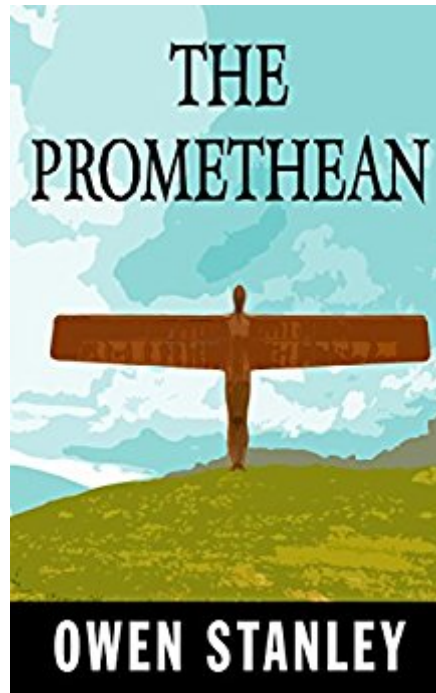


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The Promethean



Synopsis

The Promethean is an amazingly funny novel exposing the utter insanity of modern academia and the world of technology. An extraordinary tale of ambition, social justice, and human folly, it combines the mordant wit of W. Somerset Maugham with a sense of humor reminiscent of P.G. Wodehouse. When American billionaire Henry Hockenheimer discovers that conquering the corporate world is no longer enough for him on the eve of his 40th birthday, he decides to leave his mark on the world by creating the first Superman, a robot as intellectually brilliant as it is physically capable. But his ideas are thwarted on every side by the most brilliant minds of the academic world, from the artificial intelligence researcher Dr. Vishnu Sharma to the wheelchair-bound head of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee of Her Majesty's Government's Bio-Engineering Research Fund, Nkwandi Obolajuwan, and, of course, Dr. Sydney Prout, formerly of the United Nations, now Special Adviser on Human Rights to the European Union. And when Hockenheimer succeeds, despite all of the incredible obstacles placed in his way, he discovers that success can be the cruelest failure of all. Author Owen Stanley is an Australian explorer, a philosopher, and a poet who speaks seven languages. He is at much at home in the remote jungles of the South Pacific as flying his Staudacher aerobatic plane, deep-sea diving, or translating the complete works of Charles Darwin into Tok Pisin.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Imagine if Isaac Asimov and PG Wodehouse took on the forces of political correctness, using a robotic Jeeves as a foil to a Silicon Valley version of Bertie Wooster. Better yet, don't imagine it, just buy the book.

Put me in mind of both Asimov's robot novels (the 3 laws are identical) and Brave New World. Here the Promethian is the "savage" coping with a savage society. The hyperbolic humor regarding contemporary PC attitudes was a bit overdone. It was like opening a walnut with a sledgehammer. I wondered if the author thought that his average reader would fail to understand a more subtle approach?

This book is a fine successor to Harrison Bergeron by Kurt Vonnegut. It is a truthful satire of this sad pathetic lickspittle Weimar era we live in. I strongly urge you to have a couple of stiff drinks while reading this so that you are not tempted to go and shoot a random communist in outrage at the insanities of our modern age. The plot is well written as a vehicle to explore social mores, customs and absurdities. I do not remember which famous English authors use similar storytelling styles as satire but Owen Stanley has generally followed their design and adapted it well to our age. His skewering of the EU and the Diversity Commission is written by a man with either first or second hand knowledge of these groups. 4 stars because I wished for a sweet meteor of death and the rapture to begin shortly.

When an intelligent robot designed to look as human as possible begins to put two and two together and realize what his creators failed to give him (or her, if that's the pronoun the books' Diversity and Inclusion Committee would insist on), the advice of a (post)modern day highland warrior might just set events in motion that ruin the plans of Eurocrats and SJWs alike. If you've read *The Missionaries*, in which elite leftist academics descend upon a tribal island society to "uplift" it, only to have their plans go horribly and deservedly awry, you are familiar with Owen Stanley's satirical style. If not, you should certainly read that book as well as this one, which is the former's

chronological sequel but only mentions the events of the previous book more or less in passing. (with one familiar face turning back up in an important role, having not merely failed to learn from the events of the first book but doubled down on his ideological fixations) While the previous book dropped its satirical ordinance on those who would deny human nature, this one has an even sharper sting ready for those who would deny basic reality, and by inevitable extension the concept of truth itself. Focusing less on the U.N. anthropological crowd and more on SJW thought police and radical campus progressives, Stanley's portrayal roasts progressive concepts of privilege and wrongthink in a way that hits almost a little too close to home to be funny. Almost, but not quite--reading the Kindle version, there were times I had to set the phone down I was laughing so hard. The book's pacing is not quite as smooth as Stanley's previous offering, and rural England and the chaotic St. Samson's a far cry from Elephant Island, where the setting was an important character in its own right. But this crossbow bolt of satire launched at the increasingly frenzied heart of progressive academic mania is as relevant as tomorrow's headlines; a layered little onion of parody that when sliced open brings tears not to the reader but to the Berkeleys and Brussels of our world.

If you think the headline is an exaggeration, you haven't been paying attention. Stanley takes us from the Pacific Island savagery of "The Missionaries" to the mansions of Silicon Valley and the Byzantine world of high-tech, government bureaucracies and PC Universities. Honestly, it's enough to make you long for barbarism. The premise of the story is when a self-made billionaire looking to make a name for himself in the history books decides to make the first companion AI - indistinguishable from a human. This seemingly benign project rapidly degrades into a Kafka-esque nightmare of competing social and political interests while the robot tries to adapt to the incomprehensible behaviour of its creators. Anyone who has read Stanley's previous book can imagine the kind of surreal humour that results. My favourite was the psychopathic Scots Professor of Extreme Celtic Studies who accidentally teaches the AI how to break its behavioural controls. Daes yer maither stitch, Asimov? If I have a complaint about the book, it's that too much of it seems like real life these days. When you can no longer tell the difference between mainstream news reports and The Onion headlines, something has gone off the rails.

I liked this considerably more than Owen Stanley's previous literary excursion. I imagine part of that is my own experience among academics, whom Mr. Stanley gives here a fine and well-deserved skewering indeed. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who enjoyed The Missionaries. It

even has the reappearance of a character or two.

Mr. Stanley has managed to outdo even his tremendous debut novel with this rollicking satirization of modern hyper-liberalism. While some of the humor references 'The Missionaries', reading that isn't necessary to appreciate this. All you need is a taste for irreverent comedy and a distaste for the insanity of modern political correctness. Readers who are tuned into the nuance of modern internet satire will particularly enjoy the tongue-in-cheek references. And even if you find all that a waste of time, there's still an average of a joke a page to enjoy, many of which found me laughing aloud, regardless of who might hear.

Fantastic. Laugh density spikes in the second half. The first is just mildly absurd characterization setup. The second half is the whirlwind. I don't think it's quite as funny as his first, because that one felt like the gestation of a lifetime. The laugh density made it actually difficult to finish and a workout to read. But this one nonetheless delivers in epic and poignant fashion.

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