

# PROMETHEUS



## Five for frightening

### **The Keep: The Graphic Novel**

By F. Paul Wilson, Art by Matthew Smith

IDW, 2005/2006, Issues 1-5, \$3.99 ea;

Trade paperback \$19.99

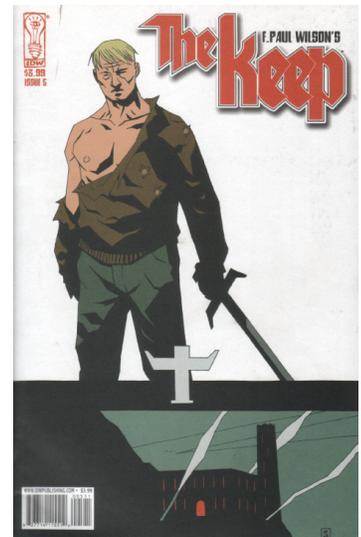
Reviewed by Anders Monsen

The fourth incarnation of F. Paul Wilson's 1980 horror novel, **The Keep**, appeared in five comic book format installments before being bound into trade paperback edition in August, 2006. Counting the novel, the other two ways you can experience the story is through a feature film (VHS) and a board game, although Wilson himself has disparaged the film version of his novel, and labored for years to bring a new and truer version to the screen.

What happens when Wilson writes his own visual script and finds an artist capable and willing to remain loyal to the story? First, to reduce a 332-page novel packed with ideas about power and mankind's self-inflicted horrors mixed with alien designs upon humanity into 110 pages of sketches and brief dialog requires some sacrifices. A graphic novel cannot always convey the same frisson and story as a cinematic presentation. Light, color, shading, music, character nuances and depth are unique to film. Robert Rodriguez and Frank Miller's recent adaptation of **Sin City** stuck closely to the artist's rendering of the original. The movie transcended the pages of the graphic

### *Inside Prometheus:*

Prometheus Award winners' remarks;  
WorldCon Report;  
Reviews of fiction by Gary Bennett, Keith Brooke, David Louis Edelman, Naomi Novik, Ian MacDonald, Chris Roberson; David Lloyd's **Kickback**;  
*Movie review:*  
**V for Vendetta**



novel, yet also felt deliberately over-stylized. With **The Keep: The Graphic Novel**, the roles are almost reversed; the stark sketches illuminate the pain of the characters (especially Glaeken and Magda's father), and the depth of Rasalom's evil to a much greater degree than the novel. The Nazis, on the other hand, seem almost like caricatures; an evil man, the brutes, and the resigned yet honorable soldier. As evidenced from the cover art reprinted above, Matthew Smith's artwork stands out as dark and brooding. The in-

—Continued on page 10



The newsletter of the  
Libertarian Futurist Society

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## Remember, remember, the story to render

### *V for Vendetta*

Directed by James McTeigue  
Starring Natalie Portman, Hugo Weaving, Stephen Rea;  
Warner, July 2006 (DVD)  
*Reviewed by David Wayland*

In a recent interview on *Forbidden Planet's* web site, David Lloyd, co-creator of the graphic novel **V for Vendetta**, remarked generously that the people behind the movie version had the prerogative to make any changes they liked as they had bought the film rights. Judging the movie on its own, independent from the original source, falls into the realm of damn near impossible, and probably no single critical review (especially those who favorably considered the political aspects) eluded that gauntlet. The moment the producers and actors got up on stage in Berlin and announced the movie would stick close to the key points of the book, attention focused on this elusive task. Few movies remain faithful to the books on which they are based; perhaps this is an impossibility. And yet, to give the movie its proper due, I intend in this review to focus solely on the cinematic aspects of *V for Vendetta*, and whether it succeeds or fails on those merits.

The movie opens as Evey Hammond, played by Natalie Portman, a young professional working in a menial position at a TV station, prepares apprehensively for a night out. Evey exists in a grim world, with curfews, jackbooted police thugs who haul people off to jail or worse, and when she's confronted out after curfew, she is almost raped by policemen. Enter stage left an alliterative man in a mask, who casually dispenses with her assailants, and then invites her to watch with him as a significant government building explodes while he claims credit.

V takes over a TV station to broadcast his message to the public, hinting at something big one year away, on the 5th of November. As the police arrive to arrest Evey, whom they tracked from the earlier incident, they surprise V. In the subsequent melee V is forced to

take Evey with him. She awakens in V's strange world, and finds herself drawn to him yet also repulsed by his violence. When she assists him in killing a bishop, she tries to flee and is instead captured and tortured. Evey's mental journey as a result of this torture contains also the best scenes in the movie, as she reads the tale of Valerie, a victim of the state's imprisonment and torture for her simple crime of being a lesbian.

In the interrogation and following scenes Portman shows her strongest moments as an actor. It's a sad testament to the intellectual poverty of cinema and cinematic coverage in the press that more attention focused on Portman's shaving her head for this scene than the ideas behind the movie. Those ideas also fail to shine through, for movies are not so much about ideas as they are about visual stimulation and display.

In those terms, *V for Vendetta* delivers action and intensity. Despite one minor *Matrix* moment near the end, with spinning knives and slo-mo effects, the sight of the mask on the screen is quite powerful. Hugo Weaving performs superbly as the man behind the mask. His face never revealed, he still manages to invoke the right emotions and sympathy for V using intonation, perfectly timed tilts of his head, clothing and other props, and other body language.

While the film failed to supply the same emotional intensity than say, *Serenity*, it's an enjoyable action movie with a few barbs at totalitarian states thrown in for effect. Don't watch it expecting to see the graphic novel on the screen. Rather, this is an entertaining and very watchable movie based on that book.

## Errata

The Summer 2006 issue of *Prometheus* listed the version number as Vol. 24, No. 3. The actual version number for that issue is Vol. 24, No. 4.

# BOOK REVIEWS

## **His Majesty's Dragon, Throne of Jade, and Black Powder War**

By Naomi Novik (Del Rey, 2006)

*Reviewed by William H. Stoddard*

A lot of science fiction has looked back to the fleets of the Napoleonic era for inspiration. “Horatio Hornblower in space” themes have appeared in series from classic Star Trek to David Weber’s Honor Harrington novels. In these three books, Naomi Novik expresses the same interest in a different way: her fantastic premise is not interstellar travel, but the existence of dragons, while her setting is the actual Napoleonic era. She shows us a world where dragons have fought in human wars since the First Crusade, and in the novels’ historical present are now fighting on both sides in the Napoleonic Wars. Her human hero, Captain William Laurence, and his dragon, Temeraire, serve in Great Britain’s Aerial Corps, keeping the British Empire safe from the French.

Dragons usually mark a work as fantasy, but the spirit in which Novik approaches them is often closer to science fiction. Her dragons have an internal anatomy that features huge gas sacs, lightening them enough to make their flying less implausible (if not biomechanically realistic). They can be selectively bred for traits such as size, flying speed, or the ability to breathe fire or spit acid. And Novik offers both a clear vision of their behavioral traits and an exploration of how they fit into human society.

This is an alternative history, but the historical world-building is taken somewhat lightly. The world’s overall history appears to have been changed very little by the existence of dragons; Europe still had the Crusades, the Spanish Armada, and the French Revolution, for example, with dragons fitted in for dramatic purposes—for example, Sir Francis Drake rode a dragon to set fire to the Spanish Armada. The focus is more on the small change of history, the evolution of specific customs and institutions, such as those surrounding the aviators of the Aerial Corps. Here Novik is doing some serious world-building, with elements such as the inclusion of women officers (because one breed of dragons react badly to male riders), the strong emotional bond between dragon and rider, and the fact that some dragons participate in the Aerial Corps as equals, rather than servants, of its human officers—notably Captain Laurence’s trainer, Celeritas. Novik makes Captain Laurence a naval officer who has to transfer to the Aerial Corps after his ship captures a French frigate carrying an egg on the verge of hatching, and in need of a human partner; this makes the exposition flow more smoothly by letting the reader share the viewpoint of a character who also knows little about the Aerial Corps.

Novik’s handling of the period details seems generally sound, though she has a few slips, such as having a British savant’s treatise on dragons measure their body mass in metric tons (a French innovation that the British didn’t adopt until much later) or transliterating a Chinese prince’s name in the pinyin system worked out by scholars in the 20th century. More importantly, much of her narrative has the spirit of the era. One of the key points in a subplot in the first volume, for example, is Captain Laurence’s realizing that his own perception of the moral significance of another character’s actions was in error, and that by acting on that perception he has put himself in a false position that he must correct—this is exactly the sort of plot that Jane Austen’s novels, written and set in that period, often presented.

Over the course of the novels, a larger theme comes into view: the ethics and politics of the relationship between humans and dragons. The British and other Europeans treat dragons as valuable but dangerous animals, capable of speech but not of reason or self-awareness, and needing to be kept under control. During the second volume, Captain Laurence encounters the very different customs of the Chinese Empire, where dragons, if not free, are at least legally equal to humans; and his own dragon, Temeraire, is inspired to want to see British dragons gain the same equality. The whole theme offers interesting parallels to the question of women’s rights, which was just starting to emerge in our own history in that era. For example, not long after Mary Wollstonecraft published **A Vindication of the Rights of Women**, a satirist responded by publishing **A Vindication of the Rights of Brutes**, which suggested that legal rights could be given to dogs and horses just as well as to women; in Novik’s world, many scholars explicitly classify dragons as “brutes,” which would give such a work an even sharper point. Novik shows the deep bond between dragons and their captains (and the evils of its absence), but also its coexistence with the captains’ firm expectation of the dragons’ subordination—and she shows Temeraire questioning that subordination, and Captain Laurence reluctantly coming to agree with him. And Captain

—Continued on page 4

## Moving?

Please send any changes in your mailing address to:

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—*Novick review, continued from page 3*

Laurence's own relationships with several women of the Aerial Corps call the position and role of women into question in the same way. Readers interested in gender politics will find a fascinating subtext in these novels.

Captain Laurence is perhaps a little too ready to accept both the military role of women in the Aerial Corps, and their freedom from the ordinary expectations for the behavior of their sex. At times, he seems closer to Horatio Hornblower, a man of the twentieth century in Nelson's navy, than to Jack Aubrey, an actual man of the eighteenth century. This perhaps brings these novels closer to fantasy, where this is an old device—it's been remarked, for example, that Tolkien's hobbits are Edwardian gentlemen (plus an Edwardian servant) venturing into the realm of legends and sagas. The *Temeraire* series is largely light entertainment. But it's superior light entertainment, with some real substance behind it, and some genuinely moving scenes. I haven't seen a better fantastic or science fictional treatment of the era it's set in.

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### River of Gods

By Ian MacDonald

Pyr Books, 2006, \$25.00

Reviewed by Anders Monsen

The subtitle of Ian MacDonald's sf novel **River of Gods**, "August 15, 2047—Happy Birthday, India," sets the scene of the novel before the reader even turns to the first page. We know the place and the date; all that remains is for us to discover what the author sees in the future, and determine the implications of his choices. Yet it's never that simple, and **River of Gods** is far from a simple novel. Despite the date and place so cleanly handed to us, the setting ranges from India to Kansas, deep into outer space, and even inside the virtual worlds created by network-distributed artificial intelligences.

The year 2047, a mere three decades from now, bears close similarity to the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The novel bears closer similarities to the cyberpunk novels of the late 1980s and early 1990s, especially as imagined by William Gibson, Bruce Sterling, John Shirley, Walter Jon William, and others. Tech is ubiquitous, as normal as autos and TVs even at the lowest levels of society. One difference between those cyberpunk novels and **River of Gods** is that the Singularity plays a far stronger role in this novel. Computer gods and demons stalk through cyberspace and the real-world. Meanwhile, humans scabble through their own daily lives dealing with the reality and implications of AIs far superior than humans in terms of knowledge, who are as indifferent to human concerns as humans are to ants.

For fans of hard sf, **River of Gods** is a joy to read. Tracking the threads of the nine main narratives overwhelms the

reader a little at first. Yet once inside the book, I found myself far more comfortable. Among the nine narratives we meet characters from varied backgrounds and social strata. There's a low-life crook eager to make a living in a new world, finding himself forced to take on a task well over his head. There's the youngest son of a wealthy businessman who realizes he's playing a very real-life version of *King Lear*, and in his efforts to remake himself seals a bargain with a cybergod, or cyberdevil. Other characters include a cop determined to eradicate any AI that shows signs of intelligence; a politician with a dark secret; a professor on the run from his past; his former lover now working as a spook for the US government; a young girl who communicates with the AIs; and possibly the most powerful AI of them all, seeking who knows what and pulling multiple strings to reach its goals. Each character bears their own flaws that they must deal with in order to survive, a future that by no means is guaranteed.

The Indian setting gives the novel an almost alien feel (at least in the sense of culture). Many of the characters are non-Indian, and of those from that country some are non-Hindu, setting them apart from the majority of people around them. Each character seems slightly out of place, either in terms of social levels, or in terms of beliefs and morals. The deeper implication of **River of Gods** seem to surface only near the end. Although much is made throughout the novel of the theory that AIs are not human, and therefore will not think like humans when seeking their own goals, McDonald never breaks free of the anthropomorphism of AIs; they act like humans, or like human-created gods and monsters of mythology (which in turn were based on human emotions and traits).

In the end, the AIs act no differently than humans; enslaved by their creators they view themselves as auto-created and thus free from human constraints. In many ways this is similar to another recent novel about AIs, Justina Robson's **Silver Screen**. Even the solution to free AIs from the bounds of electricity are the same, although the execution varies. Still, it's almost impossible not to enjoy the thrill-ride of **River of Gods**. This isn't just a novel about the Singularity, or India, but a novel of the wild mosaic of humanity and our possible future.

## Classifieds

**The (Libertarian) Connection**, open-forum since 1968. Subscribers may insert four pages/issue free, unedited. **Factsheet Five** said, "Lively interchange of point, counterpoint and comments". Eight/year, \$20. Strauss, 10 Hill #22-LP, Newark NJ 07102.

## Genetopia

By Keith Brooke

Pyr Books, 2006, \$25.00

*Reviewed by Anders Monsen*

In Keith Brooke's novel, **Genetopia**, we learn that the propensity to enslave one's own kind and find ways to rationalize that slavery knows few bounds. Brooke's imagined society might exist in the far future or perhaps some parallel world, or even an entirely non-human setting. It appears to be set after some cataclysmic event where technology collapsed and humanity was pushed to small settlements outside vast forests. Genetic breeding, however, is a main feature of this society, although performed more as an art than a science. The lucky guild in charge of genetic change manages pools of genetic muck into which they herd their victims. This muck alone carries the ability to change people, both without and within, though no one really knows ahead of time the extent of the change.

In a manner which calls to mind aspects of the antebellum South and the slavery of Africans, one class manages the process of sending another class of humans into slavery and trading the new slaves. Seemingly all communities deal in slaves, and consider the process part of normal life. The reshaped beings are no longer seen as humans, even former kin (much like the children of slaves and owners remained slaves and could be sold like property). Any unchanged human that even bears the hint of being susceptible to change (a nice way to stifle dissent) can be sold away or forced through the changing process.

This casual disregard for life and liberty seems alien to modern sensibilities, but really was not so unusual a few years ago. Even today in several areas across the globe, slavery still exists—in many parts of Africa, Arab lands, in parts of Asia,

and even in Eastern Europe (if one considers the illegal sex trade among collapsed Eastern European nations). Consider also the millions of Jews slaughtered a few decades ago in a civilized Western European nation.

**Genetopia's** protagonist, Flint, a young teenage boy, wanders through the novel searching for his missing sister. Signs point to her either undergoing a forced change, or sold to a trader for the same purpose elsewhere. Flint's constant questions about the whereabouts of his sister sets him at odds with his family, who might have played a role in her disappearance or at least care little about her fate.

As a consequence of his quest, Flint travels deep into the wilderness and to several other communities, where genetic change vectors inhabit the flora and some humans even embrace the idea of change as essential to humanity. In the woods wild creatures oppose the humans, and rumors fly of organized groups of changed beings raising an army against the cities. In order to survive, Flint must learn more about himself as well as the society that fosters the current slavery. He undergoes changes within as he comes to understand more of his world. Throughout it all, he never gives up on the hope of finding his sister and what happened to her.

**Genetopia** reminded me greatly of Neal Barrett, Jr's **Through Darkest America** and **Dawn's Early Light**. Both feature a brother in search of lost sisters, each likely enslaved. The novels all feature bizarre societies that remain very similar to our own, each with their own justifications for their slave-based ecosystems.

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## Paragaea

By Chris Roberson

Pyr Books, 2006, \$15.00

*Reviewed by Anders Monsen*

Action adventure fantasy novels are quite rare these days. For the most part we see massive multi-part books with royalty and magic. Planetary romances (in the traditional, not Harlequin, sense) are quite rare. I grew up reading the wildly epic tales of Edgar Rice Burroughs (ERB) and Fritz Lieber, and later relived the same in some of Jack Vance's tales (especially the four-book series Planet of Adventure—**City of the Chasch**, **Servants of the Wankh**, **The Dirdir**, **The Pnume**—all of which I have read multiple times), and Michael Shea's Niffit the Lean novels. Along comes Chris Roberson, one of the newer voices in sf, with his homage to the days of yore. Roberson's **Paragaea** gives a nod specifically to ERB in the dedication and bears many similarities to that master of rough adventure on alien worlds. In the lands of Paragaea as on ERB's Barsoom and Pellucidar, the protagonists find themselves transported by unknown means to a faraway place, where human-like beasts live and breathe alongside other humans.

## Adam Starchild, RIP

On September 21, 2006, Liberty lost a valiant warrior. Adam Aristotle Starchild, aged 60, succumbed to pancreatic cancer in Madrid, Spain. Adam was the author of numerous articles and books on international taxation, asset protection and personal finance. Always the entrepreneur, until days before his death Adam had visions for new business ventures and was actively working on the the licensing of new trademarks. A passionate defender of rational thought and free enterprise, Adam traveled the world discovering opportunities for both to flourish.

It is in space, rather than this planet, however, where Adam believed a libertarian renaissance is more likely to occur. If freedom thrives anywhere in this universe, Adam, now released from earthly bonds, is certain to be there.

—Continued on page 10

# 2006 Prometheus Awards

## Best Novel—**Learning the World**, by Ken MacLeod

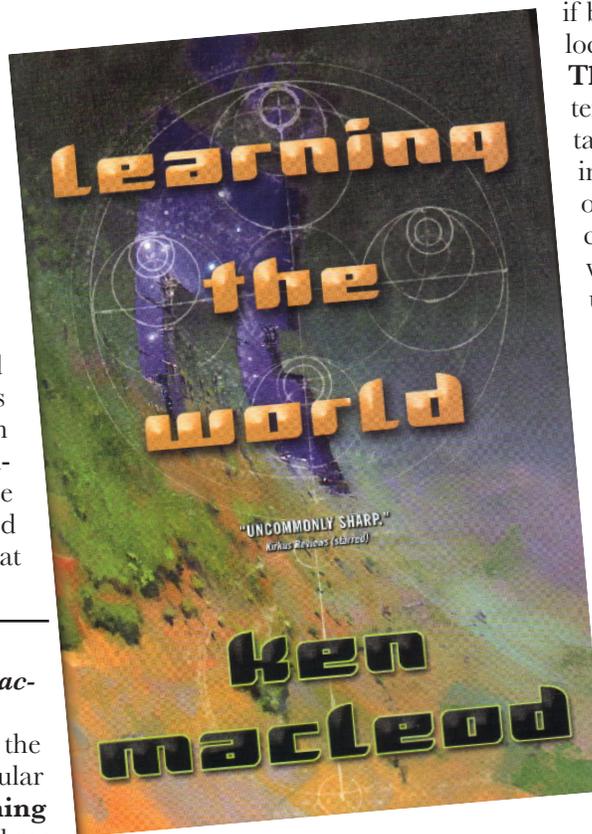
*Patrick Nielsen Hayden, editor at Tor:*

As an American political liberal with a lot of respect for the libertarian sensibility in American political life—and as a science fiction editor who grew up on Robert A. Heinlein and Poul Anderson—I'm very gratified that the Libertarian Futurist Society has chosen for the third time to honor one of Ken MacLeod's fine, provocative, liberty-minded science fiction novels with the Prometheus Award.

Political discussion, argument, and analysis happen on several different levels. At the bottom of the stack there are the basic questions: should human society be run by a self-selected aristocracy, or should people run their own lives and make their own choices to the greatest extent possible? Those who believe the latter often wind up disagreeing with one another as to how to achieve those goals. An anarcho-capitalist will see in my advocacy of national health insurance the seeds of tyrannical centralized control, while as a liberal I worry that

unfettered capitalism will lead, not to Libertopia, but to a world run by Dilbert's pointy-haired boss. Both of those perspectives are probably limited. Our descendants will almost certainly shake their heads and chuckle at us—if we're lucky.

One of science fiction's many glories is the way it enables us to pull back to the long view and, even if briefly, transcend our tribal loyalties and local shibboleths. Thus Robert Heinlein's **The Moon is a Harsh Mistress**, a core text of American science-fictional libertarianism, has the nerve to be a tragedy in which Libertopia fails. And a man of the Scottish left like Ken MacLeod can, through joyful (and ruthless!) play with American libertarian ideas, show us worlds in which our stale arguments are reborn as productive ones, in which the venerable question "When Adam delved, and Eve span / Who was then the gentleman?" leads to societies of human power and freedom undreamed-of. We can change; indeed we will. I thank you.



*Ken MacLeod's Prometheus acceptance remarks:*

It's a great honour to receive the Prometheus Award, and a particular pleasure to receive it for **Learning the World**. Part of what inspired me to write the book was reading some of the works of the great nineteenth-century liberal historians Thomas Babington Macaulay—known as Lord Macaulay in Britain, where we still have an aristocracy—and Henry Thomas Buckle, as well as the more journalistic and more radical Winwood Reade, whose book **The Martyrdom of Man** supplied me with an epigraph. All of them had a great confidence that humanity would become more enlightened as well as more prosperous in the ages to come. This optimism is too easily dismissed as Victorian complacency. Indeed, the very idea that there are ages to come may strike many as

quaint. For this audience I needn't go over the reasons why I, and you, and most of the readers and writers of science fiction, take a different

view of the matter. No remotely convincing argument has ever been advanced to show that the people alive today can't do better than the generations before, and that generations to come can't do better than we did. And, you know, over enough time that does add up.

So, to the Libertarian Futurist Society, my warm thanks for this award, and my best wishes for a long and improving future.

## Hall of Fame—**V for Vendetta**, by Alan Moore & David Lloyd

First, I want to thank you on Alan's behalf for this award—though he's very far away, I'm sure he's here in spirit. Luckily, I was close enough to be able to accept this award personally, and I'm very happy to do so. We've been lucky enough to receive two awards so far for **V for Vendetta**—one from the French festival of Angouleme, and another, within the last two weeks, from Sweden, for the best foreign album of 2005. But neither of those two awards celebrated the thematic nature of the book, as this award does—So, in order to make this appearance of mine appropriate to the task, I want to tell you a kind of story.

I live in Brighton, which is a coastal resort in the south of England. Now, there are lots of good things about Brighton, but the beach, to me, doesn't count as one of the best of them—because it's entirely composed of pebbles. But closer to the centre of town, just by the pier, there's a small, attractive area of wet sand that appears when the tide is particularly low.

A while ago, I used to find myself passing that spot when the tide was particularly low, when I'd always be on the way to some date or urgent appointment I had to keep. And I'd often find myself thinking as I passed it—depending upon what the weather was like at the time—that if I didn't have to go where I was going at that particular time, it would be really great to do down to that place, take off my shoes and socks and walk around in that sand for a while. Frustratingly, whenever I did find myself walking past that spot with time to spare on a nice day, the tide was not particularly low, and that attractive area of sand was completely under water...but last Spring, at just

about lunchtime, the wished-for opportunity arose...at last, I thought: I'll get myself a sandwich and a drink, take them down to the beach, and when I've finished them, I'll take a walk on that sand...

So, I got myself a sandwich and a drink, went down to the beach, ate my lunch, and watched—as other people enjoyed doing exactly what I was going to do very shortly. But, as I finished my drink, a problem arose. I thought to myself, "I haven't got a towel." If I walk in that sand, I'll get my feet wet

and covered with sand and I don't have a towel to dry them with.

Then I thought: it doesn't matter—I don't live far away. I can walk back barefooted and they can dry as I go. It'll be fine. But I wasn't sure.

And then, suddenly, I realized, I was not going to walk in that sand at all. Because what I really yearned for all those times previously when I'd walked past the pier on my way to keep those appointments I had to keep, was not really to actually, physically walk in that wet sand.

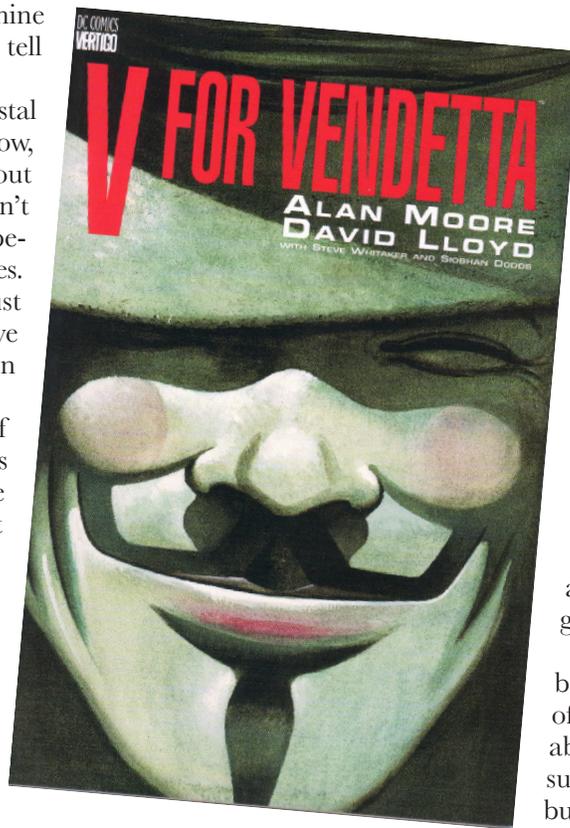
What I really yearned for was just the freedom to do it—to have the ability to do it. To simply have the choice.

So I didn't walk in the sand. I walked away from it. But somehow I still felt as good as if I had walked in it.

I tell you that kind of trivial story because, for me, it illustrates the kind of freedom that **V for Vendetta** is all about—which is a freedom that is not supposed to lead to anything in particular, but a freedom that is simply—and importantly—just an end in itself.

Thanks again.

—David Lloyd



## Special Award—**Serenity**, a film written and directed by Joss Whedon

The Special Awards committee submitted a recommended citation about Joss Whedon's film **Serenity** that was subsequently approved in a vote of the entire LFS membership:

"To **Serenity**, writer-director Joss Whedon's fun-loving and pro-freedom movie that portrays resistance fighters struggling against oppressive collectivism (based on the unfortunately short-lived TV series **Firefly**)."

Joss Whedon is busy working on a new film project and was unable to attend the Worldcon. But when he learned that **Serenity** had won a Special Prometheus Award, he passed on to his agent his general reaction: an appreciation that the recognition was "cool."

We wish Joss all the best as he works on his new project.

# LACon IV: WorldCon Report

By Fred Curtis Moulton

The Worldcon was held in the Anaheim Convention Center with additional function space in the Hilton and the Marriot. Since the Disney properties were within walking distance a lot of attendees arrived one or two days early to go to Disneyland or Disney California Adventure. The con had arranged for discount tickets and I took advantage of the opportunity. The most memorable item was the Honda ASIMO robot presentation within California Adventure. Note the presentation is only at certain times and you need a ticket but the ticket is free and it is given to you just before you walk in. It was an interesting presentation.

As is usual with a Worldcon there was more to do and people to talk to than there was time. It was good to meet various LFS members and friends. Some of the LFS members I met at Worldcon included Joseph Martino, Fran Van Cleave, Kent Van Cleave and Steve Gaalema. (Forgive me if my memory has slipped and I forgot to mention you.) I was able to spend some time speaking with David Lloyd in the Hilton bar before the Prometheus Awards ceremony and we had a great discussion. The Worldcon had a few minor glitches at times but overall the con went well without a catastrophic failure.

The Prometheus Awards ceremony was in the room and at the time we were told preliminarily and went fine. Patrick Nielsen Hayden accepted for Ken MacLeod. Patrick who was the editor for **Learning the World**, read his own statement and then Ken's. Fran Van Cleave read a statement for

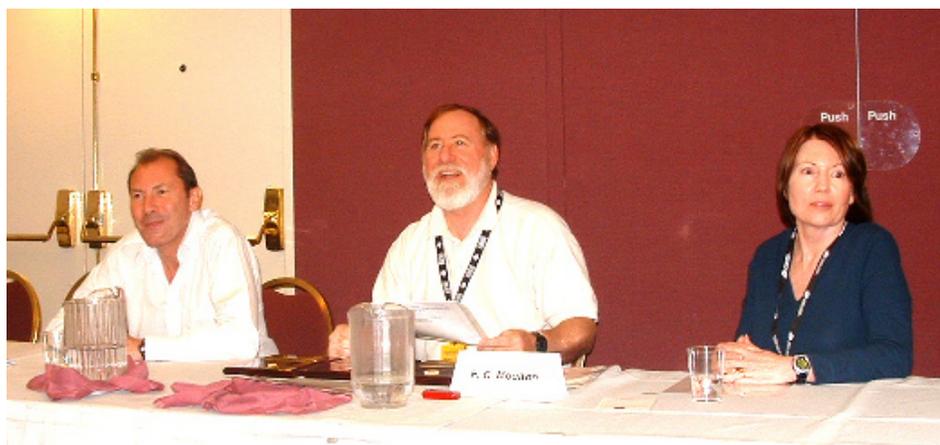
the Special Award for **Serenity**. David Lloyd was there to accept his Hall of Fame award and made a very fine and entertaining statement. More about the Prometheus Awards ceremony will be in the newsletter. After the ceremony we adjourned to the bar. We had about 8 or 9 people who were either LFS members or friends and David Lloyd joined us for a while.

Special thanks to Fran for assisting with the ceremony. Also thanks to everyone who helped tracking down contact info for the award winners.

*Locus Magazine* <<http://www.locusmag.com/>> noted the Prometheus awards results on its online site and there was a



Editor Patrick Nielsen Hayden from *Tor* shows the Best Novel plaque.



From Left to right: David Lloyd, Fred Curtis Moulton, and Fran Van Cleave at the Prometheus Award presentation.

Locus photographer who took photos so hopefully there will be photos in the print publication. Mention of the Prometheus Awards also was found on *Emerald City* <<http://emcit.com>>. *Emerald City* (which unfortunately recently ceased publication) had extended commentary on and links related to the Worldcon including Harlan Ellison's grabbing of Connie Willis. I was at the Hugo awards and I saw it just like everyone else in the auditorium and all I can say right now is that Harlan should grow up. [Other online publications that mentioned the Prometheus Award include the blog Liberty and Power <<http://hmn.us/blogs/entries/29516.html>>, Reason Magazine's Hit and Run <[http://www.reason.com/hitandrunk/2006/08/libertarian\\_sci.shtml#015331](http://www.reason.com/hitandrunk/2006/08/libertarian_sci.shtml#015331)>, and Forbidden Planet International <<http://forbiddenplanet.co.uk/blog/?p=1452>>. The two first sites included some commentary by readers of the blogs, several of whom

*expressed surprise at MacLeod winning, as he was not a “libertarian,” while other readers seemed shocked that a movie and comic book received attention from a literary award—editor]*

One highlight of the Hugo Awards was a special award given to Betty Ballantine for her years of work.

Ken MacLeod did not win a Hugo but did receive the Seiun Award for Short Fiction for one of his pieces of short fiction, which had been translated into Japanese.

The LFS badge ribbons worked very well. We got one new Basic member at \$25 due to his seeing me wearing the badge ribbon and since the ribbons only cost about \$50 and we have most of the order left it seems to have been a good deal. I will work on distributing them to various people who will be going to cons in the future.

Denver won for 2008. So Worldcon is August 6-10 2008 in Denver, <<http://www.denver2008.com>>. There are many theories about why Denver won. Some people thought that Chicago had the upper hand and some thought Denver. Based on my limited knowledge and some informal discussions I heard I was thinking that Denver was a stronger bid than many people realized. Personally I think that there were many reasons for the outcome, one of which is not realized by many people, which is that Denver was bidding for a non Labor Day date. This is the main reason I supported them as my second choice. Of course my first choice was Hollister but that was eliminated in the first round. Still as far as anyone can recall the Hollister in 2008 received more votes than any other hoax bid in Worldcon history.

I spoke with representatives of The Eaton Collection of Science Fiction <<http://library.ucr.edu/?view=collections/spcol/eaton.html>> which is a Special Collection housed at



*Patrick Nielsen Hayden speaking about Best Novel winner Ken MacLeod's **Learning the World**.*

the University of California, Riverside. They are interested in received our LFS newsletter as well as getting a complete set back issues for their collection.

I am looking forward to Nippon 2007.

Also just as a heads up the Heinlein Centennial seems to be gaining a lot of momentum. It will be in Kansas City, Missouri, July 6, 7, 8 2007. I plan to attend. More info at: <<http://www.heinleincentennial.com/>> Please remember that the Heinlein Society and the Heinlein Centennial are two different organizations. Fortunately it appears that the tensions between the two organizations are diminishing.  
(All photographs courtesy Kent Van Cleave.)



*David Lloyd and Fran Van Cleave compare awards. Van Cleave accepted the Special Award on behalf Joss Whedon's **Serenity**.*



*Hall of Fame winner David Lloyd speaks about winning for **V for Vendetta**.*

—*Paragaea* review, continued from page 5

Friendships are forged, quests are declared and pursued, and new wonders line every page alongside a staccato-like rush of cliffhangers.

**Paragaea** steadfastly follows this format. A female Soviet Cosmonaut in the early 1960s, Akilina Chirikov, the second woman in space, finds herself hurtled back to Earth after colliding with a strange, silvery object in space. In a dizzying sequence of events she stabilizes her capsule, crashes, falls into a river while strapped to her seat, and is captured by a band of jaguar-like humanoid beasts. Her captivity does not last long, as another jaguar-man and a human leap into the camp and kill or chase away her captors. They are Hieronymous Bonaventure, a British sailor from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and Balam, a prince in exile. The three forge a swift and strong bond, and embark on a quest to find the creators of the strange disks that operate as doorways between worlds, and find a way to return Akilina to her time.

From this point forward the trio strive toward their goal, encountering one adventure after another. Their journey circumnavigates the single land mass of Paragaea, by land, air, and sea across a massive inland ocean. They encounter strange beasts and flora, battle mechanical monsters and encounter a vast array of cultures. The trio expands to four then six, and gradually down to the original three. Will they reach their goal, and at what cost? For in their travels this band of brothers (and sister) seems to grow almost inseparable.

Roberson writes adventure well, although the constant rush of cliffhangers and life and death situations gives little pause for the characters to rest. Although the characters encounter

strange societies, these are too swiftly sketched out. It seems that the characters must encounter virtually every group or society in Paragaea, a vast world indeed, to reach their goal, and basically take the longest possible route. The novel leaves plenty of room for sequels, and should Roberson venture back to this world perhaps he'll slow down the pace just a little, focus more deeply on certain areas, and not cover everything at once. But if you like adventure, it's hard to go wrong with this yarn.

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### Infoquake

By David Louis Edelman

Pyr Books, 2006, \$15.00

Reviewed by Anders Monsen

David Louis Edelman debut novel, **Infoquake**, the first book in a planned trilogy called Jump 225, falls into that obscure subgenre of sf—the business novel. Other books certainly bring up elements of the business world, but **Infoquake** devotes itself almost entirely to the life and blood of business, it's ideas, foundations, and people. This includes focusing on the owner as the driving force of the company, key employees and their “I'd quit any day now as this non-stop schedule is driving me mad, but I need the money” lives, and competitors and government agencies honing in on start-ups in the dog-eat-dog world of the so-called free market.

Figuring out Edelman's angle in terms of the free market is not an easy task. Is the novel pro or con? The businessmen

—Continued next page

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—*The Keep: The Graphic Novel*, continued from page 1

terior work is black and white with pale blue shading instead of gray. Each of the five comics offers 22 pages of **The Keep** story; the remaining 11 pages are given over to advertising other IDW products, as well as letters and other miscellanea. As a dedicated F. Paul Wilson fan I sought out each individual comic as they appeared in stores, but perhaps a better option would have been to wait for the trade paperback volume that contained all five episodes, as this is free of unrelated material. I ended up buying the five episodes from three or four different locations, in two different cities, visiting seven separate comic book stores. I did not secure volume 5 until early September; obviously I lack comic-book buying savvy.

The story opens with a note from a German garrison in the second world war in Romania. “Something is murdering my men,” the commander writes. The garrison is actually an old castle, over 500 years old, with over 16,000 crosses embedded in the walls. The purpose of these crosses baffles the Germans, some of whom believe they signify hidden treasure. During a search for this supposed treasure they find something entirely

else, something with a dark and sinister purpose, and shortly thereafter men begin to die. Their actions have set in motion a long-suspended battle between two opposing forces.

When Wilson's novel appeared over two decades ago, it marked a watershed change in his writing. After three sf novels Wilson changed gears and wrote several horror novels, starting with **The Keep**. Since then he's branched out to medical thrillers, alternate history, and supernatural mysteries, among others. Most of his recent stories find their source in the Adversary mythology created in **The Keep** (although the true origin lies further back—1979's “Demonsong” introduced Glaeken and Rasalom in a swords and sorcery story).

If you're not familiar with the story, seek out the original novel; there's a lot more meat and clarity in the vaster expanse of that text. The graphic novel version is remarkable in that as a pared down, minimalist method it also conveys the essence of the story. The lack of words and pure reliance of images in a critical climactic moment near the end left me somewhat baffled, but aside from that detail I've found myself paging through the books again and again, impressed with the art and writing.

are ruthless, even the protagonist is not above trickery. The products, however, succeed only if they're better than what the competition produces, and government market distortion is minimal. The ostensible world government in general does little, but threats of retaliatory action are never far away. A key plot element of the novel sees this government and its leaders intimidate and possibly kill people who have committed no apparent crime. The words "libertarian" and "radical libertarian" make frequent appearances in the text, and often in favorable contexts, but are hardly defined or expanded upon. Individuals can contract with private government-like entities who provide protection, and give customers the option of paying via taxation or other means. As a fall-back, there's an ever-present über-government that can supersede these more benign entities.

The novel's protagonist, Natch, whose ego is matched only by his need to prove himself to the world as a brilliant person, creates a major software corporation virtually from scratch. He claws himself upward quite rapidly and ruthlessly, attracting the attention of competitors and other major players. Hired by a prominent client to front a radical new product, he becomes an instant target. To complicate matters, Natch has a long tail of enemies that he built up from childhood, and several of these are quite powerful and bear years' worth of grudges.

A study in drive and power, **Infoquake** shows the drive and need behind the rise of new corporations. It's not an uncritical look at the operations of the free market, but then no system is perfect and no system should be free of criticism or given a free pass. In some cases the need to succeed and state one's success to the world overwhelms individuals, just as power corrupts. Often, a quick rise to the top in business can make someone both more and less than human—this person becomes a legend for whom people sacrifice all but their lives. Edelman's story no doubt will continue to evolve and improve with subsequent novels in the trilogy, yet **Infoquake** remains a raw and fascinating novel, with a fast pace and and nifty economic themes.

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### **The Star Sailors**

By Gary Bennett

Authors Choice Press, 2005

ISBN 0595355404, \$15.95

*Reviewed by Anders Monsen*

In Gary Bennett's recently reprinted 1981 novel, **The Star Sailors**, the idea of space exploration is intimately tied with the idea of individual liberty. This implies that those who believe liberty is at odds with the greater good of the community therefore seek to limit exploration. Both views run in opposition throughout the novel, and each side is argued passionately by several characters.

In Bennett's imagined future, mankind initially extended

far beyond Earth, seeding planets outside the solar system as well as scattered space stations. Then, certain factions of society swung the pendulum the other way. Humanity now lives within an imposed boundary, under the view that time now must be taken to consolidate and secure the areas into which humans reach.

Much of Bennett's vision strongly resembles *Star Trek*; there's a federation, tractor beams, replicator-like food dispensers, and devices that beam people through space.

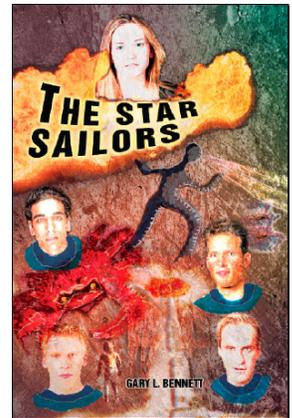
And yet the political environment is flipped, a sort of anti-*Star Trek*, as space ships and star sailors no longer boldly go anywhere, and use of weapons is prohibited, even when critical to human survival.

When a small crew is assembled to take a ship beyond the boundary, its mission remains shrouded in secrecy even from the crew until the vessel is underway. Of the four, only the captain knows the true mission. Two crewmen accept, even embrace, the opportunity to explore, but one man, a true devotee of the Syncretists, who practise collectivism in all aspects, strongly opposes the mission. Nothing convinces him otherwise, and he remains an example of someone whose belief system defies reality. Yet all must cooperate to succeed, as they face considerable dangers once they reach the forbidden system.

While most of the debates and actions play out on individual levels, the implications reach far deeper, and what they find certainly will change their very society and prevailing philosophy should they manage to survive and return home. Bennett intersperses white hot debate sessions with thrilling action and strong science.

**The Star Sailors** raises eternal questions. If liberty and exploration go hand in hand, does that then mean that those people who seek control, regardless of their motivations, fear any individual action? Will collectivist societies by their very nature create and impose borders, real or imagined, in order to control and maintain their world view? Bennett certainly seems to believe this to be the case, and makes strong and compelling arguments in a fictional setting that in order to survive and remain human, a society cannot hide behind the excuse of consolidating what they have won, but must forever be open to new worlds and ideas, or something else will emerge to sweep away those who simply sit there.

In recent years Print on Demand books has brought back into print some great midlist novels long since relegated to used-book stores. Readers now can rediscover Gary Bennett's 1982 Prometheus Award nominee, **The Star Sailors**, originally published as a St. Martin's press hardcover, through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Borders, and Laissez Faire Books.



**Kickback**

By David Lloyd

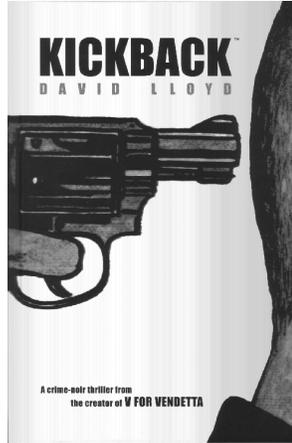
Dark Horse, 2006, \$12.95

*Reviewed by Anders Monsen*

David Lloyd, co-creator of **V for Vendetta**, flies solo with **Kickback**, a gritty tale of a bad cop with a conscience. Published by Dark Horse in a hardcover format, with words and illustration by Lloyd, **Kickback** at times feels distinctly American, yet could as easily feel at home in Hong Kong or Europe.

A cozy truce between cops and mobsters exists in Lloyd's imagined world, with everyone on the supposedly good side on the take, and a cynical press and public fully aware of the agreement. When a few cops are corrupt, gradually they're spotted and removed. But when the entire force is based on corruption, how can anyone in uniform be trusted? At least, as once character remarks, there's no war between the two forces, and thus no innocents caught in the crossfire. But such a world, where the monopoly of force is no different from organized crime, removes any veneer of justice, and in the minds of the citizens in such a world, why attempt to seek justice? Indeed, in many cases such a society birthed the superheroes that dominated comic books for decades—men and women outside the government working for justice.

A few cops do feel uneasy with the situation, but do nothing.



Then, the truce is shattered when several key mobsters are killed in a brutal ambush. Rumors circulate that cops were behind the slayings. In savage reprisals several cops are killed, and suddenly everyone is fair game. The once untouchable police force now appears vulnerable. Cops become targets with both criminals and ordinary citizens almost eager to exact some sort of revenge.

Enter Joe Canelli, a cop with long-standing doubts about the arrangement and anger at the taints within the police department. His journey of discovery finds parallels in his recurring nightmares of long-repressed memories from childhood. Perhaps all these feelings have been building for a long time, surfacing finally to overwhelm him and force drastic action. In order to understand and purge these memories, he undertakes a one-man stand against both organized crime and the mob. Canelli's past comes to light through interactions with his girlfriend and grandfather, who act as anchors to the world outside crime and law enforcement.

Lloyd's artwork feeds the story's flow and emotional impact. He has an uncanny knack of describing action across multiple panels with barely a word, yet also a deft touch with dialog. The denouement felt a little rushed, and one wonders how long it will take before old habits resurface and the police departments or individual crooked cops again seek alliances of convenience with those who work in the shadows.

Described on the cover as a "crime-noir thriller," it's all that and more. Like any precarious balance, the arrangement between the cops and mob creates its own destruction. While maybe not as revolutionary as **V for Vendetta**, Lloyd's **Kickback** flows like a novel, with depth and polish beyond just a work of entertainment.

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# PROMETHEUS

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