

foreign currencies because of the hyperinflation of the mark:

The old older had shattered; even money was rapidly ebbing away from between men, leaving them desperately incommunicado like men rendered voiceless by an intervening vacuum: millions, still heaped on top of each other in human cities yet forced to live separate, each like some solitary predatory beast.

It seems quite insane as described in the novel but apparently hyper-inflation really was that bad: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyperinflation_in_the_Weimar_Republic. One of the great things about this novel is the way that Hughes makes the story personal to his characters. So:

At the Bayrischer-Hof, too, some at least of Lothar's meals were provided. But no one could expect so good a job all to himself, and Lothar shared his turn-about with a fellow student. On his off-days he lived chiefly on memories of his hotel meals, dining in retrospect. One night when he was supperless like this he dreamed he had been sacked, and woke screaming: other times he dreamed of his brother Wolff — the wild one who had vanished — and woke in tears.

***Bill, the Galactic Hero* by Harry Harrison**

Meanwhile, I picked a much lighter book off my shelf to read at in the mornings. Last year I read Harry Harrison's novel *Bill, the Galactic Hero*, a pastiche of military science fiction written in 1965. Harrison continued the adventures of Bill in a series of later books: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill,_the_Galactic_Hero#Series](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill,_the_Galactic_Hero#Series) published starting in 1989. I read the first of these this week, *Planet of Robot Slaves*. It's entertaining in a completely silly way, and contains mini-parodies of other writers, including William Gibson and Edgar Rice Burroughs. Ultimately it's not as good as the first one, though, and the humor is less Swift and more Sandler (Adam, that is). I don't think I'll read any more of these, although I am planning to read some more Harrison — I want to read the first Stainless Steel Rat book. I think that series fared better over time than this one did.

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