

# PROMETHEUS

## Fifty works of fiction libertarians should read

By Anders Monsen

Everybody compiles lists. These usually are of the “top 10” kind. I started compiling a personal list of individualist titles in the early 1990s. When author China Miéville published one entitled “Fifty Fantasy & Science Fiction Works That Socialists Should Read” in 2001, I started the following list along the same lines, but a different focus. Miéville and I have in common some titles and authors, but our reasons for picking these books probably differ greatly.

Some rules guiding me while compiling this list included: 1) no multiple books by the same writer; 2) the winners of the Prometheus Award do not automatically qualify; and, 3) there is no limit in terms of publication date. Not all of the listed works are true sf. The first qualification was the hardest, and I worked around this by mentioning other notable books in the brief notes. I mostly excluded short stories but included two plays, one of which appeared several thousand years ago.

This is a personal list. As with any list there may be debate and questions of the compiler’s taste and sanity, etc. We read and enjoy fiction for a variety of reasons, but these books I believe are compelling for the spirit of liberty, which burns brightly within their pages.

Some of these books I last read decades ago, others very recently. They are ordered alphabetically by author, and mostly ignore the political beliefs of the author: the idea of liberty is one shared across the political spectrum. While some political philosophies clearly are at odds with individual liberty, names and labels change over time, and thus someone who considers themselves a socialist may end up writing a book that seems to counter certain views of socialism. Liberalism in the 19th and early 20th centuries is far closer to modern ideas of individualism than the idea of capitalism at that time.

Also, books have a life and soul of their own, often at odds with those of the author. Authors’ life experiences amidst certain world events also influence their fiction. As they fictionalize their experiences, thoughts and emotions bubble up into their fiction in ways they must see through to the end. Thus, you have the socialist writer George Orwell penning perhaps the greatest critique ever of socialism: *Animal Farm*. Once released into the wild, a book no longer belongs to the author, and must be judged on its own.

### **Poul Anderson — *The Star Fox* (1965)**

An oft-forgot book by the prolific and libertarian-minded Poul Anderson, a recipient of multiple awards from the Libertarian Futurist Society. This space adventure deals with war and appeasement.

### **Margaret Atwood—*The Handmaid’s Tale* (1986)**

A dystopian tale of women being oppressed by men, while being aided by other women. This book is similar to Sinclair Lewis’s *It Can’t Happen Here* or Robert Heinlein’s story “If This Goes On—,” about the rise of a religious-type theocracy in America.

### **Alfred Bester—*The Stars My Destination* (1956)**

This novel is about a man adrift with no ambition, until he is abandoned in space and his pleas for help are ignored. He is filled with a burning sense of passion for revenge, propelling a raging torrent of events. Bester wrote vivid prose and strong characters.

### **Karin Boye — *Kallocain* (1940)**

A dystopian story about the use of a truth drug by a totalitarian world state to suppress rebellion. Grim and stark, this book falls into the group of early 20th century dystopias, many reacting to the rise of the totalitarian Soviet state.

### **Ray Bradbury—*Fahrenheit 451* (1953)**

Long after every book has been digitized and those made of paper and cloth reside only in libraries, Bradbury’s classic

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**Editor**  
Anders Monsen

**Letters and Submissions:**

Anders Monsen  
501 Abiso Ave.  
San Antonio, TX 78209  
editor@lfs.org

**Award Chairs**

Best Novel — address@lfs.org  
Classic Fiction — halloffame@lfs.org

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Libertarian Futurist Society  
650 Castro St. Suite 120-433  
Mountain View, CA 94041  
**president@lfs.org**

Send mailing address changes to:  
David Tuchman  
1364 Mapleton Ave  
Suffield, CT 06078  
**treasurer@lfs.org**

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## 2012 Prometheus Award winners

For the second time in its history, there is a tie for the Best Novel award. The two winners are *The Freedom Maze* (Small Beer Press) by Delia Sherman and *Ready Player One* (Random House) by Ernest Cline. The award for Best Classic Fiction (the “Hall of Fame” award) goes to “The Machine Stops,” a short story by E. M. Forster, written in 1909.

This was the first Prometheus nomination for both Sherman and Cline. Sherman’s credits include five fantasy novels and editing two collections. *Ready Player One* is Cline’s first novel; his official bio includes a variety of odd jobs, poetry slams and writing screenplays.

Delia Sherman’s young-adult fantasy novel focuses on an adolescent girl of 1960 who is magically sent back in time to 1860 when her family owned slaves on a Louisiana plantation. She’s mistaken for a light-skinned slave fathered by a plantation owner. She endures great hardships, commiserates with others suffering worse, works in the household and the fields, and sees the other slaves demonstrating their humanity in the face of incredible adversity. In the process, she comes to appreciate the values of honor, respect, courage, and personal responsibility.

Ernest Cline’s genre-busting blend of science fiction, romance, suspense, and adventure describes a virtual world that has managed to evolve an order without a state in which entrepreneurial gamers must solve virtual puzzles and battle real-life enemies to save their virtual world from domination and corruption. The main characters work together without meeting in the real world until near the end of the story. The novel stresses the importance of allowing open access to the Internet for everyone.

“The Machine Stops” by E.M. Forster was published in 1909. Forster described it as a reaction to H.G. Wells’s fiction. The story describes a future in which most people never leave their rooms and interact only through the Machine’s video and text facilities. People in this dystopia depend on the Machine for all their needs. When the Machine falls into disrepair and fails, the people are isolated from one another and many die, though Forster depicts it as a hopeful ending with a few wild humans on the surface likely to carry on and learn to be self-sufficient again.

The other finalists for the Best Novel award were *The Children of the Sky* (TOR Books) by Vernor Vinge, *In the Shadow of Ares* (Amazon Kindle edition) by Thomas L. James and Carl C. Carlsson, *The Restoration Game* (Pyr Books) by Ken MacLeod, and *Snuff* (Harper Collins) by Terry Pratchett. MacLeod has won three Best Novel awards, Vinge has won twice, and Pratchett has won once before.

The other finalists for the Hall of Fame award were “As Easy as A.B.C.,” a story by Rudyard Kipling (1912); “‘Repent, Harlequin!’ Said the Ticktockman,” a story by Harlan Ellison (1965); and *Falling Free*, a novel by Lois McMaster Bujold (1988).

A list of past winners of LFS awards can be found on the LFS web site at <http://www.lfs.org>

# LETTERS

Reading Richard Vowles' essay on Karin Boye and *Kallockain* in *Prometheus* was fascinating—a very knowledgeable text, yet one which for reasons possibly having to do with the fact that in 1965 such things were not mentioned manages to give a both distorted and incomprehensible view of both Boye and much of her work.

Karin Boye, who lived during a time when homosexuality was still both taboo and criminal in Sweden as elsewhere, was a lesbian. In Sweden, she initially never dared speak openly of her feelings, and indeed during her active period in the socialist Clarté organisation went so far as to marry another Clarté member, Leif Björk; this is noted by Vowles, who says that this “early, unsuccessful marriage...was the first of several emotional defeats that finally led Karin Boye to seek psychiatric help in Berlin.” Boye was married to Björk in 1929, the year she became 29; hardly a particularly early marriage. She went to Berlin, which before the ascent of Hitler was viewed as the most tolerant, hedonistic and liberal city in Europe to seek help, certainly, but also liberation, and found it; it was during her year in Berlin (1932–1933) that she both sued for divorce and began living with Margot Hanel, whom she met and seduced (Boye's own word) in Berlin and who after her return home joined her in Sweden where they lived together until Boye's death. Even so, Boye could not embrace happiness: her great love from their meeting at a Christian summer camp in 1918 and until her death was Anita Nathorst, but although they became close friends, Nathorst, devoutly religious and with a degree in theology, could never allow herself to be her lover; she was headmistress of a girl's school and lived alone. At the time of Boye's death, she had left her home and partner to travel to the town of Alingsås, where Anita Nathorst was dying from cancer. Boye spent time with her, then on April 23 committed suicide. Her partner Margot Hanel killed herself the following month. Anita Nathorst succumbed to cancer in August.

When Vowles writes, “the poet trapped in a prosaic marriage, unable to realize himself in poetry or in love...undoubtedly...come close to the problems of Boye's own life,” he is certainly quite correct. But his refusal to discuss the real issues tearing Boye apart makes her incomprehensible. In fact, she was tragically just one more victim of religious and social intolerance enacted in law.

Best regards,  
John-Henri Holmberg

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Editor: Although Vowles introduction stands unchanged in the 2002 University of Wisconsin edition of *Kallockain*, a more detailed biographical essay by David McDuff can be found at <<http://www.halldor.demon.co.uk/boypage.htm>>, along with several of her poems, translated by McDuff. Boye's later life reads like a tragedy, and McDuff details far more of Boye's sexuality and how this played a role in her suicide.

## Mondo Cult #3

Edited by Jessie Lilley

Published by Brad Linaweaver, 2012, 161 pages, \$13

Reviewed by Anders Monsen

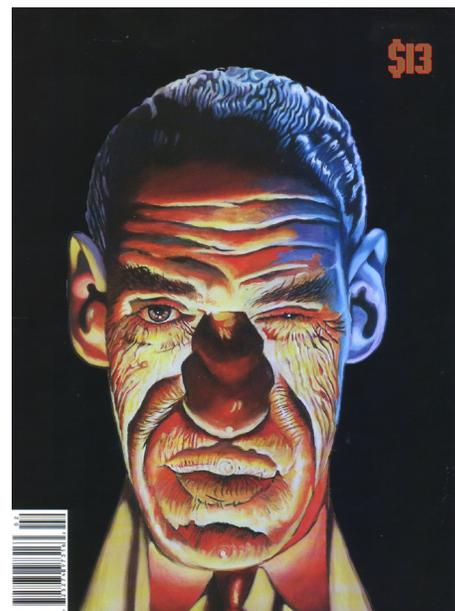
This brief review can in no way do justice to the third issue of *Mondo Cult*, which packs in several magazines' worth of material between full-cover pages. Although adhering to no solid publishing schedule, *Mondo Cult*, when it arrives, has become a critical vehicle for the review and study of classic film, music, books, and people of science fiction, horror, and fantasy. In this issue over 30 writers

contribute articles. Photos of actors, writers, and other personalities fill virtually every page, along with images of classic movie posters, advertisements and cartoons, not to mention a Frank Frazetta picture on the back cover. One could spend hours reading and re-reading this magazine, and still discover or re-discover new aspects of what is covered.

The contents are helpfully grouped by topic, such as books, comics, features, fiction, interview, film, music, and more. Interestingly, the books section is one of the smaller sections. Film gains most of the focus, with around 20 reviews and articles on such diverse topics as *Atlas Shrugged*, *King Kong*, the Narnia movies, *Sherlock Holmes*, and many more cult-like movies, including modern ones like *Kick-Ass*. From black and white to color, horror to science fiction, classics and modern re-boots, the reviews all display a love of the cinema. Some of the reviews go in-depth, setting them in context, and adding potential spoilers for those who may not have seen them. Some of the movie reviews are brief. Others, like Jerry Jewett on Narnia encompasses several movies and compares them in-depth to the original books.

There's even a nod to TV, with articles on new shows like *Grimm*, as well as old ones such as the rare and creepy version of Jack Vance's novel, *Bad Ronald*. Rare in print as well as screen, *Bad Ronald* seems sadly modern. *Dr. Who* fans William Alan Ritch and Buddy Barnett weigh in with articles about the show and obituaries of one of the characters, Elizabeth Sladen, who played Sarah Jane on the show.

Along with the interviews, I found the feature articles most interesting, with in-depth coverage of such varied people as



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novel about the destruction of books will remain relevant. The firemen in the book might be burning paper, but, in actuality, they try to destroy ideas and memories. The human condition tends toward rebellion in a desire for liberty, and thus a group of people react by striving to preserve those words and ideas. The theme of liberty appeared in other Bradbury stories, such as “Usher II” and portions of *The Martian Chronicles* and elsewhere.

**David Brin — *The Uplift War* (1987)**

In Brin’s novel, mankind is deep in space and living on other planets, one of many galactic civilizations. Not all of these populations view humans as worthy, and some launch a war to gain power over the humans. Yet, on the planet they invade lives a chimp population, which coexists with humans and is given full rights. Human and chimp resistance launches its own campaign, with consequences for both species. *Uplift War* deals with rights and liberties in subtle ways, and remains memorable for very realistic sketches of interactions between species.

**Lois McMaster Bujold — *Falling Free* (1988)**

This novel explores rights and liberties of “manufactured beings,” genetically modified humans owned by corporations. This question persists in science fiction, from the clones in Philip K. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* to Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*, or simians in F. Paul Wilson’s *Sims*. Bujold’s tale of the Quaddies deals well with the issue of rights and sentience.

**Mikhail Bulgakov — *The Master and Margarita* (1938; translated 1967)**

A dissident in his own country, Bulgakov once wrote, “manuscripts don’t burn” after being forced by Soviet authorities to burn his own writings. This surreal tale weaves in magic, Satan, and the ever-present police state of the early USSR, analyzing the issues of good and evil amidst totalitarianism.

**Edgar Rice Burroughs — *The Gods of Mars* (1918)**

Religion might be the opiate of the masses, but when pushed by the state, dissension often means death. This sequel to the more famous *A Princess of Mars* skewers blind faith. One doesn’t usually think of Burroughs, the author of Tarzan, the Pellucidar series, the Carson of Venus series, the many Barsroom novels, and a host of other pulp era action tales, as someone with political ideas expressed in fiction. Yet the vehemence with which John Carter expresses his hatred for the Therns and the aeon-long deception of the other Barsroomian races, makes this book a clear novel for liberty.

**Philip K. Dick — *The Man in the High Castle* (1962)**

This novel about daily life under totalitarianism contains stories within stories, plots within plots, and characters pretending to be people they are not. A classic PKD book, it raises more questions than it answers. It presents an alternate America where Germany and Japan defeated the US and carved out

and distributed large swaths of the world and beyond among themselves.

**Cory Doctorow — *Little Brother* (2008)**

This recent publication shows the often cruel and arbitrary reactions of those in power when they see every hesitation as subversive activity. Although the ending’s call to action seems weak in response to the type of mindset related earlier in the book, Doctorow’s thoughts on resistance and control are highly relevant in our modern Patriot Act-world.

**Joe Haldeman — *The Forever War* (1974)**

This book is an anti-war war story of human soldiers fighting an interstellar war against an alien race. Each time the soldiers return, time that spanned only years to them, in fact spanned decades or centuries on earth, an allusion to the psychological distance that war creates between the front and home. Considered one of the best, if not the best, anti-war war sf novels ever published, *The Forever War* is a must read.

**Robert A. Heinlein — *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* (1966)**

Many books have tried to bring the revolution of 1776 into space and science fiction. None have succeeded like Heinlein’s seminal novel. Every book that follows is a pale copy struggling to differentiate itself in every respect, from hurling rocks through space to rebel AIs. This book is nearly the perfect fictional tale of rebellion, with superb characters, from Mike the AI, to the narrator, Mannie and his friends, Wyoh and Professor Bernardo de la Paz. Even the slightly cynical ending works.

**Zenna Henderson — *The People: No Different Flesh* (1966)**

Along with companion novel *Pilgrimage: The Book of the People*, this novelized collection of stories deals with extraterrestrials living on Earth. A strong sense of individuality and cooperation runs through the stories. As a curious aside, this idea was made into a movie in 1971 starring William Shatner.

**James P. Hogan — *Voyage From Yesteryear* (1982)**

Hogan’s views of dealing with power expressed in this novel owes a great deal to Eric Frank Russell and Ghandi: just ignore it and work around it, lure away the oppressors to your side by example, and the edifice of power will collapse. Hogan explored the same themes in other books and short stories.

**Aldous Huxley — *Brave New World* (1932)**

*New World* is one of the other “classic dystopias” along with George Orwell’s *1984* that people often mention without having read it. In a one-world state with a tightly controlled economy and populace, babies are decanted, and everyone is happily socially conditioned. It’s a book that needs to be read often to remind us that there are people who actually see those aspects of control as beneficial, and try to secure

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the political will to impose such a society on the rest of us, a concept which might even exist in minor forms in places like North Korea.

**Henrik Ibsen — *A Doll's House* (1879)**

Hailed as an early “feminist” work, this book instead is pure individualism, exploring one person’s quest to free herself from arbitrary social rules and conventions. While hailed as a play about women’s liberation, Ibsen has gone on record that this play is about individuals’ freedom, since all individuals must be free to find their own place, and not have it imposed upon them.

**Franz Kafka — *The Trial* (1925)**

No other work of fiction has dealt as adeptly with the mindlessness of bureaucracy, although the movie *Brazil* comes close. The protagonist stumbles through the nightmare into which his life has become after a seemingly innocent matter of confusion in court.

**Ken Kesey — *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962)**

Although the movie and its performance by Jack Nicholson in the lead role is probably remembered more than the novel, this book is about institutionalized mental health patients, conditioned behavior, and the power wielded by one person.

**Arthur Koestler — *Darkness at Noon* (1940)**

When new forces come to power, they first go after their enemies, then they begin to turn on themselves. Some learn this fact too late; others, like Koestler, live to tell the tale of their disillusionment. The book is set during the Soviet show trials of 1938, where former revolutionaries suddenly became enemies of the people, to be tried and killed or exiled (see Gulag). Upon publication, this book immediately was seen as anti-Communist. Soviet fellow travelers in the US hid the atrocities that took place, with Hollywood screenwriters working to prevent the story being adapted into a movie, rather than reveal the horror taking place. Adherence to an idea that people are abstract beings who need to fit into certain models of behavior replaced concern for fellow humans as individuals.

**Victor Koman — *Kings of the High Frontier* (1998)**

A story about the space race writ on a private and massive scale. We’re seeing some of this happening right now, as more and more people look for alternatives to reach the wild black yonder. Koman, who won the Prometheus Award for his first novel, *The Jehovah Contract*, and again for *Solomon's Knife*, writes perhaps the best novel ever published about the dream of getting into space. It’s a shame this novel never gained a wider audience. *Kings of the High Frontier* spins several threads about individuals seeking to reach the stars, much like the X Prize that saw Burt Rutan’s *SpaceShipOne* reach this milestone in 2004.

**Ursula K. Le Guin — *The Dispossessed* (1974)**

The left-anarchist classic that long was debated among LFS members finally received a Hall of Fame award in 1993. At times, some of the anti-anarchist ideas seem desirable to individualists, while some of the utopian aspects seem alien. Regardless, this book is an important work that explores one of the many options in free societies.

**Fritz Leiber — *Gather, Darkness* (1950)**

More well-known for his Ffard and Mouser fantasy stories, Fritz also wrote sf, and this book deals with a technocratic future and a group of strange rebels.

**Ira Levin — *This Perfect Day* (1970)**

A modern dystopia by the author of *Rosemary's Baby*, a far more famous book. In the tradition of *1984* and *Brave New World*, Levin sketches a bleak utopia founded on uniformity, where weather is controlled, people are drugged into obedience, and selfishness is punished, and one person wakes up and seeks to change his world.

**C.S. Lewis — *That Hideous Strength* (1945)**

Third in the trilogy that began with *Perelandra* and *Out of the Silent Planet*, this book takes place on Earth. There are hints of a police state in the takeover of a local village, and demonstrates the power of bureaucracy.

**Sinclair Lewis — *It Can't Happen Here* (1935)**

Possibly the first American dystopia, this book is about the rise of fascism in America in the 1930s. The novel is less memorable for the type of dictatorship that erupts (fascism vs. socialism vs. other) than for the fact that it happens in America, land of the free.

**Brad Linaweaver — *Moon of Ice* (1988)**

Expanded from his Nebula finalist novella of the same name, an alternate history following WWII. *Moon of Ice* shows a radical alternate history where America slipped toward libertarianism, with a mixed bag of results, while Germany solidified its position through the development of nukes. Linaweaver later co-wrote (with Ken Hastings) an alternate history story set in the Spanish civil war in the 1930s, *Anarquía*.

**Ken MacLeod — *The Stone Canal* (1996)**

Set in the same universe as *The Star Fraction*. While the former contained a libertarian enclave in North London, this novel debates libertarian ideas amid the Martian landscape. MacLeod’s sympathies may lie elsewhere, but he gives individualist ideas a fair hearing in his books, and also writes cracking good stories.

**Victor Milán — *The Cybernetic Samurai* (1985)**

One of the forgotten novels of the early cyberpunk scene. A team of scientists in Japan after WWII create an artificial intelligence, one imbued with personality and a sense of honor.

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When confronted with the question of power, and the destruction this often brings, how will it choose? Is power inevitable or can something with ultimate power consider and act on the ultimate sacrifice?

**Alan Moore & David Lloyd — V for Vendetta (1985)**

This is the classic anarchist graphic novel. In a dystopian Great Britain, people are rounded up and killed, like in Hitler's Germany for various "sins" declared by a conservative/fascist government. People are the subjects of terrible experiments, and out of those experiments rises a masked avenger seeking retribution and liberation. Darker than any Batman comic, the ambiguous and violent nature of the main character, V, may raise questions, as might his manipulation and mind control over his protégé Evey Hammond. Considering who created V in the story, perhaps that violence is an appropriate result.

**George Orwell — 1984 (1949)**

An original dystopian novel, it is the source for such classic terms as Big Brother, Memory Hole, and more. Orwell's other major work is the equally vital *Animal Farm* (1945). People still refer to *1984* today as the model of a dictatorship where everyone is watched, and people actually believe the story prevented this type of future from happening, when in reality it is already here, or at least in some part.

**Terry Pratchett — Feet of Clay (1996)**

While another one of Pratchett's novels won the Prometheus Award (*Night Watch*), and there are rich veins of anti-authoritarian and anti-bureaucratic ideas in his other Discworld books, I believe that *Feet of Clay* hews closer to the libertarian ideals of individual freedom, and so I picked this book. Like the traditions of clones, robots, Quaddies, in Discworld, there are ample opportunities to view certain types of beings as "lesser" and thus exploitable (this showed up again in *Snuff*, another recent novel). In this case, Golems are the ones in thrall, who find the chance to rise up and claim their own selves.

**Ayn Rand — Atlas Shrugged (1957)**

Perhaps the most influential work of fiction ever written, this book virtually requires no introduction. For emotional appeal, the much shorter *Anthem* also is recommended. Some Rand fans point to her Soviet rebellion novel, *We the Living*, or even *The Fountainhead* as more accessible books. Yet, *Atlas* towers above these in scope and ambition.

**J. K. Rowling — Harry Potter and Order of the Phoenix (2005)**

The Harry Potter novels span many topics. The story of a boy who survived attempted murder by an evil wizard, grows up in a room under the stairs, and arrives at a school of magic as a famous eleven-year-old became a publishing phenomenon. Young Harry is a rebel, who breaks school rules in his quest to defeat the evil Lord Voldemort. Some school rules, like sp,e in society, are often silly and arbitrary. Yet the

fifth book in the series took a quantum leap in subversive action. *The Order of the Phoenix* pits Harry and his friends against the Ministry of Magic and its power-crazed representative, Dolores Umbridge. While the Minister of Magic hides his head in the sand regarding Voldemort, unconsciously aiding and abetting him by suppressing any mention or preparation against Voldemort and his allies, Umbridge is the very epitome of bureaucratic excess. Will young readers absorb the lessons of questioning authority? Whether or not that happens, this book embodies well that lesson, in the personal costs of deliberate refusal to go along.

**Eric Frank Russell — The Great Explosion (1962)**

How to resist authority without violence? In Russell's satirical novel, we encounter an unusual society. Calling themselves Gands after a famous passive resister, they have a society based on cooperation and barter through obligations, or "obs." Some of the passive resistance is echoed later in James P. Hogan's works.

**J. Neil Schulman — The Rainbow Cadenza (1982)**

Schulman's second novel tackles a difficult topic—women drafted to serve a time in sexual servitude, in a society where they are outnumbered by men. Schulman explores libertarian themes in a culture that accepts many of today's socially controversial themes, yet he also makes the coercive selective service a key element of the novel. Both utopian and dystopian at the same time.

**Robert Shea & Robert Anton Wilson—Illuminatus! (1975)**

Three books in one (*Eye in the Pyramid*, *The Golden Apple*, and *Leviathan*), this trilogy covers drugs, conspiracies, and sex. While perhaps somewhat dated as a 1970s novel, the books still contain many libertarian ideas and a vast sense of adventure and conspiracy, paranoia and wacky theories and actions.

**Mary Shelley — Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus (1818)**

Long hailed as a book about the excess of science, this short novel bears within it the same germs of liberty as the character of Satan in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (and indeed, the creature at one point refers to itself as Frankenstein's "fallen angel"), as Frankenstein's creation struggles to come to grips with its existence. Dr. Frankenstein, trying to wrest the problem of death into creating eternal life, much like Prometheus wresting fire from the gods, encounters a side effect, which imbues his creation with a unique conscience. Shelley raises the question of will and the moral choices between good and evil. This book often is hailed as spawning both the genres of science fiction and horror.

**L. Neil Smith — The Probability Broach (1980)**

A classic of libertarian science fiction and alternate worlds, *The Probability Broach* offers a libertarian utopia, matched only perhaps by Galt's Gulch in Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*. What begins as a hard-boiled detective story slips sideways into science fiction, and turns into a non-stop tale of action,

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conspiracy, and politics. Smith followed up this book with several others in the series, such as *The Gallatin Divergence*, *The Nagasaki Vector*, *The Venus Belt*, and a direct sequel some years later, *The American Zone*. Along the way he has written over 20 novels and remains the most libertarian sf writer ever. A graphic novel appeared in 2004.

**Alexander Solzhenitsyn — *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962)**

The Soviet Gulag remains a deep pit of despair in human history. Much like the zeks mined the pits of Kolyma and elsewhere in the harsh Siberian north for gold, writers have mined the Gulag experience for insight into the human condition. I debated whether or not to include more books from this era, such as Varlam Shalamov's *Kolyma Tales*, or Andrey Platonov's *The Foundation Pit* and others, but for now I stuck with perhaps the most famous of them all, Solzhenitsyn's short and stark novel about the day in the life of one prisoner, or zek. Soviet writers have a tremendous amount of real-life dystopian material from which they can create dark fiction.

**Sophocles — *Antigone* (442 B.C.)**

*Antigone* is the oldest entry in this list, from almost 2,500 years ago. This play is famous for being one of the first ever published instances of an act of defiance against the state by an individual. It might be a stretch to claim Sophocles as a "libertarian," but the seeds of individualism versus the state are present in this play.

**John Steinbeck—*The Moon is Down* (1942)**

Written during WWII as a propaganda novel against the Nazis, this is a brilliant resistance novel, translated into languages of several of the occupied countries in Europe and declared illegal by the Germans.

**Neal Stephenson — *Snow Crash* (1992)**

One of the best cyberpunk novels ever written, *Snow Crash* is snappy and inventive, and wildly anarchic. Private security companies handle previously monopolized state activity. America is Balkanized into various different societies, some almost anarcho-capitalist. A picaresque novel through a real and virtual world.

**A.E. Van Vogt — *The Weapon Shops of Isher* (1951)**

"The right to own weapons is the right to be free." So states the motto of the Weapon Makers, who see themselves as the permanent opposition to tyranny. This group exists as a way to preserve the right of individuals to defend themselves; they do not interfere with politics, except to help arm those who wish to defend themselves.

**Jack Vance—*Emphyrio* (1969)**

Along with *The Blue World*, *Wyst: Alastor 1716*, *The Faceless Man*, *Gold and Iron*, and others, the theme of the individual at odds with conformist forces is often present in the works

of Jack Vance. Yet none quite cover the acts of rebellion in an oppressive welfare-state-like society as much as *Emphyrio*. *Emphyrio* is the tale of a young boy and his father, and how casual acts of rebellion have grave repercussions that can lead to more radical acts of rebellion.

**Vernor Vinge — *A Deepness in the Sky* (1999)**

*The Peace War*, "The Ungoverned", *Marooned in Realtime* all might claim a place on this list, yet none are as fully realized in constricting liberty and command societies as *A Deepness in the Sky*. Through the alien Spider we see the search for individualistic, classic liberal ideas. Meanwhile a space-faring civilization employs a mind-control technique to force obedience and productivity. The dual plots come to a head around the Spider world.

**T.H. White — *The Book of Merlyn* (1977)**

A sort of sequel to *The Once and Future King*, this book has two interesting chapters on very different societies, one, based on ants, the other based on swans. The former is a life-less, totalitarian society in which individuality does not exist. The latter, quite the opposite.

**Jack Williamson — *The Humanoids* (1949)**

Originally published as a short story, and expanded into a novel and subsequent sequel (*The Humanoid Touch*), this book deals with consequences of mitigating risk, to smoothen the rough edges of life. The humanoids are robots built by an individual to help mankind. Ostensibly their mission is "to serve and obey and guard men from harm." However, as they interpret this mission, it takes on a whole new meaning, and the robots strive to protect man from every possible dangerous action, rendering most actions useless. Williamson takes aim at the dangers of benevolent protection, and shows this concept taken to its logical conclusion.

**F. Paul Wilson — *An Enemy of the State* (1980)**

F. Paul Wilson has written non-political thrillers, horror, and other fiction, but his most explicit libertarian work also has the most libertarian title ever attached to a novel. This novel along with *Healer* and *Wheels Within Wheels* form the LaNague trilogy. Today Wilson is better known for his Repairman Jack series, with Jack as a sort of libertarian anti-hero. LaNague, on the other hand, is a full-fledged rebel agitator. Wilson's Repairman Jack novels possibly take some inspiration from the KYFHO philosophy expressed by some libertarian-minded individuals in the LaNague books.

**Yevgeny Zamiatin — *We* (1921)**

Another major dystopian novel, experienced in large part by the early Soviets (including the author), in which millions suffered and died as a consequence of communism. Set in a future world with a single state, total surveillance (people live in glass houses) and uniformity in appearance. This is the state visualized in Apple's 1984 advertisement, via Orwell's classic novel which borrowed so much from *We*. As in many other novels, love leads to rebellion, yet betrayal and defeat often fall upon those who try to rebel against an all-powerful state.

—*Mondo Cult review, continued from page 3*

Hans Christian Anderson and H. P. Lovecraft, A. E. Van Vogt and Rondo Hatton. Brad Linaweaver's article on Lovecraft brings up Charles Stross, some of whose novels merge Lovecraft and James Bond into something weird and delightful.

Having reviewed some Atlanta Radio Theatre Company productions in the past for *Prometheus*, I enjoyed reading Brad Strickland's essay on their history and productions. I had no idea that ARTC did a *Guards! Guards!* production back in 2001, nor how difficult it can be to get the rights for audio adaptations.

Among the interviewees in *Mondo Cult* are Britt Lomond, who acted in Disney's TV show, *Zorro*, along with a host of other shows in the 1950s and 1960s. There are brief interviews with Roger Corman and John Landis, and others in the movie business. The business of making movies can often be as interesting (if not more so) than the actual movies. Of the books reviewed, the only one I recognized was William Patterson's Robert A. Heinlein biography (volume one), *Robert A. Heinlein: In Dialog with His Century*. The focus on other forms of culture came at a cost to the books; graphic novels, comic books, regular fiction received scant coverage.

Closing out the magazine is Brad Linaweaver's illustrated paean to Ray Bradbury and the power of fiction, "Clutter," with an alternate ending from Ray Bradbury. In this story, a teenager comes to live with his aunt after the death of his

parents. A fanatic about cleanliness, she decides he has "too many books," and sets out to reform him, to punish him for what she calls his selfishness. One cannot help but feel the horror, the horror, when a rare Arkham House edition of Ray Bradbury's story collection, *Dark Carnival*, is broken and destroyed. To a fan, this is akin to murder, which makes the villain almost too easy to hate, yet the tale no less powerful. And then, seeing Bradbury's comments about the ending brought to light with a page of his alternate ending seemed quite generous. Having recently re-read several Ray Bradbury stories, his voice in those few words are vintage Bradbury.

With over 160 pages of material, this ambitious third issue of *Mondo Cult* easily surpasses the prior two issues in scope and size. Publisher Brad Linaweaver and editor Jessie Lilley clearly have performed a massive labor of love in producing and writing this magazine. *Mondo Cult #3* is wellworth a look; we may never see its like again, with the expense of paper, print and mailing costs trending ever upward. Copies can be ordered online at <<http://www.mondocult.com>>, where new articles continue to appear, including a moving tribute to Ray Bradbury, who died in 2012. The web might be the future, but occasionally we need these windows to our past that grace the dying breed like only a print magazine such as *Mondo Cult* can provide.



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501 Abiso Ave.  
San Antonio, TX 78209