

The Real Ernest Hemingway?

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On June 20th, 2016, in a post entitled “The Real Ernest Hemingway,” *The Occidental Observer* reprinted the first few paragraphs of a writing that had appeared in the February, 1979 issue of *Instauration*, a white interests magazine, along with a link to the complete source¹. In introductory remarks, the *TOO* post characterized the *Instauration* material as “a fascinating portrait of an elite American [Hemingway] shortly before the Fall [which I took to mean the demise of white hegemony in this country]—extreme cowardice on race and Jewish issues combined with a veneer of hyper-masculinity.” The post attracted 33 reader comments.

The prefatory remarks in *TOO* and the opening paragraphs from the *Instauration* writing, along with the *TOO* reader comments, piqued my curiosity, and I followed the link to *National Vanguard*, a white advocacy web site, where the reprint had first appeared a few days before and read the 1979 Hemingway writing in its entirety.

I found the *Instauration* material from 37 years ago to be as the *TOO* post described it, fascinating, and the contemporary response to it in *TOO* intriguing; and more than that, I found all of it important. You’re invited to read the full *Instauration* writing as it appears in *National Vanguard* for yourself. However, I’ll try to write this in a way that it makes sense even if you haven’t read what was in *Instauration*.

Some background on *Instauration*:

Instauration was a monthly print magazine—no webzines like this one [The Occidental Quarterly] in those days—with a

publishing history lasting from 1975 to 2000. It was the brainchild of an American, Wilmot Robertson (1915-2000)—*Instauration* died when he did.

It wasn't until Robertson was in his mid-fifties that he became active in racial matters with a book he authored in 1972, *The Dispossessed Majority*.² The majority referred to in the book's title are American whites of northern European heritage, who were, according to Robertson, being, well, dispossessed in their own country. They were being pushed down, shoved aside, and replaced by a coalition of liberals, racial minorities, and, most powerfully, Jews. While Robertson had no time for these three groups, he had particular contempt for the white American power elite of his day, who, as he saw them, contributed mightily to the demise of their racial brethren by sucking up and caving in and selling out to whites' adversaries in the process of pursuing their own narrow and selfish personal agendas. Robertson continued and expanded upon these themes as the editor of *Instauration*.

Both the *TOO* and *National Vanguard* posts were titled "The Real Ernest Hemingway." Indeed, there was an indisputably real Ernest Hemingway. He was born in 1899 in Oak Park, Illinois and he did what he did (most prominently, he wrote both fiction and non-fiction) in places like Paris, Havana, New York City, World War II battlefronts, and Idaho, and he died by a self-inflicted shotgun blast in Ketchum, Idaho on July 2nd, 1961.

Since Hemingway is no longer around to speak for himself, and we can't check him out first-hand, we're left with what we can discern about the real Ernest Hemingway, that mortal human being and his merits as a man and as a writer, from what we're told and shown about him—such as in this 1979 *Instauration* writing.

And that's not a simple task. In a recent article for *TOO*,³ I

referred to people’s tendency to believe whatever someone who is articulate and comes off credible sends their way that aligns with their preconceptions and perceived wants and needs. Too often, we—and I’m including myself in this characterization—buy what is alleged about someone or something when we shouldn’t.

In my *TOO* article, I used the term “mediator” to refer to people who in effect stand between us and reality and tell us what’s going on and what it means and what we should think and do about it. The mediator I used as an example was *The New York Times* and its coverage of mass killings at an Orlando, Florida gay nightclub in mid-June of 2016. Here, I’ll be doing pretty much the same thing, only this time the mediator is the *Instauration* author in 1979 saying (writing) “This is what Ernest Hemingway was like.”

But was he really like that? That is what we have to decide. And whatever we decide, what is the significance or implication of that perception of Hemingway for things we care about, such as the wellbeing of white people?

I think it is fair to say that the *TOO* post, including the reader responses, is favorable to the *Instauration* take on Hemingway: yes, this gets at the true Ernest Hemingway, good job; and this portrayal of Hemingway makes a positive contribution to the cause of whites. I disagree on both counts: this is not the real Hemingway; and it is not good for white people to depict Hemingway in this way. This writing sets out how I came to that conclusion.

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The February, 1979 *Instauration* issue with the Hemingway writing contained just two names, Robertson’s as the editor and Howard Allen’s as the publisher.⁴ Only one of the eleven articles in the issue had an author attached, the one with the Hemingway

writing: “Inside Out with Cholly Bilderberger.” “The Real Ernest Hemingway” wasn’t part of the *Instauration* material; that was the title used in the web site that first reprinted the *Instauration* Hemingway writing, *National Vanguard*, and then *TOO* used this same title for its post.

A review of other issues of *Instauration* around that time revealed this same pattern—no identified authors except “Inside Out with Cholly Bilderberger.”⁵ Given the absent of authors’ names except Bilderberger’s, which seemed clearly to be a pen name, I was left with the impression that *Instauration* was likely a one-man operation, that Robertson wrote and edited everything in the magazine, including the Cholly Bilderberger “Inside Out” feature. If indeed Robertson wrote everything, that was a lot, around thirty large size pages with small type per issue, month after month after month. Sampling the articles, Robertson and whoever else might have contributed writings came off to me as bright, informed, and dedicated, and the writing was at a pro level.

So what was this Cholly Bilderberger business? I decided that it was likely Robertson as a fictionalized character. I am reminded of a fictional contributing editor to *Vanity Fair* magazine, Ed Coaster.⁶ From time to time in *Vanity Fair*, we learn of the escapades of Mr. Coaster, an aging journalistic anachronism with his old-style typewriter. We are never told directly that Coaster is a send-up, and we don’t know who writes the Coaster material, and the Coaster episodes involve real people doing ostensibly real things with Mister Coaster. As readers, we know to take it all with a grain of salt—none of it really happened. But at the same time, Ed Coaster’s exploits—as do good fiction and satire—reveal truths about the world.

It seems to me Cholly Bilderberger was Wilmot Robertson’s

Ed Coaster. Right off the bat, in the first paragraph in the Hemingway feature, Cholly notes in passing that he was there with Hemingway and Winston Guest hunting in East Africa, *and* with Hemingway and Leland Hayward at the Ritz in Paris, *and* with Hemingway and Marlene Dietrich at 21 in New York City, *and* with Hemingway “playing king to the whole world” in Havana. This would have been in the 1930s and ‘40s. All that? Cholly was at the table with Ernie and Marlene? Come on. This was exaggeration for effect. We’re having fun here.

I had the strong impression that Cholly, whether it was Robertson or someone else, made up all of this February, 1979 “Inside Out” feature, including the remarks attributed to Hemingway, to get across a point he really believed, that while Hemingway was down on liberals and Jews he knuckled under to them in order to look out for himself, and that he was a despicable character personally and a sell-out to what he really believed, including in his writing, and a plague on him and other big shots like him. Robertson’s Cholly dispatches weren’t to be taken literally (as Ed Coaster’s aren’t now). I assume he thought everyone knew what he was up to, just playing around, but with a serious intent behind it.

It appeared, however, from reader correspondence in the old *Instauration* issues that the irony, the joke, got by people; they took Cholly and what he said at face value. And I have the sense that the readers of *TOO* and *National Vanguard* did too. To the extent that is true, it raises the question, is this evidence that people aren’t processing the factual claims and ideas coming at them well enough? I hypothesize the answer to that is yes.

In the 1979 Cholly feature, Robertson—I’m assuming it was Robertson—I’m sure meant well, but in getting his message across he trivialized and attributed a low, sarcastic, and crude

persona to a major white icon, Hemingway. Among other things, Cholly has Hemingway saying “Kikes smell different and feel different.” Ouch. I don’t think that portrayal of Hemingway serves the cause of white people. In fact, it serves our adversaries more than it does us.

The Cholly material reinforces the stereotype of Hemingway (and, the put-down, the shallow and disreputable aspirations of a lot of white men): “boozing and womanizing and generally living out the American dreams.” But that’s Hemingway's public persona, the one that sold the books and magazine articles. I’ve read a good deal about Hemingway, and from that, plus what I’ve picked up in his writings, in reality Hemingway was soft, not hard, or better, soft as well as hard, nuanced, complex. To illustrate, consider the posthumously published *The Garden of Eden*, which is clearly autobiographical. Although but a high school graduate, Hemingway was very informed, thoughtful, and perceptive — an intellectual, really. I remember being taken by a recording of his voice—surprisingly genteel. He knew literature well and could have been on a college English faculty somewhere. Boxing, yes; a man’s man, communing with nature, big on courage, yes; possessing the coarseness and immature vulgarity depicted in this Cholly writing, no. Hemingway was a capon, was he? (Cholly refers to him as that.) This Cholly writing insults Hemingway. And frankly, I’m taken by the fact that none of the *TOO* commentators picked up on this.

Cholly has Hemingway offhandedly dismissing his novel “The Old Man and the Sea,” which more than any other won him the Nobel Prize in Literature as being about “some spic who caught a fish.” He also has Hemingway flippantly saying about the Jewish character Robert Cohn in his first big book, *The Sun Also Rises*, “I was actually pretty nice to him.” That’s not the

Hemingway I've read about or discerned from his writings. That's not the way a serious writer talks about his work. I can't believe Hemingway ever said anything like what Cholly put in his mouth.

Hemingway was an artist (he drew inspiration from artists outside the realm of writing, including from the French Impressionists), and he was deadly serious about his art. He sincerely respected the creative act of writing. He crafted the words he wrote with every ounce of his being. I think of his ten or more drafts of a paragraph from his memoir "A Moveable Feast," all of which found their way into print so readers could see Hemingway's process. This was very near the end of his life and he was badly damaged and not a one of the drafts was any good. But it was obvious he had never stopped trying to produce great writing. The "some spic who caught a fish" slur goes too far for my money.

Even though Hemingway famously professed writing what you know about, Bilderberger (Robertson?) declares he hypocritically stopped doing it himself, that he "retreated from reality." That's poppycock. I recently read *Across the River and Into the Trees*, a later, and critically disparaged, novel (I thought it was superb). It was about a man aging, about mortality, about life now being for all practical purposes in the past tense, about action having been replaced by immobility and inertia, and losing it sexually. Not what Hemingway knew about? Not getting at what's really going on? Are you kidding me? Well, yes, you are kidding me, but as Queen Victoria once said, "We are not amused"—or at least I'm not, and I'm suggesting that none of the rest of us should be either.

Hemingway, declares this *Instauration* writing, didn't support the famous poet and critic Ezra Pound when Pound was

hospitalized/locked up as a fascist nut case for anti-American and anti-Jewish broadcasts he made from Italy during WWII. Hemingway most certainly *did* support Pound, and he did it at significant professional risk to himself. A few years ago, I researched an article that got me into the Pound case.⁷ Hemingway said things like Pound "couldn't have been in his right mind" and that he "uttered absolutely idiotic drivel," but that was clearly to lighten things up and get the authorities to go easy on Pound after he was arrested, and he said it in the context of effusive praise for Pound. This Bilderberger feature says Hemingway called Pound a traitor. I never came across that in my investigations. It would have been out of character for Hemingway flat-out to have called Pound a traitor.

As the *Instauration* writing asserts, I'm sure Hemingway had negative feelings toward Jews. From what I've read, just about everybody did in those days. But Hemingway bowed down to them as the writing describes? Hemingway was a phony and an opportunist and a coward who said one thing out of their presence and another thing to their face? Hemingway had to go through Jewish-dominated publishing and motion picture industries to get his work to an audience and earn a living. My conclusion from what I know about Hemingway is that he was a man of personal and professional integrity and that he laid low and kowtowed the very least he had to in order to make his way in the world. It's so easy to hold someone to lofty standards when you aren't the one who has to pay the utilities bill. In my view, the *Instauration* depiction of Hemingway crosses the line into the realm of character assassination.

The *Instauration* piece attributes sophomoric and vulgar banter to Hemingway about the Jewish film producer David Selznick, liberal doyenne Eleanor Roosevelt, and "Juice in New

York City” that I can’t bring myself to repeat. Hemingway? No. He was too evolved a person for that. Putting this kind of mentality in another human being to get a rise out of readers and support your thesis about the “reality” (I’m putting it in quotes) of the American elite is base behavior.

The writer of this Hemingway writing does a hit job on Hemingway. Hemingway and by association white people generally—Cholly says it: Hemingway came to “stand for all [white] Americans”—come off looking a lot worse than liberals and Jews do here.

Whites’ adversaries realize that ridicule and demonization of exemplary whites—the Founders, every dead white male artist that ever lived, get slave-owner Jackson off the twenty-dollar bill, etc, etc, etc.—is a good way to soften whites up and bring them down as a race. We should be extra cautious about doing that to ourselves. Taking a sledgehammer to the pedestal of an iconic white American (and unfairly as far as I’m concerned) in order to make a point as was done in the *Instauration* material is the very thing we don’t need.

Postscript:

I submitted the above article to the editor of *The Occidental Observer*, Dr. Kevin MacDonald. He sent it for review to two men who knew Robertson when he was alive and had familiarity with *Instauration* when it was in publication. According to them, while I was on to something with my basic contention—Cholly’s writing was likely fictionalized—I was off on a number of my speculations:

Contrary to what I alleged in the article, Robertson had a long history of racial activism prior to writing *The Dispossessed*

Majority in the early '70s and his work with *Instauration*. In the late 1930s, he was active in the America First Committee, most prominently associated with aviator Charles Lindbergh, which opposed U.S. entry in a European war and had a tacit white racial agenda. Another example, in the mid-1960s he was a contributor under his own name to a white racial publication called “Western Destiny.”

Instauration did not cease operation upon Robertson's death. Rather, Robertson voluntarily closed it down because he was concerned about maintaining its quality. He worried that it would become a parody of itself in the way he believed an earlier, similar magazine had—*American Mercury*, edited by the legendary journalist, H. L. Mencken (1880–1956).

Robertson did not write everything in *Instauration*. There were contributions from a host of others, I'm not sure of the exact number. Robertson heavily edited submissions, however, so that stylistic differences among the writers were blurred. In my review of *Instauration* issues, Robertson refrained from using author names other than Cholly's—using one's name writing for white interests publications is like sticking your head out of the foxhole. The pattern for writings where author's identities are protected with which I'm familiar, including with this webzine, is to use pseudonyms; writings aren't left without any attribution at all. The stylistic similarities among the writings and the absence of author names other than Cholly's in the issues I reviewed led me to come to the conclusion that Robertson wrote everything in *Instauration*. The reviewers have helped me learn that that conclusion was based on a false premise: Cholly was far from alone as a credited *Instauration* author, including at least one besides Robertson who used his real name.

Robertson did not, as I had surmised, write the Cholly

“Inside Out” features. I still don’t know who Cholly was (the reviewers report he has died), but it wasn’t Robertson. The reviewers describe Cholly as a socialite and a respected author of both fiction and nonfiction who had lived in Paris, Switzerland, and Palm Beach. He participated in the European theater in World War II, in the intelligence service, one viewer believes. The reviewers think it likely that Cholly did in fact know Hemingway.

One reviewer reported that his recollection is that Cholly held Hemingway in contempt, and that Cholly “wrote a good deal of fictional material.” This reviewer referred to noting “elements of a Cholly ‘tall tale’” in the Hemingway writing. However, he added that he “suspected Cholly had a basis in fact in some of the material he included in the article.”

Respectful as I am of the reviewers’ comments—they both have superb reputations—what’s my grade on this article? I’d put myself in the B/B- range—not bad, but still leaving much to be desired.

In my favor, I believe I caught a fabrication in this Cholly writing. And it does seem that readers, both back then and now, took it literally when they shouldn’t have.

And, something I didn’t go into explicitly in the article, I think this Hemingway writing example reflects a pattern in white racial discourse generally. We make pronouncements to one another, and indeed they are often thoughtful and articulately expressed. But except for brief “yes, right” and quick comments and extrapolations from their audience, they pretty much just sit there unattended, unexamined; they don’t receive hard analysis and criticism. The thesis here, and it should have been articulated better in the article—is that the white racial movement would profit from more rigorous dialogue and debate, and yes,

respectful disagreement, than has characterized it up until now.

An example that comes to mind, in this magazine I read the writings reflective of a “New Right” perspective, Alain de Benoist’s for example. No question, these writings come across as erudite and unimpeachably valid. But are they really? Are they truly grounded in reality; are they more that high-sounding words put together well? Hear me, I’m not saying they aren’t worthy; I’m but raising the issue of whether we put them to the test of hard scrutiny—as we should with all public expressions, including this one—and whether we work with these ideas, offer modifications and alternatives to them. Do we essentially nod our heads yes and move on? I have concern that that is basically what we do. I certainly don’t think we have a corner on this predilection—in fact, we do it less of it than our adversaries. But our standards should be higher than theirs.

What exactly are we debating right now as a white racial movement? What alternative visions, programs, strategies, tactics, are on our agenda at the present? Does this Hemingway post and its response tell us something important about ourselves? I think it does.

All that got my grade up to a soft, not solid, B. But I’m not an A by a long shot. The shortcomings in my article preclude that.

The big error in my piece was jumping to the conclusion after a cursory investigation that Robertson authored the Hemingway writing, which I still find highly objectionable. Doing that, I detracted from the legacy of a true pioneer in the white racial movement. We would all do well to read Robertson’s book, *The Dispossessed Majority* (see endnote 3). Written nearly a half century ago, it contains a remarkably accurate and prescient diagnosis of the underpinnings of the crisis

currently facing white people in America. I owed Wilmot Robertson to write about him carefully — full of care — and I didn't.

Why were there so many places that I was off in my conclusions?

First, I had other things going on in my life that drew my attention and energies, and I was willing to devote just so much time and effort to this Hemingway matter and no more. The truth of it is that I was re-binge-watching *Breaking Bad* when I took a break between episodes and checked the *TOO* site and saw the “Real Hemingway” post and went “What’s this?” and decided to look into it some. Which I did, but Walter White never left my mind—along with my daughter’s golf game, and this suspicious lesion on the side of my face, it isn’t skin cancer, is it? Plus I have a pronounced lazy streak—at this very moment, a nap is calling out my name. That is an explanation, but it isn’t a valid excuse, especially when going public with claims about people as I did in this article.

As a reader, you need to be on the case sifting through what you are getting from someone—me in this writing—who is telling you what is going on in the world. You and I both need to keep in mind that we are trying to make sense of reality amid all sorts of things going on in our lives, and within the context of personal limitations, and we have to stay humble, tentative, about what we know, or think we know.

I ended the article I originally submitted with the assertion that we should be careful about pulling the rug out from under prominent white personages from the past, Hemingway being one of them. The two reviewers strongly contradicted my positive views of Hemingway.

“Professor Griffin is correct to some extent that the

destruction of our heroes is a bad thing for our racial self-worth,” said one reviewer. “But does Hemingway deserve to be a hero?” Clearly, he was implying no, he doesn’t.

Said the other reviewer: “As for the quote [Cholly attributes to Hemingway] about *The Old Man and the Sea* being about some spic who caught a fish, Dr. Griffin is incorrect when he surmises that Hemingway would never say that. In *To Have and Have Not*, Hemingway makes derogatory racial remarks about Cubans. He has a character observe that when the hatch is open, he’s hit with ‘Chink stink.’ If he would say those kinds of things in his novels, it stands to reason that he would say such things privately.

“Hemingway was a truly repulsive person. He was an Anglo-Saxon who liked Spanish bullfights in which the poor animals are essentially tortured to death. They are bled to the point of collapse before the matador comes out and finishes them off.

“It is well known and documented that Hemingway gut-shot a bitch and relished watching her death agonies over the next several days. The story was reported by the respected liberal writer Joy Williams, and it appeared in a guidebook put out by the Key West Chamber of Commerce. There is every reason to believe the story is true.

“Hemingway commented that he was able to finagle the ‘honor’ of being allowed to torture and kill a German POW [during World War II].

“He went out of his way to humiliate and hurt his friend [the writer] John Dos Passos by springing on him in front of everybody at a dinner where Dos Passos was to give a talk that a very close friend of Dos Passos had been executed in the Spanish Civil War. It was shocking and sadistic treatment.

“Hemingway’s style of writing was an inevitable and necessary corrective to the overly flowery and effeminate language novelists used in the 19th century and into the 1920s.

“Hemingway was not a great white man.”

My response is that writers can attribute things to characters in their books that do not mirror their own views or behavior.

Also, there are positive ways to look at bullfights and those who take to them.

As for the bitch dog story, maybe so, maybe not so—I lean toward disbelieving it. The Joy Williams account is evidence to be sure, but because she wrote it and the Key West Chamber of Commerce printed it does not *prima facie* make it a fact; credibility has to be assessed from the get-go. Another piece of evidence to consider is that Hemingway doted on a slew of cats. Cats aren’t dogs, but they are domestic animals. I’m having major trouble imagining Hemingway shooting a dog in the stomach and relishing in watching her death agonies over a period of a several days.

More, as my recent Orlando article pointed out, a lot of claims by respected liberal writers, as Joy Williams was, aren’t true (I’d say the same thing about respected conservative writers), and it is not because they make things up. Rather, their life experience, outlook, and work and social contexts lead them to write things they assume are so that aren’t. Hemingway’s politics, which I have written about elsewhere,⁸ leaned in a libertarian/conservative direction, and he had a gun-toting alpha male image.⁹ Williams, liberal and a woman, could have been writing about the “other” in the same way liberal writers at *The New York Times* are when they deal with Donald Trump.

Whether or not Hemingway ever told the story, seriously

or in jest, about maiming and then killing a German POW—I've never read it—that it actually happened is incredible to me, not the least bit credible. For the military to have granted the most famous writer/journalist at that time, who was sending back reports on the war to publications in the U.S., the privilege of killing a German POW and to have run the risk of a monumental public relations disaster if the news of it had gotten out is beyond my imagination. Imagine the uproar if it had been revealed that top military brass were allowing a civilian to, as the reviewer relayed the tale, knee cap and then execute a German soldier, who, before he died, cried out, "What about the Geneva convention?" Supposedly, Hemingway snarled in reply as he started shooting, "Here's your Geneva Convention." I simply don't buy it. Which is certainly not to say that I dismiss all stories of atrocities against German soldiers (one reviewer concluded that I do). To the contrary, I have documented them in a book I wrote on the late William Pierce.¹⁰ My article was about what Ernest Hemingway likely did and didn't do, only that.

There are other possible, less condemning, motivations to Hemingway's sharing with an audience that Dos Passos' friend had been executed than it was Hemingway's intention to hurt and humiliate Dos Passos. Shocking and sadistic treatment of close friends does not fit with what I have read about Hemingway. Insensitive at times, yes; shocking and sadistic, no.

And last, I deem Hemingway a truly great writer; far, far more than an inevitable and necessary corrective.

The issue has been drawn: the two reviewers say Hemingway does not merit being a respected figure in whites' racial heritage and I say he does.

I contend our adversaries are tearing down our white heroes enough as it is without us piling on ourselves and helping

them in their campaign to destroy us. Especially, we shouldn't be debunking white heroes unfairly, and that's what I see happening here to Hemingway. I don't pick up that the two reviewers have as big a concern about this phenomenon as I do.

It needs to be underscored that neither the two reviewers nor I are the last word on this matter. We are but three voices at the table. Add your voice to this issue of Hemingway's merits as an exemplary white historical figure, as well as anything else in this article.

Endnotes

1. <http://www.instaurationonline.com/pdf-files/Instauration-1979-02-February.pdf>

2. *The Dispossessed Majority* is available online as a PDF. <https://ia800500.us.archive.org/23/items/TheDispossessedMajority/WilmotRobertson-DispossessedMajority-Dm.pdf>

3. "The Orlando Shootings: Talk, Reality, and The New York Times," *The Occidental Observer*, June 27th, 2016. <http://www.theoccidentalobserver.net/2016/06/the-orlando-shootings-talk-reality-and-the-new-york-times/#more-37606>

4. The February, 1979 issue of *Instauration* is online. <http://instaurationonline.com/?cat=26>

5. The December, 1978 and all of the 1979 issues of *Instauration* are online.

<http://instaurationonline.com/?cat=26>

6. For examples of the Ed Coaster spoofs, see <http://connection.ebscohost.com/tag/COASTER%252C%2BEDwin%2BJohn>

7. A book I recall contributing to that investigation into the Pound case that involved Hemingway is E. Fuller Torrey, *The*

Roots of Treason: Ezra Pound and the Secrets of St. Elizabeths (McGraw-Hill, 1984).

8. See the November, 2007 thought “On Hemingway’s Politics” in my web site, www.robertsgriffin.com.

9. See the March, 2014 thought “On Ernest Hemingway and Manhood” in my web site, www.robertsgriffin.com.

10. Robert S. Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man’s Deeds* (Authorhouse, 2001), see pp. 285-290.