to leave today behind.

Written off as a sellout on the streets of his old 'hood, Rigo's got his own ap in an aplex, a 9-to-5er, and a girl. He's got opportunity. If he works hard, his job with a heavyweight politicorp could give him a chance to move up in the clades. But when he's chosen as part of a team to construct a new colony on a nearby comet, Rigo smells a setup. And when disaster strikes, he learns that if there's a way to bend the rules, there's also a way to break them...

Clade Details

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Author : Mark Budz

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From Reader Review Clade for online ebook

Peter Tillman says

Rating: "A-". A gritty Stablefordian Cal-biotech hard-SF future, and an exceptionally fine first novel.

Clade is set 50 years after a catastrophic ecological collapse, the 'ecocaust', a human-caused mass-extinction right up there with the "Big 5" worst in Earth's history. Civilization was saved by heavy-handed reengineering of the biosphere, but at a cost of billions of lives lost, and a tightly-regimented social setup. Budz does a nice job of worldbuilding in Clade, and handles the ambiguous costs and benefits of new technology very well indeed.

Decent hard-SF that makes a serious attempt to extrapolate the medium-term future is never in oversupply. This is my favorite kind of SF, so I was very pleased to discover Clade. There are, unsurprisingly, some first-novel rough spots here, particularly with the thriller-style plot, which suffers from some heavy-handed auctorial hammering-to-fit -- but, hey, you'll happily put up with a few warts for the technically-sweet payoffs in Clade. Budz is clearly an author to watch. A sequel, Crache, is promised for Fall 2004. I'm looking forward to it.

Budz, a Silicon Valley technical writer with training in physics and engineering, is married to respected fantasy writer Marina Fitch. Fitch helped Budz polish his ms.: "Marina's good at characters and finding loopholes in story consistency," he said.

My longer 2005 review: <http://www.infinityplus.co.uk/nonfict...>

Author website: www.markbudz.com

Brian Burt says

Fascinating vision of a world rising from the ashes of environmental catastrophe, where humans are forced to bioengineer self-contained ecosystems to conserve resources and squeeze every last drop of efficiency out of the ravaged biosphere their predecessors bequeathed them. Budz creates an intricate world where everything a person is or does or can aspire to do is ruled by the draconian restrictions of one's "clade"; where the "ecotecture" to which you're bound at an almost cellular level becomes both a lifeboat and a prison. There were some quirky, memorable characters and clever humorous touches that helped propel the novel. I'm not sure I understood every nuance of the story at one reading. This imagined world is rich enough to bring a reader back more than once.

Brandy says

It's the future. The caste system is back in place. People belong to a 'clade' as befits their caste. The corporation rule. They have the power to shut lower clades out of their areas, their buildings, their stores, their jobs. Bioengineering has made it possible to effect your mind. To sooth you by releasing synthetic chemical via the plants & structures at home. They are engineering plants that will be able to become single dwelling homes on other planets. The over population has caused people to be removed from their homes &

be placed where the corporations want them to live. It's all based on which clade you belong to. Abandoned children are guinea pigs for the corporations' tests of newer chemicals. It's a hidden issue, but some are aware of it & are trying to help. It's hard though, when you can't move freely among the clades. It takes illegal chemicals to mask your clade.

I don't think I've given things away here. I really enjoy reading about different societies, as long as it's not too political. I could see this type of society actually happening in our future. It's a scary thought. I like books that make me think about things like this. It was also a very entertaining read.

Amanda Fernee says

While this book had an interesting premise, the execution was pretty terrible. I love sci-fi and yet for much of this novel I was scratching my head. Not only does he forget to explain things, but the plot is not cohesive. The climax of the book comes out of nowhere and then disappears without a trace. Great idea, but not well done.

Christopher McKitterick says

Mark Budz's *Clade* lives in the same, refreshing new sub-genre as Syne Mitchell's *THE CHANGELING PLAGUE*, which is the natural evolution of cyberpunk. Both of these novels envision a future where biologicals determine who we are and what we become in the way that cyberpunk postulated integrated circuits and weblife, or that the Heinlein-Asimov future postulated rocketships and other hard-engineering feats. Those biologicals might be benign or downright terrifying, designed to heal or murder, but they will change how we live and even who we are.

This is both interesting and important, I think, to where SF is going, because this is where science is headed, as well. Both novels view the world from the perspective of regular people, or even antisocials, which is where "cyberpunk" got its "punk." In fact, the back cover of *CLADE* has a quote from Kevin J. Anderson, who suggests this new genre be called "biopunk."

On the other hand - perhaps I'm just not longer a young 'un - I was less interested in the punks of *CLADE* than the DNA hackers of *THE CHANGELING PLAGUE*. In particular, I got a bit irritated with Budz (as narrator) using curse words; I expect his characters to do so, but it distracted me when the non-character narrator did. I also felt he used a bit too much exposition as dialogue, but it was interesting. I love the (scary) idea of social engineering via pheremone-emitting plants which create the title's "clades," locales which make their inhabitants happy with life and unable to move up or even move laterally in class.

Fascinating stuff, and highly recommended.

Michael Schulz says

OK, but not great.

Angie says

Didn't like it. The author was so invested in creating an alternate world/language/terminology that he forgot that stories need cohesive plots.

Deryn says

Great ideas, shoddy execution. Bonus points from this local for creating a sense of place in a place not too many authors bother with.

Misha says

Interesting views of a biotech influenced society but the characters suck and things don't really make sense. Why do people have personal AI butlers who are unhelpful dicks? Why do only the two main characters seem to have them? There are obvious soap opera style backstory twists that are acknowledged as ridiculous and add no value to the plot.

Eric says

My review here is showing three stars, but it was a struggle to go for three stars.

A number of people I know noted that this seemed like a "me" book. I really don't think so. I slogged through and finished it, but I skimmed a number of parts. I really struggled with the flow of the story. I also struggled with the author's writing style. I just don't think his style is something that's going to work for me - ever.

The story itself was decent, but it almost felt like nothing happened until about three quarters of the way through the book then everything came crashing down at once. There were some parts where we were shifted from one point of view to another and it got muddled.

I definitely think there are discussion worth ideas in here, I just don't know that I'm on board for anything more. It was a struggle.

Allan Dyen-Shapiro says

The best thing about this book was the premise: people restricted to a geographic area or a social grouping via being engineered to be compatible with a specific ecosystem. Plus temporary patches to allow people to tolerate each other for short periods of time, and "reclading" when necessary.

Second best thing about this book were the protagonists' AI's. The male lead had one who spoke solely in

malapropisms. A few were especially cute, but the overall effect was funny.

The female lead had one that continuously quoted Shakespeare.

Another really nice thing is the world building--the dystopic Hispanic area of San Jose seemed quite real to me. And the characters were also quite well drawn.

The plot--meh--what was the plot?

I was too busy enjoying these side issues to care much about what was going on in the story.

Lots of random biology terminology often used wrong--biopunk, as this was called, doesn't seem to have a lot of real bio in it. But that was okay. I'm being pedantic.

I liked it. Worth the read.
