

PROMETHEUS

1996 Prometheus nominees

Alan Dean Foster & Eric Frank Russell, **Design for Great-Day** • Ursula LeGuin, **Four Ways to Forgiveness** • Ken MacLeod, **The Star Fraction** • Victor Milán, **CLD** • Thomas F. Monteleone, **The Resurrectionist** • Titus Stauffer, **Bats in the Belfry, by Design** • Neal Stephenson, **The Diamond Age** • S. Andrew Swann, **Profiteer: Hostile Takeover #1** • F. Paul Wilson, **Implant**

The Star Fraction, Ken MacLeod, Lengend, 1995, £10, 341 pages
Reviewed by Anders Monsen

Every now and then, a novel appears that blows away even the most jaded of readers. A novel, rather than consumed and forgotten, that burns itself in your memory, jolts you out of your easy chair, and widens your mind, drunk on the wine of words and ideas.

The Star Fraction is such a novel.

This novel is superbly styled, richly imagined, and layered with the ore of libertarian ideas.

The protagonist, Moh Kohn, is a gun for hire. He is not an assassin, but part of private security force, one of many such competing agencies that have arisen in a world half a century into the future, a world fighting back from the ashes of war. This profession alone is enough to the pique the interest of any reader. Even more interesting is the fact the Kohn is a socialist, quite comfortable with his free market profession, where he satisfies an economic demand: protection.

The people that tend to hire Kohn's kind are scientists, besieged by Greens

and eco-terrorists. During one such operation, Kohn is exposed to a memory enhancing drug developed by Janis Taine. The drug awakens long forgotten memories of when Kohn's father wrote complex computer programs, among which were AI development.

These memories trigger a AI construct in the world net, and Kohn immediately becomes the target, along with Taine, of statist forces who want to shut down any potential AI that might run rampant through their systems. They seek hiding and protection in Norlonto, an anarcho-capitalist enclave in Northern London, where Kohn's operations are based, and where free market principles rule.

Spinning into this whirlpool of events are several brilliantly drawn characters, such as young stock market genius/hacker Jordan Brown. Jordan, a resident of a strongly religious enclave, is a radical individualist, who developed his ideas despite the propaganda of his mini-society. After a transaction where he encounters 'something' in cyberspace, he flees into Norlonto, and into direct contact with Kohn and the cybermind Kohn's memories awoke. Libertarian individualists may well identify more with

Jordan than Kohn, but the differences are marginal.

The rich cast of characters includes a pair of unsavory Stasis heavies, members of the UN/US controlling world-force. This control is nominal, but expanding, and there is a sense of defeat in the novel. Such defeat is almost standard in libertarian sf, that liberty on Earth is doomed, and the only hope lies in the great beyond: space.

If I have problems with **The Star Fraction** it lies in MacLeod's sense of *time*. Although set fifty years hence, the novel fails to fully consider the phenomenal rate of change in language and technology. Common computer culture terms such as email, gopher, fetch, kill-files, and VR seem anachronistic. Fifty years ago, phone numbers were tied into street addresses, such as Madrone 1242; it is dubious that the electronic world half a century into the future still uses domain names and email identical to our use today, complete with the @ sign.

Of course, in the novel, *fetch* and *gopher* are virtual entities, not computer

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Editor's Corner

by Anders Monsen



Award news

This year's Prometheus and Hall of Fame Awards will be presented at the Worldcon in Los Angeles, August 28. Exact date and place of the Awards has not yet been set.

There is currently a rough proposal before LFS to change the name of the Hall of Fame Award in honor of a famous writer. The same proposal suggests expanding the Awards to include short fiction. It is too early to provide any details, but this proposal will be submitted to the membership of LFS for consideration later this year.

Call for help

LFS is seeking volunteers to help with *Prometheus* and to expand the role and visibility of LFS. One key area for the newsletter is Art Director, soliciting and finding, or creating cover art and stand-

alone interior images for the issues.

I would like to see less text on the cover and more science fiction art. Once the issue expands beyond its current eight-page format, we will have more room for creative art and design.

One major neglected area of libertarian fiction, in the pages of *Prometheus* and the Prometheus Awards, has been short fiction. During the founding of LFS in 1982, there was discussions of creating an award for short fiction. This never progressed beyond discussions and proposals. Since that time the issue has surfaced again and again, but little mention of short fiction has been made in *Prometheus*. To attempt to remedy this, LFS is looking for one or more volunteers as Short Fiction Review Editor(s).

The task of this editor, or editors, will be to read fiction magazines and write brief mentions of stories of interest to libertarians. Reviews of classic short fiction also are welcome. As examples of these stories, I present the following, far from complete, list of short stories I think libertarians will find interesting.

F. Paul Wilson, "Lipidleggin'" and "Green Winter"; A.E. Van Vogt, "The Weapon Shops"; Jack Vance, "Dodkin's Job"; Harlan Ellison, "'Repent Harlequin,' Said the Tick Tock Man"; Vernor Vinge, "The Ungoverned" and "True Names"; William Tenn, "The Liberation of Earth"; Ray Bradbury, "Usher II" and "The Pedestrians"; Franz Kafka, "An Old Manuscript" and "In the Penal Colony"; Brad Linaweaver, "Clutter"; Poul Anderson, "Sam Hall" and "No Truce With Kings"; Barry N. Malzberg, "Conversations at Lothar's"; Øyvind Myhre, "Bull Running's War"; and Robert Sheckley, "Street of Dreams, Feet of Clay."

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Apologies to Vin Suprynowicz and William Stoddard, for bumping their reviews to the July issue. That issue also will include an reprint of a non-fiction essay by L. Neil Smith.

PROMETHEUS

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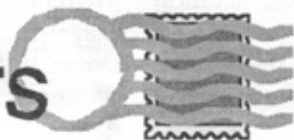
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1996 Hall of Fame nominees

Poul Anderson, *The Winter of the World*; Lee Correy, *Manna*; Sergeann Golon, *The Countess Angeline*; Cameron Hawley, *Cash McCall*; Henry Hazlitt, *Time Will Run Back*; Robert Heinlein, *Red Planet*; Donald Kingsburg, *Courtship Rite*; Fritz Leiber, *Gather, Darkness*; Kevin O'Donnel, Jr, *War of Omission*; Norman Spinrad, *Agent of Chaos*; S.M. Stirling, *Under the Yoke*; S.M. Stirling, *The Stone Yoke*; S.M. Stirling, *Marching Through Georgia*; Jack Vance, *Blue World*; Jack Vance, *Emphyrio*; Walter Jon Williams, *Hardwired*; Jack Williamson, *The Humanoids*

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Letters



I just read **The Resurrectionist**, a great and very libertarian suspense-supernatural thriller by Thomas Monteleone. I want to nominate it for the Prometheus Award. It's a Warners Books hardback, published in 1995.

The novel features lots of anti-government analysis. The central character is a bad politician who has a change of heart after a near-death experience following a plane crash. The government attempts to kidnap and kill him through a secret spy organization.

It's an exposé of double standards in ethics between private individuals and governments, and a very well written, exciting novel.

—Michael Grossberg

I have two books to suggest for consideration for the Prometheus Award. First is Melanie Rawn's **The Ruins of Ambrai**—a surprising work, a fantasy

set on another planet where there are two different orders of mages, one believing in individual freedom of choice and the other in central planning by the (magically) wise.

There are clear allusions to the art of conspiracy as practiced in **The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress** and there's some very lucid discussion of the corruption of market economies by statism.

[This novel was published in 1994, and therefore is not eligible for this year's Prometheus Award. However, the book does deserve attention by libertarian fiction fans, and Stoddard's review will appear in the July issue of Prometheus—Editor]

A less clear case, but well worth reading, is Neal Stephenson's **The Diamond Age**. This has a future where privacy has destroyed the nation state and replaced it with the ethnic kindred, with an international body whose job is to

make sure everyone follows common economic protocols, and one of the dominant ethnic kindreds being Anglo-Americans who believe in the Victorian ethic. There's even something called the First Distributed Republic which seems like an intelligent though slantwise reading of anarcho-capitalism.

—William Stoddard

I'm thrilled by [Bill Howell's] review [of **Self Control Not Gun Control**, *Prometheus*, Vol. 14, No. 1], which I just read. He's the first reviewer who actually understood that this isn't just a gun book like **Stopping Power**; he MAY be the first reviewer who actually read it.

—J. Neil Schulman

Thanks for the latest *Prometheus*. For a moment, seeing Brinke Stevens on the front page, I thought it was Joe Bobb Briggs' newsletter.

Thanks for the kind words about **Implant**. I'm surprised to see it as a Prometheus nominee (I don't consider it SF) but very pleased.

—F. Paul Wilson

Prometheus Project

New fiction by L. Neil Smith

Bretta Martyn, a sequel to L. Neil Smith's 1989 novel **Henry Martyn**, currently is under contract to Tor Books. The new novel is set 15 years after the first book, and concerns Arran Islay's teenage daughter Robretta. Most of the original characters return, plus many more new ones. Lots of surprises—there's a new Ceo of Hanover. And we'll get to the bottom of the Oplyte Slaver Trade.

L. Neil Smith's celebrated first novel, **The Probability Broach** (1980), winner of the Prometheus Award in 1982, will be republished, with material restored, by Tor Books in October, 1996, as well as new cover art and an introduction by Andrea Rich of Laissez Faire Books.

Brad Linaweaver made the Nebula Preliminary ballot for his short story, "Wells of Wisdom" (*Galaxy* 6/ 1994).

Linaweaver had three novels published this year within a few months of each other. His **Sliders** novel was published by Boulevard in March. **Sliders: The Novel**, is reviewed in this issue.

In June, Pocket will release the new Doom novels, co-written by Linaweaver and libertarian co-conspirator Dafydd ab Hugh. The third and fourth novels in the series are sub-titled **Thy Flesh Consumed** and **Endgame**, respectively.

Victor Milán has three novels due out in 1996. **New Order**, a sequel to his Prometheus Award-nominated novel, **CLD** (Collective Landing Detachment), will be published by AvoNova in De-

cember. Penguin/ROC is publishing two BattleTech novels by Milan. **Hearts of Chaos** will be out in June, and **Black Dragon** in November.

F. Paul Wilson edits a horror anthology, **Diagnosis: Terminal**, to be published by Tor/Forge in July. His multimedia tie-in novel, **Mirage**, co-written with Matthew Costello, is due in August by Warner.

Vernor Vinge is the editor of a forthcoming non-fiction anthology, **True Names and the Opening of the Cyberspace Frontier**, published by Tor in August. History may yet succeed in granting Vinge primacy over the 'cyberpunks' in having created the first vision of cyberspace.

Special thanks to L. Neil Smith and Brad Linaweaver, who contributed to this section.

Reviews

The Diamond Age, or, A Young Lady's Illustrated

Primer, Neal Stephenson. New

York: Bantam Spectra, 1995.

Reviewed by William Stoddard

In contrast to most Prometheus nominees, *The Diamond Age* seems to have little ideological content. It does have moral content, but the focus of that content is not on the value of freedom or private property, but on the value of loyalty and discipline. Several of the major characters belong to a culture deliberately modelled on the Victorian Era, and a conversation early in the novel tells us that this culture is viewed as undisciplined by many of the world's other cultures—for example, by the neo-Confucians of the Han. So where's the libertarianism?

As it turns out, something like libertarianism appears to be built into the infrastructure of Stephenson's future world. Midway through, we learn that one of its historical *données* is that unbreachable privacy has made the na-

tion-state obsolete by making taxation impossible.

In its place, we find a mixture of "signatory tribe[s], phyle[s], registered diaspora[s], franchise-organized national entit[ies], sovereign polit[ies], or...other form[s] of dynamic security collective" held together by a set of rules, the Protocols, and a body dedicated to their enforcement but not claiming any form of sovereignty. "Economic transaction" is defined broadly here; it includes theft and even mayhem and penalties for both in confiscation of assets or forced labor.

The sole purpose of the Protocols is to enable economic transactions to take place between members of different cultures according to a coherent system of rules. Moreover, it appears that membership in these organized bodies is largely by individual choice. There are references to neo-Victorians having taken the Oath, and to other groups having recruiting policies. There is even a First Distributed Republic that appears to reflect the libertarian ideas of our own time.

In short, whatever disciplines and rigidities people have imposed on themselves come much closer to being their

own choices than in our time, and in that measure Stephenson's future comes closer to being libertarian. It still has darker elements, ranging from terrorist gangs to the abandonment of a quarter of a million infant girls by Chinese parents unable to support them due to aquifer depletion, but the overall feeling is more like the relative peace and prosperity of the nineteenth century.

Within this framework, Stephenson poses a problem that faces any ethical movement: while the neo-Victorians themselves largely adhere to their code because they have personally become convinced that the alternatives are undesirable, their children will have grown up under it and follow it out of simple conformity to tradition—and thus will lack both real understanding of their own customs, and the creative drive of their parents. As a solution to this problem, one of his characters devises the novel's *Marvelous Invention*, the *Young Lady's Illustrated Primer*, from which it takes its title.

The inventor, commissioned by a nobleman to make it for the nobleman's granddaughter, attempts to create a bootleg copy for his own daughter; this copy itself is stolen and ends up in the possession of a poor girl growing up in the slums of Shanghai, whose education becomes the center of Stephenson's narrative.

But why choose to live within such constraints at all? For Stephenson's characters, the answer is simple: life without constraints, as in the late twentieth century, was intolerable, both because it prevented individual accomplishment and because it exposed people to other people's destructive behavior. (At one point the students in a girls' school are exposed to simulations of a Victorian workhouse and a late twentieth century American slum, and conclude that the first is much less unpleasant.)

At one level, this is a novel about technology: pseudo-intelligence, nanomachines, and all their implications. But at a deeper level, it is a novel about

Ambuehl Ulakey

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Internet Consulting

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Savior of Fire, Robert B. Boardman, Blue Note Books, 1991, 294 pages, \$5.95)

Reviewed by Jim. Davidson

It's not often that an important work of philosophy takes the form of an author's first science fiction novel. **Savior of Fire** is an enjoyable romp as a work of fiction. Its science isn't terribly hard and the characters are brilliantly conceived, so it might be classed as New Wave. But it is much more.

You've just got to like a story that opens with a line like, "At noon the sun exploded." To come upon an author with the intestinal fortitude to start with a supernova and move on from there is a rare thing—I'm convinced that the first line alone is worth the price of admission.

Savior of Fire is clearly meant to be read for enjoyment. Yet underlying this good read is a carefully crafted, well-developed economic philosophy.

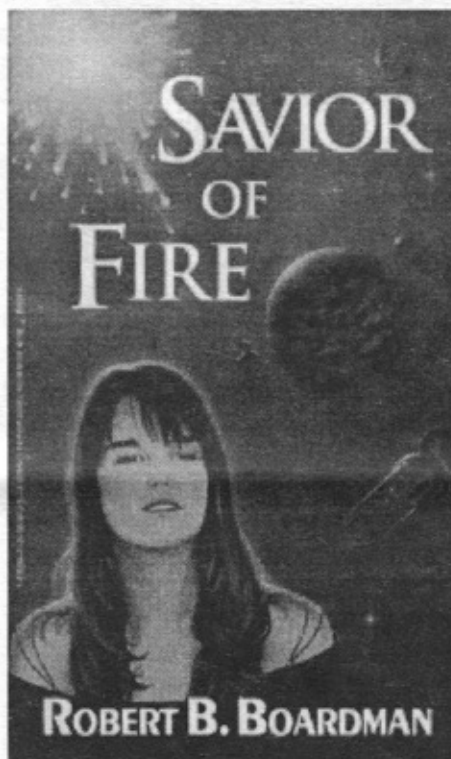
Entrepreneurs and liberty-minded individualists will love this story as much for its high regard for capitalistic values as for its readability.

Not since **Atlas Shrugged** has the novel been used to evoke a philosophical point so delightfully. **Savior of Fire's** characters are fully dimensioned, excellent studies of humanity who grow and evolve through the story. By paying attention to his characters and creating strong ones, Boardman succeeds in making **Savior of Fire** even more poignant.

The planet Fire is inhabited by human beings. In the 22nd Century, visitors from Earth arrive, study the fairly advanced civilization of Fire, and decide to send help. Fire is already quite successful economically and technologically, but lacks what the antagonist Gordon Boston calls an advanced spiritual outlook. Boston sets out to help the Firelings help each other. In this way, Boardman sets up an intriguing commentary on life in America.

The point Boardman is making is best served if the people of Fire are human beings just like those of Earth. Rather

than belabor the point with some sort of unskillful prehistoric tale that gives gas pains to any paleoanthropologist reader, Boardman plays with early historical myths for his explanation, which is at once lighthearted and acceptable. He makes his point that Earth and Fire are populated with the same species without resorting to complexity. Rather, he openly invites the reader to play along and see what results. He clearly wants to challenge anyone who says that the



economic system under which the people of Fire have flourished wouldn't work for Earthlings.

One of the central characters is an economist named John Maynard. That name seems appropriate when you realize that Boardman is criticizing some of the economic theories of John Maynard Keynes, the British economist whose work was the basis for the governmental intervention typified by the New Deal. If economics is a science, then this book represents economic science fiction at its best. It becomes only natural that the economist should play a central and eventually heroic role.

I realized how very much I liked not

only the book but also the people of Fire when John Maynard explains to the antagonist, "On the planet Fire, Gordon, the people do not have, never have had, and don't even understand the concept of taxes." Naturally, the social balance of Fire is considerably upset when the Earthlings arrive. Adding to the irony, it is a cabinet-level, United States Department of Space Exploration mission which finds Fire in the 22nd Century. The space program is clearly an extension of the current, government-oriented, jet-jockey-dominated, space-for-the-elite program of today.

It was the ability of the people of Fire, led by their heroine, to overcome the challenges of the bizarre economics of Earth that was the best part of this book for me. It suggests that there is some hope for changing the system we live under.

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Science Funding: Politics &

Porkbarrel, Joseph P. Martino, Transaction Publishers, 1992, 392 pages, \$32.95.

Reviewed by Victoria Varga

This book should have been reviewed in *Prometheus* several years ago, but I didn't know about it until I found two copies on the "New Acquisitions" shelf in the American Center Library here in Warsaw.

LFS member Joseph P. Martino is a senior research scientist at the Research Institute of the University of Dayton in Ohio. His book is extremely useful for those interested in the history of science funding in this country and how the intrusion of politics into the funding process has in recent years distorted scientific research and science itself.

The book boasts as clear an explanation of the economics of public choice as I've ever read, and a non-preachy, non-

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Bats in the Belfry, By Design,
Titus Stauffer, Free Voice Press, 1995,
\$14.95, Trade paperback, 478 pages
Reviewed by Anders Monsen

In a novel with one of the most intriguing titles to date, debut writer Stauffer blends a controversial scientific subject—genetic engineering—with hard core libertarian attitudes.

The novel is set a few years down the road from our own time, in an America sagging under the weight of welfare stat-

ism and certain ascending third world countries out to stake their claims to the global pot. Stauffer focuses his action on two sides. He exposes the candidly scheming government, self-conscious of their rule-bending when they initiate a covert biowarfare project, and dovetails this with a private sector genetic engineering company and the consciences of the individuals working within that company.

The novel's protagonist, Phil Schrock, is a basic libertarian pot-smoking scientist, who conceives of a way to literally build pest-eating insects from scratch. Working for the ABC company developing this idea, it is not long before the omnipresent government snoops in on Schrock's discovery and begins to siphon off data, for use with their biowar project. ABC security detects this, and feeds off-center data to the government, who in the end muscles in on ABC with a government contract. Unable to steal good data, the government must approach Schrock openly, or rather, as openly as any government can, with the muted threat of force ever-lurking.

Schrock's difficult choice, as a libertarian, is whether to continue his work and become a "whore for the state," or to rebuff the state's advances and remain pure but risk government sanction and a future of poverty.

As always, the bioweapons imagined by the state become realities, and soon

the US enters an escalating war against China. Bioweapon creatures are manufactured, and become horrors against which both sides must battle.

Bats in the Belfry is frustrating because the ideas and power of a thrilling novel are there, but the final result is hampered by choppy delivery and characterization. The ideas and libertarian/scientific intent is ever present, almost too present, as characters digress into long speeches on everything from love to basic liberties. There is an unfortunate lack of subtlety among all the characters. Even evil characters are candid that their actions are underhanded, that their motives are suspect, and that they care little about others. Rather than overpowering the reader, it is more often a case of over-explaining.

Genetic engineering is a fascinating subject, rife with social and political implications. Stauffer's science is credible, and stretches the "what if" of sf lore to fascinating limits. He also views science as beneficial, not destructive.

Despite some misgiving about dialog and style, there is tremendous promise in this novel. I am not suggesting toing down the libertarian ideas, but rather the method of delivering those ideas. Style is never a substitute for content, but a vital element. A streamlined, more subtle approach tends to pack a harder punch. This is the challenge new libertarian sf must meet.

The Diamond Age review, continued from page 4

culture. Stephenson directly challenges some of the commonplaces of our time, showing us a future in which the equality of all cultures is regarded as an outmoded delusion; cultures that support scientific rationality, self-discipline, and the accumulation of capital are better than others and deserve the wealth and happiness that results.

Stephenson carefully makes the point that this is not a question of genetic or racial difference—the nobleman who starts the project, an eminently successful neo-Victorian, is in fact a Korean orphan raised in Iowa, whereas the poor little girl growing up in Hong Kong is of

white American ancestry—but he questions the cultural egalitarianism that emerged in the 1920s as an overreaction against earlier racism, and the anomie that results from it. This is by today's standards a radical idea, perhaps an intolerable one, and it's a pleasure to see an author reclaiming the role of sf as a literature of social criticism in which such ideas can be presented freely.

This is not the only pleasure Stephenson offers. There's the setting, a world seen through both panoramic views and intricate details in a way not equalled since **Stand on Zanzibar**. There are vivid characterizations of people from

diverse social classes and cultures. There is the re-creation of nineteenth century fictional modes, from the children's fairy tale to the novel of education to the swashbuckling romance, reflecting the return to nineteenth century values and virtues that is a central theme of the novel. Stephenson offers so many pleasures that you may not notice how much he makes you think—exactly the intended effect of the fictional object *The Young Lady's Illustrated Primer*, which thus becomes an image of Stephenson's own fictional project, a self-referentiality that perfectly sums up the style of *The Diamond Age*.

Sliders: The Novel,

Brad Linaweaver, Boulevard, March, 1996. \$5.99, 234 pages.

Reviewed by Anders Monsen

Brad Linaweaver's latest novel is based on the Fox TV show, *Sliders*, created by Tracy Torme and Robert K. Weiss. Strip away the media tie-in however, and *Sliders: The Novel* easily functions as a stand alone work and a superb alternate history novel. Linaweaver has wide experience with alternate history in fiction; after all, his Prometheus award winning novel, *Moon of Ice*, is perhaps the most daring and interesting alternative history novel ever written of Nazi Germany winning the war.

Sliders: The Novel, takes a different approach. It is set in our time, in a very familiar San Francisco, and while not as impeccably detailed and chilling as

Moon of Ice, it remains a powerful piece of fiction.

The premise is classic sf: Quinn Mallory, a prodigy and basement scientist/college student, discovers a way to travel between alteranate worlds. Preparing to slowly explore the nature of his discovery, Mallory is joined by a friend, Wade Wells, and Mallory's college professor, Maximillian Arturo. They label their method of travel "sliding," as the gateway which Mallory opens works like a tunnel.

Upon first sight of Mallory's gadget, they leap right into the void, a donut shaped silvery slideway into another day. By accident, they suck up an innocent bystander into their gateway, singer Rembrandt Brown, and begin their adventures.

It turns out they have little control over where they slide. Although it's al-

ways in San Francisco, the worlds may differ widely, or only in minor detail.

Instead of sliding back home, they find themselves in the midst of a strange world, similar yet different, where communism rules America, and a small band of freedom fighters keep liberty alive.

Linaweaver doesn't compromise his libertarian principles. *Sliders: The Novel*, is rife with libertarian references and ideas, from the premise of rebellion, to more minor items. There are sly references to *Atlas Shrugged*, and a wonderful scene where Mallory's mother is reading her favorite novel, *We the Living*.

Readers both familiar and unfamiliar with the TV show should pick up this novel. It's rare to see libertarian ideas in popular culture, and Linaweaver pulls off the adaptation with gusto and originality. Pencil this novel in as the first 1997 Prometheus Awards nominee.

The Star Fraction review, continued from page 1

programs or protocols, and the whole terminology is one sf fans in the information understand and identify as part of their current realities. They help us make sense of that future world in ways inventd words cannot. Nonetheless the use of 1990s nomenclature, not that of the 2040s, seems out of place.

One of the quandries of libertarian sf is how to deal with libertarian realities. How does a libertarian world function, as if it were as real to its inhabitants as our current world is to us? The only examples it seems that we have are theoretical ones; it is not enough to preach revolution, for we must all live with the results and consequences. While no one can know how such a world will shape out, there have been various attempts, such as F. Paul Wilson's *Tolive*, J. Neil Schulman's agorist mini-society in *Alongside Night*, L. Neil Smith's American Confederacy novels, and others. Each gives unique insights into libertarian worlds.

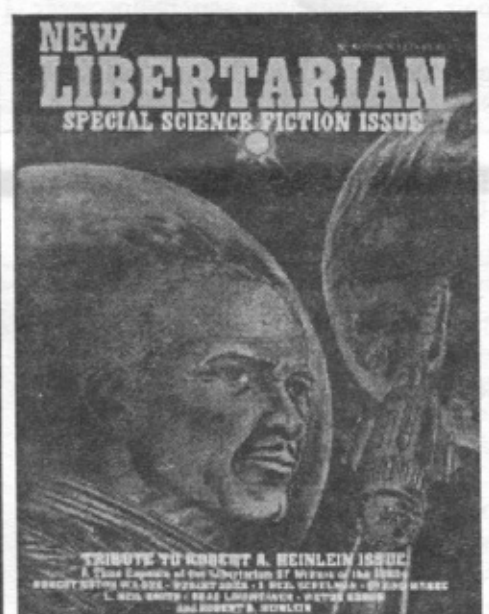
Ken MacLeod's novel now can be added to this pantheon of fictional libertarian worlds. Norlonto stands as a unique anarcho-capitalist ground, defended by socialists and individualists

alike for its free-market qualities. Moh Kohn, *The Star Fraction*'s socialist hero, argues that if socialism is better than capitalism, then it can damn well compete on even grounds, in the free market of ideas.

MacLeod's genius lies not only in imagining Norlonto, and writing a brilliantly styled novel, but in the fact that a socialist holds these libertarian ideas. In a libertarian 'utopia,' there are no clones. We all are different, and should be free to express our beliefs. The basic idea of a non-aggression principle holds for libertarian individualists and communitarians. In *The Star Fraction*, the difference is that the socialists protect this principle with guns and the absolute right to self defence.

Sadly, there is as of yet no American edition of *The Star Fraction*. No such edition appears planned either, though not from lack of trying from MacLeod and his publisher. No American publishing companies so far have picked up the novel.

The Star Fraction is due in paperback in September of this year, the same month that MacLeod's second novel, *The Stone Canal*, is published in hardcover.



New Libertarian No. 187 The Heinlein Tribute—*The Prometheus Meltdown*. A 6-way novella by Robert Shea, Robert Anton Wilson, Victor Koman, L. N. Smith, J. Neil Schulman, Brad Linaweaver, Øyvind Myhre—\$6.00 Plus \$2.50 shipping. Many copies still available; *Meltdown* editor and co-author Victor Koman will gladly autograph copies.

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c/o 17220 Newhope, #20; Fountain Valley, Calif.

Science Funding review, continued from page 5

ideological style that is very suitable for the subject matter. Using a 1986 survey of research scientists, carried out by Martino and Nicholas Engler on government sponsorship of science, and a wealth of history about the evolution of government funding, Martino simply presents facts and allows readers to draw their own conclusions.

The major thrust of government intervention into the scientific process came after World War II, as Vannevar Bush and Franklin Roosevelt noted the work done for defense during the war and decided to apply that successful partnership to peacetime. Several agencies were set up—to allow for some competition—for the purpose of funneling government money into scientific projects. Since then, the process has been thoroughly politicized, with states and their representatives squabbling over proposed projects like the Superconducting Supercollider, and the scientific ends becoming entirely obscured by the race

for jobs and votes.

The main problems caused by porkbarrel research are the corruption and politicization of the scientific enterprise, the diversion of funds from innovative small science to bloated, often outdated "big" science, the addition of layers of time-wasting red tape which turns our scientists into paper pushers, and the elimination of the most innovative projects because choices are made by the peer review system—when for truly ingenious projects there may be no peers. Government agencies avoid risk because, unlike businesses, they have little to gain if a risky project succeeds, and thus truly pathbreaking ideas get pushed aside.

Most interesting is Martino's clear demonstration that these problems are inherent in government funding, and cannot be overcome by "vigilance" or "congressional oversight," two often cited non-cures for predicaments caused by government.

Instead, Martino makes several suggestions to aid the privatization of research. First, the patent law system must be strengthened. Right now, patents are as strong as the courts which uphold them, and that support waivers from decade to decade.

Second, accounting standards should be changed to allow research to be recorded as an asset rather than a cost for tax purposes—tax law already allows this, but accounting standards have not reflected the change.

Third, industrial consortia must be able to fund research without anti-trust concerns. Fourth, tax deductions for contributions to all kinds of scientific research must be provided.

Given the very real interest by the public in scientific enterprises, especially astronomy—all the astronomical observatories in this nation, except one, were funded by private money—tax breaks mixed with innovative fund-raising could encourage a great outpouring of private money for scientific research.

PROMETHEUS

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