

PROMETHEUS

Interview with Janine A. Southard

By Anders Monsen

*Kickstarter has funded many projects, from million-dollar movies to t-shirt designs costing a few hundred dollars. Many readers probably have kicked in funding for several projects, as this is a way to participate in bringing to fruition something we support; and we can actually see our contributions at work. Janine A. Southard's novel *Queen & Commander* drew funding from a Kickstarter project, which funded copy-editing and design. It's very likely that more and more book projects like this may derive support through crowd-fund options like Kickstarter. Prometheus editor Anders Monsen speaks with author Janine Southard to try to discover how she Kickstarted her novel, what went into writing and publishing the book, and what lies ahead.*

You took an unusual approach to your novel, funding it through a Kickstarter effort. What made you decide on this approach?

I've worked off and on in the games industry for the last five years, and indie game developers were having great success with Kickstarter. Money was pouring in for them, enabling creation of new and exciting games. When I saw that Kickstarter also had a publishing/fiction category, I thought, "That'll be a good way to raise funds."

What did you learn from the Kickstarter process, and would it change how you approach any new books?

Top thing I learned: If you're not already famous (or making a game), don't expect to be rolling in the Kickstarter Benjamins. You can probably subsidize your project, but not recoup all the money you're spending on highly talented professionals. I did not, like so many others I've seen, blow past my stretch goals in the first week.

Second thing: I love it! I love the idea that real people decide to fund a project based on how interested they are. I love the meritocracy aspect: that the video or sample chapter made a difference to potential investors. I love that I'm connected (and accountable!) to my readers directly.

Third thing: Coming up with a good reward tier structure is hard, particularly where physical goods are involved. For instance, if I offer a reward that includes a poster, then I need to pay for the poster, the special packaging tubes, and the shipping of an unwieldy object. At best, this ends up costing

around \$30. So it's easy to end up at break-even or underwater at a particular increment, otherwise potential backers see "an extra \$30 for just a poster? That's highway robbery."

As for new books, I'm definitely putting my next two projects on Kickstarter! The sequel to *Queen & Commander* (tentatively titled *Hive & Heist*) will find most of its funds there. And I have an unrelated SF novella in the works which should be going live any day now, *These Convergent Stars*.

Welsh mythology and culture heavily influences the main world in *Q&C*. What made you choose a Welsh background versus inventing something from scratch?

Honestly, I named the spaceship. Our heroes fly about in the Ceridwen's Cauldron, and they have since the very first draft. The name has such great symbolism for coming together and creating something exciting. Later, when the heroes outgrow the name Ceridwen's Cauldron, when they became sick of authority figures who take advantage, they change the ship's registry to the Manawyddan's Mousetrap. (Note: this still hasn't happened, even though I just finished the draft of book two.)

When it was just the ship name, I could still have just figured Rhiannon, the main heroine, likes Welsh mythology. But... as I

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PROMETHEUS

The newsletter of the Libertarian Futurist Society

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Back to the present, almost

Pay no attention to the date on the cover, to modify a phrase. Production on the newsletter has suffered some serious delays the past year or so, but hopefully it is starting to get back on track. Several factors are at play. Content first and foremost drives the newsletter. Much like the oft-mocked annual pledge drives for national public radio and television, *Prometheus* editors hold out the hat. But instead of funds, we're seeking contributions of a literary kind. In other words, we need book reviews, movie reviews, essays, interviews.

In the internet age with blogs and a proliferation of review sites that can push content instantly across the world, the *Prometheus* production schedule requires time. Time to write, edit, proofread, add to a newsletter template, and proofread again. Then the printer takes a few days to a week to fit our request into a schedule. Stamps are bought, labels printed, mailing lists updated and verified. Newsletters are folded, labels attached, stamps attached, and staples pressed into the folded issue.

Despite these many steps, without content the whole process takes longer, as then it has to be written to fit, or the internet scoured to locate something of interest that might not have seen wide publication.

You can help, dear reader. This issue illustrates that book reviews can be brief or long. In the past we have reviewed, in addition to the standard fare of books, a varied list of movies, comic books, TV shows, and more. Perhaps you have played a video game, watched a play, or seen a web site of interest. Here is your chance to plug your favorite "fill-in-the-blank" in a libertarian science fiction newsletter. If you don't want to write a review, send an email to editor@lfs.org with the title, and maybe we can find someone to review what you wish to plug, or what you think has some bearing on libertarian sf.

Prometheus Submission Guidelines

Without content no publication can survive. In order to continue publishing future issues, *Prometheus* seeks reviews, interview, essays, articles, and columns of interest to libertarian science fiction fans. Any individual may submit material — membership in the LFS is not required.

As the newsletter of the Libertarian Futurist Society, *Prometheus* focuses on Prometheus Award-nominated works, but also publishes reviews and articles beyond the Prometheus Award candidates.

Letters of comment also are welcome, whether about the reviews, or any questions about LFS, the nominating and voting process. In this digital age the printed press continues to matter, but we need your help to sustain this newsletter.

Contact the editor for more details via email at: editor@lfs.org

Supervolcano: Eruption **Supervolcano: All Fall Down**

By Harry Turtledove

ROC, 2011 & 2012

Reviewed by William H. Stoddard

Harry Turtledove is mainly known for his alternate histories, going back to *Agent of Byzantium* and *A Different Flesh*, each a collection of linked short stories; and much of his other fiction is set in fantasy worlds with historical models, from ancient Mesopotamia to the Byzantine Empire to World War II. His newest series turns to the alarmingly possible near future for its setting. At the same time, its literary methods will be familiar to Turtledove's readers: He portrays a society undergoing change from the perspectives of multiple characters (in this case, seven) and through careful attention to the details of their lives.

The question of what genre this series belongs to has an obvious answer: It's apocalyptic fiction, one of the oldest forms of science fiction, going back at least to Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826). In this case, the destructive force is a massive volcanic eruption in Yellowstone. Geologists are seriously concerned about this possibility, as the fossil record shows that such eruptions have happened before, at intervals of around 700,000 years. Turtledove envisions an eruption putting hundreds of cubic miles of ejecta into the atmosphere, devastating three states and causing lasting health problems, global cooling, and economic hardship. One of his viewpoint characters, a geologist, provides explanations of the science underlying the story.

At the same time, this isn't a full scale apocalypse, at least not at the end of the second volume. Turtledove doesn't show humanity becoming extinct, or civilization falling. There are major troubles on a smaller scale, from the collapse of American grain and livestock production to an offstage nuclear war between Iran and Israel, but for many people, life goes on, with added problems. I think it could be said that Turtledove's main theme in this series is human survival and adaptability.

To tell his story, Turtledove focuses on seven linked characters: Colin Ferguson, a police lieutenant; his ex-wife Louise; their children Rob, Vanessa, and Marshall, all in their twenties; Vanessa's former boyfriend, Bryce Miller, a classic graduate student; and Kelly Birnbaum, the geology graduate student who becomes Colin's second wife after meeting him at Yellowstone and providing the initial geological exposition. Much of the story is about their ongoing lives: Colin's investigation of a serial killer (which is a well told police procedural with a surprising twist), Marshall's beginning career as a fiction writer, and many incidents involving searches for work, the starting and ending of romantic relationships, and the birth of children. Interwoven with these are consequences of the eruption: Vanessa's stay in a refugee camp, or the closing of the ramen factory where Louise has an office job, due to the steeply rising price of grain. The eruption leaves them scattered across the width of the United States, letting their stories

stand in for a panorama of an entire country.

Turtledove doesn't seem to be making a specifically political point in this story. But there are a lot of nuances that will have libertarian readers nodding their heads. We see simple bureaucratic ineptness; large organizations putting the convenience of their staffs above the needs of the people they're supposed to serve; rigidly enforced rules, and people who take pleasure in their power to enforce them. We also see officials using their powers for personal gain, such as the police chief of Colin's city, who repeatedly shields his son from the legal consequences of various misdemeanors, or the FEMA administrator who does favors for sexually available refugee women. We see ordinary people finding ways to get by, through self-help, mutual aid, and favors from officials with more benevolent motives, such as the small town police chief, an old friend of Colin's who arranges Kelly's transportation out of Montana after the eruption. Turtledove shows an entire community in Maine, all but forgotten by the federal government, struggling along on local resources, with the leadership of a local political figure—and a CNN news crew's effort to portray him as a small-scale dictator.

If this series does have a political theme, part of it is the contrast between two different understandings of freedom. On one hand, we have Vanessa's stubbornly going her own way—and too often finding herself with no source of help but indifferent or exploitative bureaucrats; the scene in the first book where she's told she has to give up her cat if she wants help was painful to read. On the other, we have Colin, much like her, but trying to find ways to cooperate with other people, while not letting himself be taken advantage of—and gaining added resilience from his relationships. In a story that's ultimately about survival, Turtledove shows the prices of these two systems of survival.

Article 5

By Kristen Simmons

Tor, 2012

Reviewed by Amy Sturgis

This young adult dystopian novel is set in a post-war near-future United States in which the Bill of Rights has been revoked and replaced with "the Moral Statutes." First, the negative: I felt as if I was getting psychological whiplash from the overwrought emotions of the point-of-view character, Ember. Her thoughts are rather overwritten, and her character would've been better served with a style dedicated to more showing and less telling, as the old saying goes. For example, in her internal monologue in a single scene, she goes from being floored by the discovery that her once-boyfriend kept all of her letters and carried them with him across the country against incredible odds, to accusing him in the next moment of finding her to be completely insignificant.

The positive, though, is positive. I was hesitant at first, reading the latest in a long, long line of "moral conservatives blur the line between church and state" YA dystopias—the

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—*Janine Southard interview, continued from page 1*

was researching the physics of the faster-than-light technology I wanted to use, I learned that the science was based on the work of Alcubierre (learn about Alcubierre drives on Wikipedia - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alcubierre_drive) who had done graduate work at the University of Wales, Cardiff.

That was the coincidence that tipped me over into putting more Welsh characters into the story.

Still, it's pretty fictionalized. For example, I made up most of the druidic aspects by starting with the Medieval texts (e.g., the Mabinogion) and deciding how that would sensibly go forward a few hundred years from now. Sure, I also took up listening to DruidCast on iTunes (an amazing show from the Order of Bards, Ovates, and Druids with music and philosophy and a lot of academic lectures), but my bizarre Hive-world druids have very little in common with modern druidry. Today's practitioners would be appalled at the idea of a set doctrine, for instance, or that you could possibly be a "secular druid."

Thankfully, my UK copyeditor is also Welsh, so the most egregious of my cultural errors got caught early. (Rhian E. Jones - <http://rhianejones.com/rhian-e-jones-publications/>)

How has your experience working with gaming companies influenced or affected your fiction?

Well, it's a large part of why I chose Kickstarter! It's also been really great for my dialogue writing (so people tell me). I mean, I get paid to spice up the millionth iteration of "go into the forest and kill five rabbits" and to make it tight, character-building, and informative.

My experience in gaming also taught me how to be a hack. You get your words out on time, or you don't hit your release date. There's no "I don't feel the muse" or whatever. You have a scene and a dialogue box and a plot line, and you have to get the player from one end to the other before the game ships. I treat writing a lot more like a business now than I did before, and it's made me a much better writer. (I'm a lot more prolific, and I like to think that the constant practice has made my work more fun to read.)

You chose teenagers as main characters. Given that they take control of a spaceship and need to learn quickly how to work in space, and with each other, did you deal with challenges that older characters in the same situations might not have faced?

The characters came before the plot. First, I did the world-building (with the Hive social system and the Testing), and then I made the characters. I knew immediately they were teenagers. Partially because I wanted them to take a mandatory STRONG-SAT, but partially because that's how I saw them. So it's hard to imagine how things would have been different with adults.

As you point out, they take control of a spaceship and need to quickly learn how to work in space. They are clueless. And that's okay. They figure things out—not with knowledge and experience, but by being smart. Luciano reads the manuals. Gavin draws on his experience with building theatre sets to

make sure that the ship stays in one piece. Only Gwyn does what she's trained to—with plants—and she's the character who gets no on-the-job screentime.

Adults, then, would probably already know how to use their spaceship. As characters, they'd have spent more time on relationships. They'd have started out with a lot more arguing because everyone would have an informed opinion (i.e., how to spend money, what to do over the next five years, who should be in charge of making dinner), and they'd also have segued pretty smoothly into teambuilding exercises because they know "learning to get along" is necessary. You'll notice that at the end of *Queen & Commander* our heroes have worked together and become closer, but they're not a full-on team yet like adults would try to be, and it doesn't occur to them that they'll fracture if they don't work on it.

Their lack of experience almost gets them killed several times. These kids are forced to grow up quickly. How does this affect the dynamic of the group?

Like any adventure story, the potential consequences give every action taken a whole 'nother depth. But they're also teenagers, so every choice they make has a personal consequence: it shapes their self-perception. There's a moment where Victor (who's supposed to be a computer engineer) is waffling about how he's useless on the ship, and it's at that very point that his deepest secret is exposed. This cements that he really is useless (at least, as an engineer), and that fact becomes part of his self-image.

They also have the chance to see, early on in their association, who can be relied on and who can't. No one in this situation—where you're a force-knit group of six, depending on each other for everything—wants to be the unreliable person, so there's a lot of redemption going on. But it's hard to dig out of that hole. Which leads to cliquishness and avoidance, in true teenage fashion. (Though I doubt I'd do any better.)

Since this is book one of the Hive Queen saga, can you talk a bit about book two and beyond? Where do you see this young crew taking their futures?

I have the next two books planned out, and book two should be coming out next year. In fact, there should be a Kickstarter for it this fall/winter 2013.

I'd envisioned the plot arc as a triptych. Book 1: characters leave home. Book 2: Characters kick around and learn stuff outside of home. Book 3: Characters return home and are revered (for new knowledge) or reviled (for trying to change the old ways).

Book two (tentatively titled *Hive & Heist*) picks up directly where *Queen & Commander* left off: in space. It also sees the introduction of a new character, an American Space Ranger who happens to be a sentient robot. Actually, the first full story I ever wrote in the Hive Queen universe was the origin story for the robot, M3L-155-A. As research, I went deep into reading about the first wave of Texas Rangers, who worked alone and had to always be smarter, better, faster. The Rangers also accepted all sorts into their ranks, making it the perfect home

—*Continued next page*

Queen & Commander Book One of the Hive Queen Saga

By Janine A. Southard

2013

Reviewed by Anders Monsen

Whereas so much of current Young Adult fiction focuses on dystopia, Janine Southard's debut SF novel explores a society that veers neither into dystopia nor utopia. This means that while there are no extremes, no jack-booted repression or perfect future, both good and bad remain integral parts of the novel, and both balance and spice up her fictional world.

Queen & Commander is set in a far future, or possibly alternate future. Space travel is routine, such that various cultures span many star systems. One such culture is based on Welsh tradition or mythology, almost to the degree that it becomes an alien society, at least compared to American views. The novel details a society where one major event or quality determines every individual's future. In this case, a high school test score determines the role of every person. Roles are roughly grouped into a handful of archetypes, from Queen, Commander, Perceiver, Devoted, and more. It is also usual for a group of people from various groups to form hives, with several males devoted to one Queen. Such a society seems ripe for change, and given that it's been functioning this way for over one hundred years, change appears in the form of Rhiannon, an intelligent and driven young woman who studies to defeat the test.

Rhiannon doesn't just defeat the test, she acs it almost far beyond her intentions, gaining the role of Queen and Commander, which lets her form her own hive and (if she gains one) command her own spaceship. In order for this to happen, she needs a hive that shares her vision, and a spaceship that lets them leave their world. One immediate problem is that she decides two crew-members must consist of her best friend Gwyn along with Gwyn's boyfriend Victor, a fact that must remain hidden since Victor is supposed to be devoted to one Queen, and that Queen must permit no rivals.

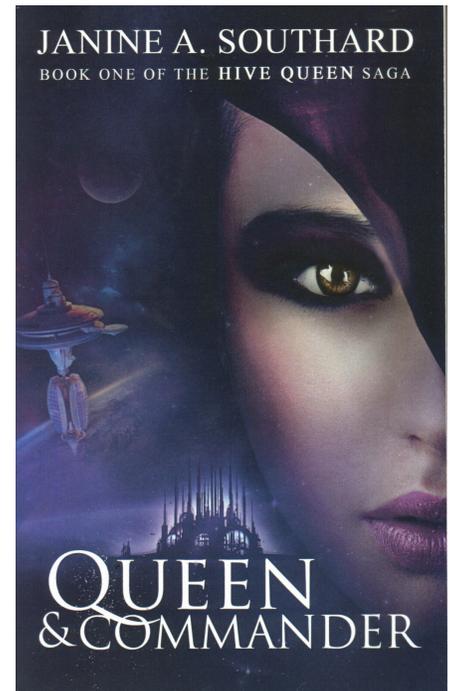
As they recruit additional members for the hive/spaceship crew, Rhiannon also secures a spaceship, and they dive into their role as space travelers with virtually no experience. Along with her first two, they add Gavin and Luciano, from very different backgrounds, and a brilliant young scientist, Alan, who sees right through how Rhiannon cheated the test, but trusts her regardless of this, or perhaps because of this act of

defiance.

Once these high school kids actually begin the process of piloting a spaceship, one realizes how overwhelmed they are for the task. None of them have any training, and they essentially are flying by the book, relying on the manual to get them undocked and out of the space-port. It's part of a long Young Adult fiction theme, where teenagers are placed in near-impossible situations and must meet their fate head-on or die. In other words, a coming of age story through which we all live vicariously. They cannot simply sit back and take their time, or rely on experienced adults to guide them and take over when things go wrong. And wrong they go.

Even before they know what they are doing, they take on a single passenger, a cantakerous man with a deep secret, quite willing to blackmail them to get his way. They also experience technical problems that almost kill them, showing how simple mistakes can lead to drastic consequences. Throw in hostile boarders who take the crew captive, and it's a rough start for Rhiannon and her hive.

Queen & Commander is a strong YA sf novel. We might think of the main characters as kids, yet they are all probably old enough to make life-altering decisions. They may lack life experience, may need to learn to trust each other and work as a team, but these are lessons every high school graduate must encounter before they enter adulthood. Rhiannon's team of young adults already have broken many constraints in their society, and if or when they return home they will have greatly changed, and possibly could cause greater change within their society. The novel ends somewhat abruptly, clearly setting the stage for sequels. It will be an interesting story to follow.



—*Janine Southard interview, continued from previous page*

for one of the few sentient robots in the cosmos.

At the same time, *Hive & Heist* develops the “Meanwhile back on Dyfed” plot a bit more, touching on some of the science involving the incarcerated Queens.

All the ensemble characters have strong motivations for their lives, and the “will they or won't they” question gives me a lot to play with. Will Luciano ever be trained as a doctor? Will Alan ever get to work in a high-profile lab? Will

Rhiannon ever figure out how to lead her people? Will any of them decide what to do with their spaceship besides go road-tripping in it?

I can't tell you much about book 3 right now without giving everything away. But I can tell you that I'm 75% sure there'll also be an alternate universe version of it. I desperately want to write the novella where Rhiannon doesn't cheat her high school exit exams. Instead of becoming a Queen and going off amongst the stars, she goes to college on the home world. I've got pages of notes about this alternate version, which is probably a murder mystery.

—*Article 5 review, continued from page 3*

most successful in recent times, to my mind, remains *Bad Faith* by Gillian Philip—but Simmons takes it a plausible step further, showing not only the corruption that this system fosters, but also the steps leading to it. One of the more subtle and thought-provoking insights of the novel is the point about how the new state emerged after the suffering of the war and provided services people wanted, and these services in turn made people dependent on that state and less likely to balk as they were systematically stripped of their rights. I wanted to enjoy this novel more than I did, but I really do appreciate its strengths, and it's incredibly relevant to our interests.

Son

By Lois Lowry
Houghton Mifflin, 2012
Reviewed by Amy Sturgis

Lois Lowry's *Son* is the fourth (and apparently last) installment in her Giver series. I really loved *The Giver*, and I'm glad I read *Son*. In the end, it left me quite unsatisfied. Two of its three sections are directly relevant to the issue of liberty.

There are lovely and clever connections to *The Giver*, *Gathering Blue*, and *The Messenger*, but *Son* stands alone and is perfectly comprehensible without prior knowledge of Lowry's other works.

The first section, "Before," takes place in the dystopian community of *The Giver*, where there is no individuality, no choice, and no emotion. The heroine, Claire, is a young teen who is chosen to become a birth mother for the community. She becomes pregnant by artificial insemination, she gives birth to "The Product" (the baby boy is taken immediately to be raised communally, and she's blindfolded so she won't even see him), and she's reassigned elsewhere. Through a bureaucratic oversight, however, she's never given the pills all citizens take to make them compliant sheep, and because of this, she has a sense of self and a sense that her baby belongs with her. The rest of the novel is about her struggle to reunite with him.

The second section, "Between" offers a terrific contrast to the first by showing what a relatively free community looks like, one that welcomes all and maintains few rules or regulations. There's trade and barter, there's individuality, there's love; the world, quite literally, has color for Claire for the very first time. There she finds support and encouragement and the strength to plan her trip to find her son.

The short final section, "Beyond," is where things fall apart, because what was a science fiction story morphs into a simplistic, fantastic allegory featuring the final standoff between Claire's son Gabe (Gabriel, an angel?) and the "Trademaster" (pure evil, the fallen angel?). I should note that the Trademaster doesn't represent trade per se; he represents the poor decisions we make, the worst of our natures (to the tune of "I'd rather be handsome than honest," that sort of thing), the way we give up those parts of ourselves we should treasure. In the end, the triumph is one individual's love for another.

The mother-son bond—considered selfish in that dystopian community of "Before"—is what saves not only these two individuals, but also their whole community.

As disappointing as I found the final section, I still think this has a lot to say. The first two sections are quite well done, and the contrast between the two communities is powerful.

A Few Good Men

By Sarah A. Hoyt
BAEN, 2013
Reviewed by William H. Stoddard

The latest novel by Sarah Hoyt has the same setting as her earlier *Darkship Thieves* (Prometheus Award for Best Novel, 2011) and *Darkship Renegades* (Best Novel nominee, 2013). The cover calls it a "sequel" but it isn't exactly that; it seems to take place in parallel to the other two novels, especially *Darkship Renegades*, with which its plot crosses over in the later chapters. Where those two novels focus mainly on a small anarchistic colony in space, with Earth as a place the characters visit, *A Few Good Men* takes place almost entirely on Earth, and shows what's going on there. Given the difference in scale, the effect is somewhat like the alternation between Frodo and Sam's perilous journey into Mordor and the massive battles in Rohan and Gondor in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Hoyt's future Earth is a grim place, in which all the perilous trends of the twenty-first century have gone to completion, leaving a badly damaged world. Most of the industrialized land areas have been destroyed, whether by straightforward nuclear attack or biological weapons. Advanced civilization mainly exists in a number of "seacities." And contrary to the speculations of libertarians such as Patri Friedman about "seasteading," these are not havens for the liberty-minded, but dictatorships. Not out-and-out totalitarian states—it doesn't look as if Hoyt's world had societies with enough people for totalitarian mass murder to be sustainable—but old-fashioned systems of elite privilege backed up by repression. The people at the top, called Good Men (making the title an ironic one), have their separate domains, but join together in suppressing any uprising, like Roman patricians setting aside rivalry to deal with a slave revolt. Readers of Nietzsche may recall his discussion of "master morality" as defining "good" as "masterful" and "bad" as "servile."

But the other side of the irony is a reference to the kind of "good men" who fight for their own and others' rights. And the novel's hero, Lucius Dante Maximilian Keeva, is such a good man—rather to his own surprise, as he is the son and heir of the Good Man of Olympus Seacity. Or he was the heir, formerly, for the novel opens very much *in medias res* (rather like some of Heinlein's novels), with Lucius in a maximum security prison, his escape from which sets the story in motion. He returns to Olympus to find his mother, his father, and his younger brother all dead, and himself the inheritor; to learn startling and science fictionist things about his own past; and to become the center of a political struggle that sets off a

—*Continued next page*

—*A Few Good Men*, continued from previous page

widespread uprising.

His involvement in the uprising comes about through his encounters with a secretive religious tradition, the Usaians. This is, I think, Hoyt's most distinctive idea in this series, the one that sets it apart from various action/adventure/romance stories in more or less fantastic futures. Hoyt envisions an American diaspora, like the diaspora of the Jews after the destruction of the Temple, turning them from a nation into a religion looking back to old traditions. "Religion" may be a somewhat misleading word, as it suggests heavenly or otherworldly hopes; the idea here is more like "next year in Jerusalem!" or like the prophet who asked, "What does the Lord God require of you, but to do justice, and love mercy?" The Usaians have no set theology that all of them agree on: they believe in natural human rights, which may or may not be God-given, they revere the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and they name their children "Benjamin" and "Nathaniel" and "George" and "Abigail" and "Martha" and the like, in commemoration of traditional heroes. The spirit is like that of Psalm 137, which says, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember thee not; if I set not Jerusalem above my chiefest joy." And the implied subtext is that the Usaians look forward to the refounding of their lost "land of liberty" as the Jews looked forward for centuries to returning to Israel. It's rather a poetic conception, and I think the implied analogy between America and Israel makes a lot of sense, as between two societies founded on (rather different!) laws, and two societies that thought they were not meant to be "like all the nations."

The evocation of Biblical themes is another rather Heinleinian point about this book, and in fact in many ways it can be read as a kind of love letter to Robert Heinlein. This comes out especially strongly in a brief idyllic interlude midway through the book, where Keeva and his new friend Nathaniel Remy spend time in a small farming community on the American mainland, in the home of a family named "Long." (The dramatic structure of the episode, though, is closer to that of Dagny Taggart's stay in Galt's Gulch, or perhaps of the Fellowship's visit to Lothlorien.) Hoyt's style is rather different from Heinlein's, but she's picked up both some of his tropes and some of his storytelling tricks.

All in all, I enjoyed *A Few Good Men* most of Hoyt's three novels (so far) set in this universe; I hope she plans a sequel showing the further progress of the uprising, and how Keeva and his allies struggle with the difficulties of establishing liberty on the ruins of statism. (It isn't an easily solved problem, as Hoyt reminds us with her evocation of the French Revolution!) If it has any defect, it's the inclusion of a love story—one that feels, to me, a bit tacked on, a bit too neat of a solution, like something a fanfic writer might have done with two good friends in someone else's story. I think it would have been just as satisfactory to leave it at the theme of Kipling's "Ballad of East and West," with its friendship of "two strong men"—and to leave it open for both of them to fall in love with other men in a possible sequel, or even for the reader to imagine that

they might become more than friends, if the reader is inclined that way. I'm reminded of Mallarmé's complaint about the Parnassians: "they deprive the mind of that delicious joy of imagining that it creates." But even with that criticism, I think this novel well worth reading, and I find its primary historical myth moving—and deeply libertarian in spirit.

The Fifth World

By Jacob Foxx

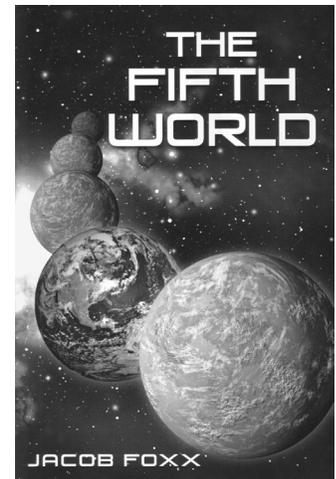
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Reviewed by David Wayland

The taste of freedom is sweet. Loss of control, on the other hand, probably leaves a sour taste to those who once wielded power; they remain self-assured in the belief that they alone know what is best for others, that without guidance from them, the world is chaotic and senseless. Jacob Foxx's novel joins a long tradition in exploring such a scenario, dating back to colonial America. After many years of benign neglect, the colonial master re-asserted its dominance. Meanwhile, the colonials started calling themselves Americans, began to like their independence, and this conflict spiraled into repression and war. Novels like Robert A. Heinlein's *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* echoes colonial American history on a lunar settlement. While many books go the route of war and revolutions, others like James P. Hogan (*Voyage to Yesterday*) and Eric Frank Russell (*The Great Explosion*) have worked the themes of passive resistance into their stories.

In *The Fifth World*, the present population of Earth live in a polluted mess. Nuclear war has rendered much of the planet barren and uninhabitable. Crops fail; diseases spread. The United Nations has been replaced by an international alliance called the Consortium. In a last, desperate hope, they built a spaceship called the Ark and launched it toward a recently discovered earth-like planet called Gaia. The journey would take nearly twenty years. All seemed on course, but then contact between ship and Earth vanished. Now, years later, a new ship is launched with the goal of finding out what happened to the original ship and the colonists. This second ship carries a crew more experienced in diplomacy and statesmanship, in case there are survivors who in the intervening years have forgotten from whence they came.

Aboard the second ship also is Becca Newman, a noted marine biologist, whose brother Alex departed on the first ship. Since the loss of that ship (and, in her mind, the loss of her brother), Newman withdrew from society and her career.



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Given a chance to find out the truth while getting her life back on course, she accepted a place on the second ship.

When the new ship arrives on Gaia they find the colony alive, but operating on entirely different principles than originally intended. Instead of large tower complexes, they find houses. Instead of planned sites and limited construction, they find the colonists have built many cities. As one of the planners on the second ship puts it, “this isn’t government. It is anarchy!”

Back on Earth the Consortium had abolished many basic rights and freedoms. The initial Ark settlement carried over many Consortium laws, but some colonists objected. In one scene they debate what happened years ago as they face the same prospect happening again with the new ship from Earth. It is a scene one can imagine taking place in Williamsburg’s Raleigh Tavern in the 1770s.

“The laws were illegal.”

“The government’s law violated the rights of the people. The rights of the people are higher, more fundamental.”

“Fundamental rights...That is exactly what the Consortium violated. It is exactly what the Colonial Authority violated here. It is what King George III, Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, Ken-Shi Kaosaki, Jamie Hopson, and Axl Steiger all violated. When a government

violates these rights, it is the right and duty of the people to oppose it and abolish it if necessary.”

Although the Consortium has been replaced by the Terran Federation, the impulse to control others remains the same. While not really an anarchy, the Gaian society values freedom, and finds itself at odds with the Federation and its desire for planned order. Conflict is inevitable. They’ve already experience one conflict, shortly after their arrival, and are wary of the same events. At the same time, they must approach the new Federation authorities carefully, as they do not want to frighten them with their rebellious tendencies. As Becca discovers, her brother Alex is deeply involved with the Gaian “anarchists” and she must choose sides.

Foxx’s novel approaches and deals with this conflict fairly slowly, building tension. *The Fifth World* falls into a tradition of genre novels adapting the American Revolution to the future. Becca fades a little from main character to spectator once she reaches Gaia, yet the cast expands with many interesting people at the same time. Some of his “bad” characters come across as slightly cartoonish, but then one only has to look at the current chair of the American intelligence department, James Clapper, and his “least untruthful” statement to see that cartoonish also can be grounded in reality.



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