
PROMETHEUS

A Century of Ayn Rand

J. Neil Schulman on *Anarquía*

2005 Prometheus Award Finalists



Reviews of books by Elizabeth Moon,
Vin Suprynowicz, Boston T. Party,
Brad Linaweaver & J. Kent Hastings,
and Steven Gould



The newsletter of the
Libertarian Futurist Society

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Defining the Prometheus Awards

By William H. Stoddard

Once again, it's time for members of the Libertarian Futurist Society to vote on the Prometheus Award and the Hall of Fame. That makes it a good time to think about an important question: What are our standards, as a society, for choosing worthy winners for our awards? The Prometheus Award is supposed to go to the best work of libertarian science fiction of the preceding fourteen months. What do we mean by "science fiction," by "libertarian," and by "best"?

One thing to bear in mind, in seeking answers to these questions, is that we give awards for a purpose. The answers we choose to accept—the definitions we use for our essential ideas—should be answers to help us to attain that purpose.

Giving a literary award to a book makes it more visible, not just to the group that gives the award, but to other readers as well. The Prometheus Award has been remarkably successful in achieving such visibility. Our award winners are announced in *Locus* and other publications in the science fiction

community. Our award ceremonies are usually scheduled events at the World Science Fiction Convention. Publishers announce that their books have won, or been nominated for, the Prometheus Award, as a selling point, and provide copies of proposed nominees to LFS judges. The Prometheus Award has credibility as a mark of good writing; it's not just a private ceremony among a few friends. That credibility is part of our capital, and we need to preserve it.

When we pick a book as "the best," that's a recommendation to potential readers. We're telling a science fiction

fan who's curious about libertarianism, or a libertarian who'd like to read some science fiction, that that book is a good place to start. Our list of award winners and nominees is as close as there is to a Recommended Reading list in this field. We need to think both about whether we found a book worthwhile, and about whether it's something we would recommend to a friend who wanted to find out more about our point of view.

And that purpose has to inform both of our other criteria. "Libertarian" and "science fiction" are pointers to the type of material we want to consider; they aren't barriers to keep out good material that fails to meet some specific definition.

Genre words, like "science fiction," exist to help market books more efficiently—which surely is a justifiable goal

[Books] concerned with freedom...can be expressed in several different ways....[They] may portray a movement or struggle aimed at creating a free society. Or [they] may deconstruct a non-libertarian work, showing the hidden implications of its values.

in libertarian eyes! By putting two books in the same genre, a publisher or a bookseller is saying that someone who likes one has a higher than average chance of liking the other.

What defines the genre of science fiction is the existence of a community of readers for a certain group of books. For example, the 2003 Prometheus Award went to Terry Pratchett's *Night Watch*, which in terms of literary theory is not science fiction but fantasy—but the readerships for these two types of material overlap so strongly that bookstores almost always shelve them together. Pragmatically, a book is "science fiction" if it appears on the science fiction shelves and in specialty

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REVIEWS

The Black Arrow

By Vin Suprynowicz
Mountain Media, 2005, \$24.95
Reviewed by Fran Tully

The Black Arrow is a futuristic tale of hope and resistance. Set in the year 2030, it opens in the streets of Gotham. The reader is introduced to a world where homeland security has blossomed and bestowed upon us its wonderful "protection" against terrorism—not only in our airports, but right off busy sidewalks at impromptu "portals." Passers-by are treated to an inspection for weapons, illegal software, drugs, and proper ID. Of course, if they don't find any problems, inspectors often treat themselves to a good grope or other sexual rewards from the defenseless citizens in this new "police state." Ah, but on the rooftops and in the shadows lurks the Black Arrow—a hero along the lines of Batman, or Superman. While the book may open with an almost comic book feel, we soon learn that it is a serious, believable novel that stirs our souls much like the film, *Spartacus*.

With **The Black Arrow**, Vin has given us a real treasure. For example, when was the last time that "Passionate," "Sexy," "Stylish," "Thought-provoking," "Funny," "Exhilarating!" "Action-packed!" and "Tear-jerker" were all used to describe the same book—let alone a book about *freedom*???

The characters are so real, likable, and unique that you believe that you know them. **The Black Arrow** starts out with a righteous assassination by an archer. The ancient method of attack is chosen to effectively render the vast "SonicNet gunfire detection grid" about as useful as the ancient Maginot Line.

Later, we find that the resistance is equally proficient with blades, martial arts, or firearms. I found it extremely refreshing to read a novel with technically accurate gun battles. Without going overboard or getting too technical, the author provides the reader with a

real sense of what it feels like, sounds like, and looks like to engage an armed enemy while equipped with bows and guns. After some of the shooting scenes, you'll actually find yourself with ringing ears yawning, trying to get your ears to pop, as though a low-flying jet had just broken Mach One overhead.

The masterful word pictures put you on the front line. You feel the cold rain, are aroused by the sex, and smell the dark, dank, vast Gotham underground. This is a thriller with soul. You will go from laughing out loud, to shaking with sheer hatred, and then down to a lump in your throat—from the tear-jerking romance.

If you're part of the "gun culture," you'll feel absolutely privileged to be surrounded by serious, well-trained, freedom fighters that not only practice good muzzle control, but also let you in on their thoughts before and *after* they pull the trigger. You find yourself understanding their justification for their conflict and their willingness to "hold the line"—despite their terrible odds of survival.

Some of the scenes are so heinous that you question the need to be so graphic; after all, no government could be *that* cruel. And then you recall that you've seen these stories before...you remember that these are real events. Vin has craftily taken the most horrific injustices to our liberties and magically made them appear as current news items in 2030. **The Black Arrow** is a must-read for romantics, libertarians, resistance fighters, and anyone who is passionate about life. It also provides the ultimate solution for the elimination of "boot-on-your-neck" politics.

The dialogue is witty and sharp. The history lessons and quotes from the founding fathers are timeless and pertinent.

Vin has given us a stunning first novel that is sure to be a timeless classic among such greats as **Atlas Shrugged**, **The Count of Monte Cristo**, **Animal Farm**, **1984**, and **Unintended Consequences**. Get the limited edition, leather-bound printing while it lasts and pass it on to your grandchildren. It is guaranteed to stir even the faintest glowing cinder of

patriotism into a raging fire of resistance. I can't wait to see what Vin will come up with next—and I hope it is soon.

About the author: Vin Suprynowicz, a collector of surplus military firearms, spent his youth in New England and worked his way through school as a disc jockey, short-order cook, motel night clerk, and member of the relentlessly unsuccessful rock & roll band, The Four Shadowings of Doom. Vin has had an extensive, award-winning career in journalism and is currently a columnist and editorial writer at Nevada's largest newspaper, the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. He is also the author of two non-fiction books **Send in the Waco Killers** and **The Ballad of Carl Drega**. Both of his non-fiction works were awarded Freedom Book of the Year by Free-Market.net and **The Black Arrow** is certain to win it this year.

The targets of Vin's books and columns include taxation, gun control, and the War to Spread Pain (more generally dubbed the "War On Some Drugs.")

But Homeland Security and our new national pastime, the airport grope-and-grab, also do not escape his literary scalpel.

Anarquía

By Brad Linaveaver & J. Kent Hastings
Sense of Wonder Press, 2004
Hardcover \$34.95; Paperback, \$19.99
Reviewed by Anders Monsen

The American Civil War and World War II bear the scars of incessant strip-mining from alternate historians. That other major war of the early twentieth century, the Spanish Civil War, earns little attention in fiction. This war in the bottom left corner of Europe drew thousands of international volunteers to fight side by side with Spaniards against what they perceived to be the forces of evil. The testing grounds for World War II were fought on the plain, mountains and cities. German brigades ranged the countryside and Stukas and Junkers pounded cities to dust. Joseph Stalin's

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A Century of Ayn Rand

By William H. Stoddard

Alissa Rosenbaum was born on February 2, 1905, in Saint Petersburg, Russia. In young adulthood, she emigrated to the United States, where she took the name Ayn Rand and pursued a career as a novelist. Her last two novels, **The Fountainhead** and **Atlas Shrugged**, both became best-sellers. She then turned to working out and promulgating her philosophical views. Both her philosophy and her fiction became major influences on the emerging libertarian movement, including the Libertarian Futurist Society, which chose **Atlas Shrugged** as one of its first two Hall of Fame award winners. Now, on the hundredth anniversary of her birth, we commemorate her achievements.

As a novelist, Ayn Rand favored dramatic, tightly plotted stories and larger-than-life characters. Her consistent theme was individualism. This took its purest form in the short **Anthem**, a portrait of a dystopian future where even singular pronouns had vanished from the language. **The Fountainhead**, written more or less at the same time, examines the same theme in a fairly traditional novel about individual characters and their relationships with each other, taking place at specific historical dates and largely in the real city of New York. Rand made its hero, Howard Roark, an architect, a choice that brought together two aspects of individualism: as a creative artist, he could work out his ideas and make his choices in the privacy of his own mind; but to actually realize any of his ideas in a building, he needed clients and a functioning economy to support the construction of buildings—and most of Roark's dramatic problems in the novel grow out of the choices he makes for the sake of gaining the chance to build.

Her last novel, **Atlas Shrugged**, is something else entirely, and critics had trouble knowing what to make of it, in somewhat the same way that they often have trouble knowing what to make of science fiction. In a sense, **Atlas Shrugged** is science fiction, set in an extrapolated near future—not so much

the near future of the 1950s, when it was published, as that of the 1930s, the “Red Decade.” But though it's filled with ingenious inventions, its focus is not on technology or even science. Much of its technology is treated like the gadgets in recent technothrillers, which exists to advance the plot but is not its main focus. Its most important invention, the Motor, which “converts static energy into kinetic,” is not so much a scientific concept as a dramatized philosophical one: its operation violates the Second Law of Thermodynamics in much the same way that, in Rand's view, the human mind does—and it's found on a rubbish pile in a society that is turning against the freedom of the human mind. That turn, and its historical impact, is what the novel is really about. Rand's imagined solution to the problem of the decay of freedom works better as melodrama, or even as myth, than it does as realistic narrative, but the problem is real, and has not become less so.

Rand's philosophy, which she called Objectivism, came into definition as she was writing **Atlas Shrugged**, and she spent the rest of her life elaborating it. She combined classical liberal political ideas with a new underpinning, taken from the philosophical theories of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas; in a sense, Objectivism is an atheistic version of Thomism. Her admiration for Aristotelian logic led her to struggle for rigorous arguments for her positions, not always successfully. But her philosophical insights are often better than the argumentative framework that holds them, and her methods of argument provide useful tools for application to other philosophical questions, which are now gaining her a measure of recognition. At the most basic, she had remarkably sound judgment on what to defend: the validity of the scientific method, the ethical justification of the pursuit of individual happiness, and the market economy and its legal basis in individual rights.

Her advocacy of this philosophy, and the success of her novels, made Rand a

public figure and brought her a large number of followers, including an inner circle who surrounded her in New York. As too often happens, being the focus of a circle of admirers did her harm; she became addicted to constant praise and admiration and unable to accept dissent or criticism. A love affair with one of her younger admirers damaged her marriage and eventually wrecked the Objectivist organization, even as the influence of her ideas was helping to spark the libertarian movement. Rand never accepted libertarianism, regarding its acceptance of adherents of individual freedom regardless of the philosophical basis of their ideas as a disastrous mistake; but libertarians, even those who reject her philosophy, find value in her ideas.

The Libertarian Futurist Society is among them. Rand showed us a picture of the dangers that lie ahead, especially for the United States—the danger of forgetting individual rights in favor of mass democracy, and of wrecking the world's most productive economy in the process. And she showed us a picture of a freer society, devoted to creative work and mutually consensual relationships. Those two visions are what we look for in fiction, and what we honor with the Prometheus Award. Even the name of the

award was influenced by Rand: she considered the titan who brought fire to man the greatest figure in human mythology and the proper symbol for the productive forces of an industrial society.



Anarquía: Afterword

By J. Neil Schulman

Look, anyone who can read can blurb a novel.

Anyone who can write can write an afterword for a novel.

But aside from the authors, themselves, the only man who can touch me in his commitment to this novel is James A. Rock, publisher of Sense of Wonder Press, who is issuing the first edition.

Nevertheless, with all due respect to Mr. Rock, he only bought rights to this book once.

I've bought them twice.

In 1999, when *Anarquía* was nothing more than an outline, I obtained the book-publishing rights to *Anarquía*—and paid the authors an advance to write it—in my capacity as publisher and editor-in-chief of Pulpless.Com.

A couple of years later I reverted those rights to the authors so they could accept Jim Rock's publishing offer.

Then, within 24 hours of the manuscript's completion in July, 2003—after reading only the first four chapters—I made an offer to purchase the movie rights. Within a week, the contract was signed, money changed hands, and I had an option on those rights.

You may reasonably conclude that I consider *Anarquía* an important work of literature, and one which, additionally, has great commercial potential both as a book and a movie.

I'll go further than that. *Anarquía* doesn't read to me like science-fiction, of which the alternate history is a sub-genre. Neither does it read to me like an historical novel. *Anarquía* reads to me like a contemporary novel written in the late 1930's, about the time that Ernest Hemingway wrote his 1938 Spanish Civil War stage-play *The Fifth Column*. But *Anarquía* reads to me not like flat-beer reporting by the newsman

J. NEIL SCHULMAN is the author of two Prometheus award-winning novels, *Alongside Night* and *The Rainbow Cadenza*, short fiction, nonfiction, and screenwritings, including the CBS *Twilight Zone* episode "Profile in Silver." This afterword to Brad Linaweaver & J. Kent Hastings' novel, *Anarquía*, is reprinted with permission from the author.

Hemingway, but a rich brew by his far-more talented contemporary, and fellow Nobel laureate, John Steinbeck.

My inside track on this book goes all the way back to its conception...and I'm going to reveal a few secrets for the first time.

In 1992 the idea for *Anarquía* originated in the mind of J. Kent Hastings ... but Kent's inspiration for the novel was Brad Linaweaver's 1988 novel, *Moon of Ice*, an alternate history of World War II in which the United States remains neutral, Nazi Germany uses nuclear weapons to conquer both the Soviet Union and Europe, and the Cold War is not between the United States and Russia but between the United States and Germany.

Kent asked himself, "What would have happened if even before World War II started—if even before Nazi Germany had made its first conquest—the anarchists in Spain had prevailed in the Spanish Civil War?"

It was a rich vein to prospect for literary gold. The Spanish Civil War was in many ways a prologue to World War II, and the literary lions associated with it include not only Hemingway (who covered it) but also George Orwell (who fought in it).

By 1995 Kent had outlined the novel with three personal heroes as its main



characters: the father of the moon landing, rocketeer Wernher von Braun; the mother of spread-spectrum communications, movie-star Hedy Lamarr, and the father of modern computing, Konrad Zuse.

By 1998 Kent had reached the limits of research about the Spanish Civil War written (or translated into) English, and was studying Spanish so he could read documents and books in their originals.

Kent and I briefly discussed my collaborating on the novel, but in 1999 my adventures in book publishing shoved

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Finalists Announced for Prometheus Awards

Judges make two recommendations for Special Award

By Michael Grossberg

Libertarian Futurist Society judges have selected finalists for this year's Prometheus Awards, which will be presented in a ceremony during the 63rd World Science Fiction Convention August 4-8 in Glasgow, Scotland.

In addition, two recommendations will be submitted to the general membership for Special Awards—one to Scott Bieser and L. Neil Smith, for their graphic novel adaptation of **The Probability Broach**, and the other to editors Mark Tier and Martin Greenberg, for a pair of Baen Books anthologies of libertarian science fiction.

Here are the 2004 Best Novel finalists for the 2005 Prometheus Award, listed in alphabetical order by author:

- **State of Fear**, by Michael Crichton (Harper Collins)—A futuristic political thriller with a cautionary theme about the dangers of the politicization of science and a courageous expose about the politics and science of global warming.

- **Anarquía**, by Brad Linaweaver and J. Kent Hastings (Sense of Wonder Press)—An alternate history of the Spanish Civil War, with a powerful vision of anarchism as the what-if alternative to communism or fascism, and a cast of characters that includes Hedy Lamarr, Wernher von Braun, George Orwell, Josef Stalin, Ernest Hemingway, Ayn Rand, and many more.

- **Newton's Wake**, by Ken MacLeod (TOR Books)—A space opera blending cutting-edge science and political insight, centered on the head of an ambitious clan of galactic entrepreneurs who stumble upon an ancient relic on a remote planet that threatens the balance of power.

- **Marque and Reprisal**, by Elizabeth Moon (Ballantine Books/Del Rey)—A science fiction adventure that contrasts the ethos of the market and the military in focusing on a female soldier-turned-trader who battles intrigue, treachery and terror while at the helm of a commercial transport starship.

- **The System of the World**, by Neal Stephenson (William Morrow)—The development in the 1700s of the modern world's classical liberal institutions, which paved the way for modern libertarianism, is explored in the climax of the author's ambitious Baroque Cycle trilogy (**Quicksilver**, **The Confusion**), which has been hailed by *Entertainment Weekly* as "the definitive historical-sci-fi-epic-pirate-comedy-punk love story."

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This year's Hall of Fame finalists includes three works first published more than half a century ago—a fitting reflection of the special focus of this awards category on time-honored classics. Here are the 2005 Hall of Fame finalists for Best Classic Fiction, listed in alphabetical order by author:

- **It Can't Happen Here**—a novel (1936) by Sinclair Lewis

- **V for Vendetta**—a graphic novel (1989) by Alan Moore

- **A Time of Changes**—a novel (1971) by Robert Silverberg

- **The Lord of the Rings**—a trilogy of novels (1954) by J.R. R. Tolkien

- **The Weapon Shops of Isher**—a novel (1951) by A.E. Van Vogt

The Special Awards Committee, which only meets in those occasional years when a nomination has been made for a special Prometheus Award, has approved two recommendations for Special Awards in 2005:

- **The Probability Broach: The Graphic Novel**, an imaginative and vivid condensed adaptation by L. Neil Smith and Scott Bieser, which is "reaching new audiences by presenting a libertarian classic in graphic form."

- **Give Me Liberty and Visions of Liberty**, two explicitly libertarian anthologies edited by Mark Tier and Martin H. Greenberg and published as companion paperbacks by Baen Books, "for having a positive long-term effect on the dis-

semination of libertarian ideas."

Only twice before has the LFS presented Special Awards, a very rare honor—first, in 1998 for the first explicitly libertarian science-fiction anthology (**Free Space**, edited by Brad Linaweaver and Edward E. Kramer), and second, in 2000, to writer Poul Anderson for lifetime achievement.

All LFS members will be mailed an awards ballot by early June—the voting deadline is July 1—to help choose the Best Novel and Classic Fiction winners and help decide whether to approve the Special Award recommendations. Each Special Award recommendation will be listed separately for yes-or-no votes by all members, and each recommendation must separately receive majority approval to become a Special Award winner.

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For the 2006 Prometheus Awards, the LFS hopes to expand the number of judges on the Hall of Fame committee and the Special Awards committee, so please consider serving on these important committees. There also may be one or two openings on the Best Novel judging committee, which is limited to 10 judges. (To volunteer, contact board president Chris Hibbert (hibbert@mydruthers.com) as soon as possible.

Thanks to all the LFS members who volunteered to serve on the three awards committees this year. Members of the Best Novel finalist-judging committee, chaired by Michael Grossberg (mikegrossb@aol.com), were Jorge Codina, Steve Gaalema, Chris Hibbert, Lynn Maners, Charles Morrison, Adam Starchild, William H. Stoddard, Fran Van Cleave, and Victoria Varga.

Best Novel judges read 14 nominees this past year. The other nominees:

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2005 Prometheus Awards Finalists

Best Novel

State of Fear, Michael Crichton (Harper Collins)
Anarquía, Brad Linaweaver & J. Kent Hastings
 (Sense of Wonder)
Newton's Wake, Ken MacLeod (Tor)
Marque and Reprisal, Elizabeth Moon
 (Del Rey)
The System of the World, Neal Stephenson
 (William Morrow)

Hall of Fame

It Can't Happen Here, Sinclair Lewis (1936)
V for Vendetta, Alan Moore, David Lloyd (1989)
A Time of Changes, Robert Silverberg (1971)
The Lord of the Rings, J. R. R. Tolkien (1954)
The Weapon Shops of Isher, A. E. Van Vogt (1951)

Special Award

The Probability Broach: The Graphic Novel,
 L. Neil Smith & Scott Bieser (BigHead Press)
Give Me Liberty/Visions of Liberty,
 Edited by Mark Tier and Martin H. Greenberg
 (Baen Books)

—*Defining the Prometheus Awards, continued from page 2*

science fiction bookstores, is reviewed in publications such as *Locus*, and is read by science fiction fans and discussed at science fiction clubs and conventions. And the LFS has largely endorsed that kind of pragmatic definition. We've been willing to consider books that are published for, and marketed to, genre readers; we've also considered books marketed to general readers, if they have comparable themes and content—such as **Atlas Shrugged**, which was not marketed as science fiction but is one of the prototypes for the kind of book we want to honor.

So far as being “libertarian” is concerned, what we are looking for are books concerned with freedom—freedom as libertarians understand it, which has to do with individuals making choices for themselves, in a sphere where their larger society doesn't control their actions. Such a concern can be expressed in several different ways. A book may portray a possible free society. It may portray an unfree society, in a cautionary

spirit, showing the reader what harm is done by the denial of freedom. It may portray a movement or struggle aimed at creating a free society. Or it may deconstruct a nonlibertarian work, showing the hidden implications of its values—as Donald Kingsbury's **Psychohistorical Crisis** deconstructed Isaac Asimov's Foundation series, or, in a broader sense, as Anthony Burgess's **A Clockwork Orange** deconstructed the behaviorist ideas of B. F. Skinner's **Walden Two**. Any of these kinds of fiction might be informative and interesting to libertarians and to other readers interested in libertarian ideas. (I offer this list, by the way, not to exclude books that don't fit into it but to suggest some of the diverse ways in which a book might be, and in which past books have been, found deserving of the Prometheus Award. Any book that persuasively dramatizes the value of freedom could be a suitable nominee, even if it doesn't fit any of these categories.)

When you vote for the awards, do

think about these two categories. If a book strikes you as not having anything to do with libertarian beliefs and values, or as not having any fantastic or speculative content—don't vote for it. But if you find a book well written and compelling; if it makes you think about your libertarian beliefs in a new way, or appreciate your libertarian values more strongly—then vote for it, and don't worry about technical definitions. That's part of being free.

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—Reviews, continued from page 3

heavy hand crushed the backs of Spanish Communists who sought their own future, while at the same time dipping into the country's golden pockets. This is a rich breeding ground for fiction and speculation, yet until now, rarely worked save as historical windows in time. With **Anarquía**, Brad Linaweaver and J. Kent Hastings repair this gap with a fine new novel that boldly ponders the question: What if the anarchists won?

Anarquía flies an ambitious black flag: the theater in Spain dealt mainly with Soviet-supported communists and socialists battling the Hitler-Mussolini-Franco triumvirate of fascism. A handful of forgotten syndicalist anarchists also fought in the war, yet while in real life they suffered at the hands of both Communists and fascists. In Linaweaver and Hastings' novel the anarchists in Spain are joined by individualist anarchists from America (including counter-economic Agorists á la Samuel E. Konkin III), and prevail against collectivists of all stripes.

Two of the main protagonists in **Anarquía** are actress Hedy Lamarr and scientist Wernher von Braun. We meet the former during a dinner party hosted by her industrialist husband, for no other than Adolph Hitler. Lamarr stands up against Hitler, to the anger of her husband, who sees the young beauty as little more than a trophy wife (Lamarr's most famous role at this point was her

nude scene at age seventeen in *Ecstasy*). Lamarr chafes in this role, and soon flees her husband for Hollywood. Along the way she encounters von Braun on a train, along with his childhood friend Konrad Zuse, and thus begins a long and hot relationship between Lamarr and von Braun.

Lamarr reaches Hollywood, meets and sleeps with actors and actresses. She enters an affair with the charismatic co-star of her new movie, later to meet his wife, a playwright and author based in New York called Ayn Rand. The depiction of Rand in her brief scene conveys the electricity of Rand's personality. There's little humanity in the authors' depiction of Rand, who comes across as obsessed with the human mind.

Meanwhile, in New York, two science fiction pulp writers and close friends debate the decision of one of them, Howard Davidson. He plans a trip to Spain to write about the conflict. This fictional writer joins the ranks of other writers, famous then and in our time for their actions in the war. George Orwell's **Homage to Catalonia** is perhaps the most famous non-fiction account of the war. On the other end, Ernest Hemingway's superb novel, **For Whom the Bell Tolls** (1939), condensed the pain, grit, and agony of the entire war in one small locale, one single incident. Both Orwell and Hemingway participate as supporting actors in **Anarquía**. Orwell comes off as the better character, noble and thoughtful. Hemingway seems more like a cruel bully, not so different from his real personality.

Once the war begins in earnest, in July 1936, the next two years fly past in brief episodes. The Germans discover to their shock a secret weapon used against them by the Spanish. Powerful rockets bring down their aircraft. Wernher von Braun is in Spain, working against Franco and Germans. Allied with Buenaventura Durruti (in our world killed in late 1936; in **Anarquía** he lives and plays a greater role in the war), von Braun's rockets turn the tide. The anarchists divert the gold headed to Russia into their own hands, financing more weapons. Lamarr leaves Hollywood and rejoins von Braun, and the course of events take a different

path from our own, into the wild black yonder.

The book at times seems too slim. Just before we become acquainted with one character, off we zoom to the next. The novel feels smaller than its 193 pages, due to the addition of photos reprinted on each page. At times it has the feel of a screenplay, switching scenes rapidly and rarely lingering in one place.

In addition to the main narrative, the book includes afterwords from Bill Patterson (publisher/editor of *The Heinlein Journal*), William Alan Ritch (former editor of *Prometheus*), one each by Prometheus Award-winners Victor Koman and J. Neil Schulman (*Prometheus* reprints Schulman's afterword on page 5 of this issue), Randall N. Herrst (president of The Center for the Study of Crime), and Daffyd ab Hugh (fictioneer and Linaweaver collaborator).

A list of fictional and real characters, a brief chronology of real events surrounding the Spanish Civil War, and glossaries on personalities and acronyms are appended after the main narrative. These fill in the historical background, but also detract from the fictional story. Nearly unforgivable is the publishers' own insertion of photos of people and posters on virtually every page of the novel. No doubt the intent is sincere. In a different setting it might even work. Yet the images are the size of postage stamps, and act like rocks amidst the flow of the plot. I found myself constantly lifting my eyes from the text to glance at the pictures, then gazing around the page to find where I had left off reading.

Look past the occasional narrative skips and the over-zealous pictorial info-dump and you will encounter an imaginative and powerful work of fiction. Linaweaver and Hastings nearly persuade the reader that the stories and events in this novel are true, or at least makes you wish they were true. **Anarquía** may be the most important book on freedom and alternate history since L. Neil Smith's **The Probability Broach**. The level of research and historical detail is staggering, the passion for liberty unflinching, and the power of story enthralling. This clearly is a must-own book.



Marque and Reprisal

By Elizabeth Moon

Del Rey, 2004: \$24.95

Reviewed by William H. Stoddard

Marque and Reprisal is the second volume of Elizabeth Moon's latest series, *Vatta's War*. Like much of her fiction, these books have action/adventure plots; and as is typical of Moon's writing in this mode, their protagonist is a woman. But unlike Moon's previous adventure heroines—Paksenarrion, Heris Serrano, and Esmay Suiza—Kylara Vatta is not in military service; she's the captain of a merchant starship. And the focus of these books is much less on military organizations, and much more on commercial ones.

By and large, Moon offers a positive view of business organizations. Three business firms play a major part in these books: *Vatta Transport Ltd.*, the interstellar shipping firm run by Kylara Vatta's family; *InterStellar Communications*, an immensely powerful firm that holds a monopoly on instantaneous communications; and *Mackensee Military Assistance Corporation*, a mercenary force in whose operations Vatta repeatedly finds herself entangled. All three are basically ethical organizations, earning their profits by selling their services on honest terms, and concerned with long-term advantage more than quick gain. On the other side of things, Moon shows Vatta's need to deal with government failures, from simple bureaucratic obstructiveness to the deliberate refusal of the government of her home planet, Slotter Key, to protect *Vatta Transport* from physical attack on its people and facilities.

At the same time, Moon establishes that Vatta is not, by first choice, a merchant at all. The first book in the series, **Trading in Danger**, began with her expulsion from the naval academy of Slotter Key, in disgrace, after she unwisely offers help to a classmate with a personal problem. Her merchant captaincy is on an old, small ship, carrying one last cargo on its voyage to be scrapped, as a way for her to prove herself to her family. Her adventures come about when plot complications involve her in problems

where her military education is more help than her mercantile abilities.

What Moon is doing with this series is exploring the relationship between two distinct sets of ethical values, identified by Jane Jacobs in her book **Systems of Survival**: the guardian ethos and the trader ethos, embodied respectively in the soldier and the merchant. Moon is ingenious in dramatizing the tension between them—in Kylara's background, in her feelings about the actions she has to perform, and in the relationship between military and commercial institutions. The book's very title points at that conflict: letters of marque and reprisal are a way of applying mercantile methods to the very nonmercantile business of warfare—and Moon's narrative shows that, as Jacobs describes, the intermixture of the two has the potential to corrupt both, if not handled with the utmost care. There are serious themes, and themes of interest to libertarian audiences, underlying this story of heroic action and conflict between the stars.

Reflex

By Steven Gould

Tor, 2004, \$25.95

Reviewed by William H. Stoddard

In his first novel, **Jumper**, Steven Gould introduced Davy Rice, a young man with the ability to teleport. In **Reflex**, his latest novel, he returns to Davy and his wife, Millie Harrison-Rice, a decade after the end of **Jumper**. **Reflex** reexamines some aspects of teleportation, and in particular one of the key assumptions of most stories about teleportation: that a teleporter can't be imprisoned.

In **Reflex**, Davy is the target of a kidnapping, carried out by agents of a conspiratorial force that wants to use his unique ability for its own purposes. Over the course of the novel, they work with several different methods of restraining him, both physical and psychological. Gould shows that disturbingly effective restraints are possible for a sufficiently ruthless captor. But he also makes the

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News

Sci Fi Wire (www.scifi.com/scifiwire2005) reports that Hugo and Prometheus Award-winning writer, Vernor Vinge, recently signed a multi-book deal with Tor. The contract includes three books, and several out-of-print books will be reprinted; **The Peace War** and **Marooned in Realtime** already are in bookstores. Vinge's next book is **Rainbow's End**, set for publication in 2006.

Vinge told Sci Fi Wire, "**Rainbows End** takes place in California in the near future and is approximately a prequel to 'Fast Times at Fairmont High.' After **Rainbow's End**, I expect that my next novel-length project will be a sequel to **A Deepness in the Sky**. This sequel would follow Pham Nuwen and Anne Reynolt as they seek to overthrow the Emergency."

Brad Linaweaver co-authored an expensive coffee table book with Forrest J Ackerman for Collector's Press, **Worlds of Tomorrow**. This is a history of classic sci-fi pulp art that was cross promoted with the movie, *Sky Captain and World of Tomorrow*. Additional information at collectorspress.com, or info@collectorspress.com

Lydia van Vogt has given Linaweaver the rights to do an audio adaptation of the original story, "The Weapon Shop," to be a production of the Atlanta Radio Theatre Company at DragonCon in 2005. Some of ARTC's other work includes dramatizations of Robert A. Heinlein's stories, such as "The Man Who Traveled In Elephants," which features Harlan Ellison as the Ringmaster.

CDs of these audio adaptations are available for purchase online at <http://www.artc.org>.

V for Vendetta adapted for the screen

On March 4, 2005, Andy and Larry Wachowski, along with Joel Silver announced the launch of production on the action thriller *V For Vendetta*, starring Natalie Portman, James Purefoy, and Stephen Rhea in Berlin, Germany. The press release stated:

Set against the futuristic landscape of totalitarian Britain, *V For Vendetta* tells the story of a mild-mannered young woman named Evey (Natalie Portman) who is rescued from a life-and-death situation by a masked vigilante (James Purefoy) known only as "V." Incomparably charismatic and ferociously skilled in the art of combat and deception, V ignites a revolution when he detonates two London landmarks and takes over the government-controlled airwaves, urging his fellow citizens to rise up against tyranny and oppression. As Evey uncovers the truth about V's mysterious background, she also discovers the truth

about herself – and emerges as his unlikely ally in the culmination of his plot to bring freedom and justice back to a society fraught with cruelty and corruption.

The screenplay, written by the Wachowski brothers, is based on the graphic novel by Alan Moore and David Lloyd. A finalist for the 1992 Prometheus Award, *V for Vendetta* will be filmed on location in Berlin and London, with a three to four month shoot. The movie will be released beginning November 4, 2005.

Portman spoke at the press conference, saying candidly, "I think this film is about the power of people to play an active role when the government is not looking after the people; the people have the right to revolt, to make their minds heard, and to speak their opinions. It is about a very oppressive regime, it's based on the graphic novel by Alan Moore and very true to that spirit of the Guy Fawkes November 5th gunpowder plot. It's all about...governments being afraid of their people, not the people

being afraid of their governments."

The official site for the movie — <http://vforvendetta.warnerbros.com/> — launched on March 4, 2005. Visitors will find the entire transcript of the press conference, the official press release, some photos of the main cast, and promises of video and news of the production.

This is not the first adaptation of Alan Moore's work. The previous movies (*The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, *From Hell*) received lukewarm reviews, but from the producers's statements, maybe this effort will be different. The Wachowski brothers appear to play more of a background role with this movie. *V For Vendetta* Director James McTeigue served as the First Assistant Director on the Wachowski brothers' Matrix trilogy. There is no doubt that if they stick closely to the original comic book version, *V for Vendetta* should fuel controversy across the globe for its radical anti-government stance.

— Anders Monsen

— *Anarquía*, continued from page 5

my life as a writer aside, and Kent went back to the source of his inspiration and offered the collaboration to Brad. I offered them a contract and their collaboration was official.

The rest is history.

Yes—after I bought the movie rights for my production company, Jesulu Productions—I did finish reading the novel. Actually, Brad read me the second half on a long weekend he and Kent spent at my house in Pahump, Nevada, where we signed the option contracts. It was fair revenge since I'd read aloud to both Brad and Kent the full text of my latest novel, *Escape from Heaven*... then read aloud to them my screenplay adaptation as well.

And when I expressed my dismay at the abruptness of the novel's ending, Brad let me in on another secret, which I'll now share with you.

The last chapter of this novel is not an ending. It's a cliffhanger. The sequel is already in the works...and I'm already pumping Kent and Brad for deep background on my screenplay adaptation.

Here's the teaser for my screen treatment:

WE OPEN on a ten-year-old boy pulling a little red wagon through the streets of Berlin in 1922. Little Wernher von Braun has tied six Chinese firecracker-rockets to the wagon and is about to conduct his first experiment in rocketry. He lights the firecrackers and the wagon careens uncontrollably through the streets, narrowly avoiding disaster. A policeman grabs the little boy by the scruff of his neck and takes him home to his father, who takes off his belt, and the incident ends with nothing more than a little boy's yelps behind a closed door.

WE CUT TO July, 1969—Cape Canaveral, Florida—as Wernher von

Braun watches proudly as Apollo 11 is launched...and a few days later the famous TV broadcast from the moon, as Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin leave their footprints in lunar soil.

SUDDENLY WE ZOOM BACKWARDS IN TIME: the Apollo, Gemini, and Mercury missions...the launch of Sputnik by the Soviets...the liberation of Europe by the Allies...V-2 rockets bombing London and we're back to a little boy's wagon being pulled on a Berlin street in 1922.

WE REPEAT the rocket-propelled wagon careening wildly through the streets of Berlin, only this time the wagon knocks a well-dressed matron into oncoming street traffic. We hear SCREAMS and little Wernher von Braun watches his first experiment in rocketry end in tragedy.

And the rest is *alternate* history.

—Reviews, continued from page 9

point that no restraint is absolute. Davy spends much of his time in captivity testing the limits of his restraints. And, despite strong ethical scruples, which shaped his earlier career as an agent of the National Security Agency, he is able to resist his captors sufficiently to make himself effectively useless to them, while at the same time their investigations of his abilities suggest to him some new applications of his power to teleport.

In parallel, we see his wife's reaction to his disappearance, which introduces a new complication: over many years of exposure to his ability, she has become capable of teleportation also. As he works to resist his captors, she works to identify them and free him from them. This aspect of the story could have been stronger; Millie defeats people with combat training a little too easily, simply by relying on her ability to teleport, and she also bypasses security arrangements with that same ability—but having decided to kidnap one teleporter, any adequately paranoid security force ought to have assumed there could be more and had countermeasures waiting for them.

Eventually the two plots converge in a dramatic climax—but the rescue/escape doesn't solve all the problems. Gould spends several more chapters working out further problems, of which some are resolved and others remain unsolved, as a possible basis for a sequel.

Despite its flaws, *Reflex* is an ingenious exploration of one of science fiction's classic conceptual puzzles. It's also a sympathetic portrayal a man of integrity resisting captivity and brainwashing. And it's a story of the mutual

loyalty that motivates Davy's resistance. Readers of *Prometheus* are likely to find these themes sympathetic and to enjoy Gould's exploration of them, as I did.



Molôn Labé!

By Boston T. Party

Javelin Press, 2004,

Reviewed by William H. Stoddard

One of the libertarian movement's recent proposals for a strategy for attaining a freer society is the "free state movement." In brief, this recommends that libertarians should choose one of the less populous American states and move there in sufficient numbers to influence or even take over its state and local governments. In *Molôn Labé!* "Boston T. Party" (a pseudonym for Kenneth W. Royce) examines how this proposal might work out. Unfortunately, he didn't

take the time to learn how to write fiction before doing so, and the resulting effort is at best amateurish.

To start with, a substantial part of this book isn't narrative at all, but essays on various topics. Some of these describe the novel's fictional future, and their inclusion as part of a work of fiction could be justified, but they're not smoothly integrated with the rest of the text. Others present the author's views of the actual present-day world, and ought to have been left out entirely.

Beyond that, *Molôn Labé!* repeatedly violates the old maxim, "Show, don't tell!" Part of the craft of fiction is to come up with imagined facts, present them, and let readers draw their own conclusions from their reactions to those facts. Many passages in this book offer the reader not imagined facts, but the author's interpretation of those facts, or even the author's value judgments of characters, events, and states of affairs, which the reader is apparently supposed to accept on trust. In fact, several passages show characters in the book reaching value judgments which the reader is apparently supposed to accept on the strength of those characters being good and heroic (the characters are readily identifiable as Good Guys and Bad Guys), without actual evidence, from a woman on an airplane who is classified as an evil liberal environmentalist by her "pony-tailed brunette hair . . . heavily streaked with gray" and her choice of clothing styles to a writer who is judged as deserving death because he advocates world government.

The novel's title refers to the reply

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—Prometheus Award Finalists, continued from page 6

For Us the Living, by Robert Heinlein (Scribner); **Molôn Labé!**, by Boston T. Party [Kenneth W. Royce] (Javelin Press); **Hostile Takeover**, by Susan Schwartz (TOR); **Coyote Rising**, by Alan Steele (Ace); **The Confusion**, by Neal Stephenson (Morrow); **Iron Sunrise**, by Charles Stross (Ace); **Freehold**, by Michael Z. Williamson (Baen); **Crisscross**, by F. Paul Wilson (TOR); and **The Last Guardian of**

Everness, by John C. Wright (TOR).

The LFS Classic Fiction finalist-judging committee, chaired by Lynn Maners (lmaners@dakotacom.net), considered 15 nominees, and included Tom Gillooly, Michael Grossberg, Chris Hibbert, Joseph P. Martino, Fred Moulton, William H. Stoddard, and Victoria Varga.

Members of the Special Awards committee, chaired by Bruce Sommer, were

Rick Triplet (vice-chair, rick_2003@reason.net), Michael Grossberg, Chris Hibbert, Lynn Maners, Fred Moulton, and Victoria Varga.

Nominations are being accepted for next year's awards. Please send nominations to the appropriate awards committee.

—Reviews, continued from page 11

of the king of Sparta to the Persian emperor's offer to accept a surrender if the Spartans would lay down their arms; freely translated, it means, "Come and take them in battle." To "Party"'s credit, he takes his premise as far as realizing that it leads toward the prospect of succession, and toward military confrontation with the federal government. To his discredit, he fails to deliver either of the things his title promises, a heroic last stand by the forces of freedom, or a desperate victory of an armed populace over the United States Army. Instead, his imagined free state of Wyoming survives because the federal government is subjected to nuclear blackmail with stolen hydrogen bombs. In terms of simple fictional technique, this is a failure to carry through with his story.

There are also questions to be asked about the author's libertarian values. A credible nuclear threat against the United States government entails a willingness to kill thousands, if not millions of

other Americans, many innocent of any wrongdoing; this doesn't seem like an easy thing to defend in libertarian terms.



And in parallel to the overt progress of the free state movement, **Molôn Labé!** shows us an underground movement, the Krassnyites, devoted to killing politi-

cally undesirable people. The message in which Harold Krassny announces his two killings states only the following facts about them (as opposed to moral judgments against them made by Krassny): that the first was a Hollywood media figure who ran for the United States Senate and developed presidential ambitions and that the second was an advocate of world government who favored United Nations jurisdiction over the United States. Objectionable as such people might be, the right to hold wrong ideas is a cornerstone of libertarianism. Neither a series of secretive killings nor the theft and threatened use of hydrogen bomb warheads has any good reason to be part of a story about the free state movement, and their presence weakens the novel as fiction; and its expressed sympathy for acts of political violence—for assassination and terrorism—undermine its claim to be an expression of libertarianism.



The Newsletter of the Libertarian Futurist Society

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