

What if a Wall is Built? Sci-Fi Novel Paints Post-Apocalyptic U.S. after Race War

A post-apocalyptic America, fueled by bigotry and the unintended consequences of technology, blooms behind a walled city in *Spectrum*, a literary sci-fi novel from award winning writer Martin Ott

Spectrum is a novel about racism and walls, and holds up a mirror to our current political landscape. It's a novel about the outer spectrum of what we love and hate, and the inner spectrum of the people we love and hate.

The novel chronicles the lives of two scientists and former lovers, whose shared invention was used to catastrophic ends, and the war they've waged against one another for hundreds of years.

This invention fuels everything in the city but is also falling apart at its core. A world built on the model of a human mind threatens to shake apart even as this centuries old struggle between lovers turned enemies comes to a conclusion.

Spectrum asks us to examine the very nature of black and white, up and down, and good and evil in this science fiction epic about love and hate

HYPE

Michael Buckley, author of *Miniature Men* says,

"The best Science Fiction is always about building a bridge between experience and philosophy, and in *Spectrum*, Martin Ott gives us dust-ups and big ideas, schlubs and heroes, utopias and the people they're built upon. As familiar as it is futuristic, we can see ourselves in the dark streets in *Spectrum*. This book is hard to put down, and once you finish it, impossible to forget."

Jason Sanford, Nebula Award nominated author says,

"Martin Ott writes like a young Samuel R. Delany, mixing strike-hard language and razor-slicing ideas into a sensual mix of fictional possibilities."

Dani Kollin, Prometheus award winning author of *The Unincorporated Man* says,

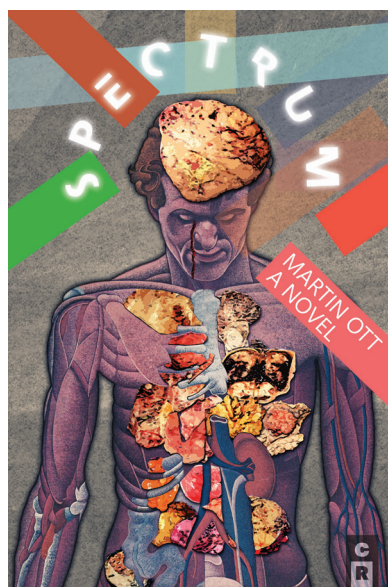
"Martin Ott's *Spectrum* is a wonderfully thought out jump down a futuristic rabbit hole filled with tantalizing imagery, rich characterization, and well crafted prose. I wasn't sure where it would all lead but trusted that in Mr. Ott's capable hands, it would not disappoint. Hang on tight, you're in for one hell of a ride."

C&R Press
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SPECTRUM



Spectrum
by Martin Ott
Paperback
\$18.00/250pp./6x9
ISBN 978-1-936196-59-3

Martin Ott

A former U.S. Army interrogator, Martin Ott is the author of seven books of poetry and fiction, including the Sandeen Prize-winning poetry book *Underdays* from University of Notre Dame Press and the short story collection *Interrogations* from Fomite Press.

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Sample Q&A with Martin Ott

Why is *Spectrum* important now?

Shifting demographics and loss of blue-collar jobs has fanned the flame of “white” anger in the United States. Some of our politicians in the U.S. Presidential election are feeding off that anger to build a sense of pride in a mythical American golden age that never existed and to build a wall to keep others from this supposed nirvana. This type of bigotry provides the backdrop to the race war in *Spectrum* that turns everything we know upside down.

Is *Spectrum* a sci-fi novel? Speculative fiction? A literary novel?

Yes. Many of my favorite writers, past and present, don't make clear distinctions. Examples include Kurt Vonnegut and Harold Murakami. Jonathan Lethem is another author I admire, who is bending genres in a powerful way. My first love reading was science fiction and my first love writing was poetry. It seems natural for me to combine literature and sci-fi. Margaret Atwood is a poet and a writer of science fiction, and someone who inspires me to this day.

What is the theme of the novel?

Evil acts do not just come from evil men, but also from those who allow themselves to hate others in mass. A relative of mine occasionally talked to me about the impending apocalypse of a race war, and believed that white people would be forced into battle to survive. It was tied to his religious beliefs and he was fervent that it was inevitable. This was a man who was kind and generous to many people in his life, including people of color. This irony stuck with me: that a man who was not evil could support evil actions. The protagonist in *Spectrum* is just such a man.

What novel is *Spectrum* most like?

The influences of the science fiction novels I loved as a kid can be felt throughout the dystopian city in *Spectrum*. Among others, I can feel the vibe of *1984*, *Handmaid's Tale*, *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, *Woman on the Edge of Time*, *Caves of Steel*, *Wild Seed*, and *Ubik* in the pages.

Why did you choose Colorado Springs as the setting for your novel?

I didn't want another dystopian novel set in a major metropolis. Colorado Springs was the perfect mix of a city with a mountainous backdrop, high-tech industry, and a community of white supremacists. It is at the cross roads of new science and old bigotries, a beautiful city with something sinister lurking in the shadows of the mountains.

What is the importance of science in the novel?

Advancements in technology such as cloning, 3-D printers, and computers built in the model of human brain combine in *Spectrum* to create the ability for the protagonist to recreate objects, people, and soldiers, to control the world practically from the living room of his home.

