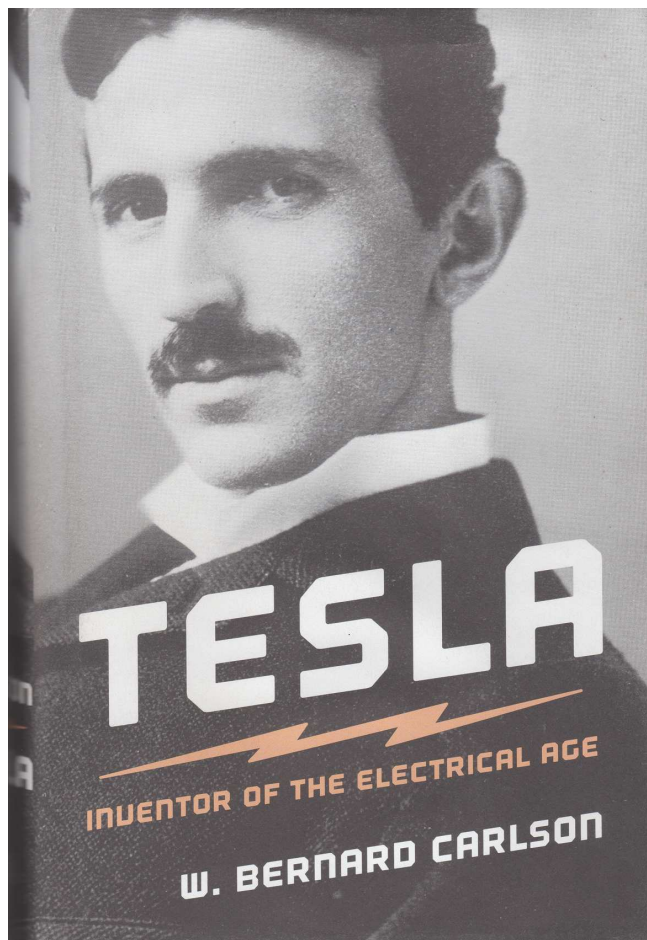


Two New Tesla Books

Reviewed by Bart Lee, K6VK, Archivist

We now have the benefit of an excellent technical biography of Nikola Tesla, and a psychological novel of Tesla's life.



The publisher of Carlson's book, Princeton, describes it quite accurately (as quoted below). Carlson's Tesla book: *Tesla - Inventor of the Electrical Age* -- makes it possible to understand all of Tesla's ideas and inventions. And while Tesla did not hear

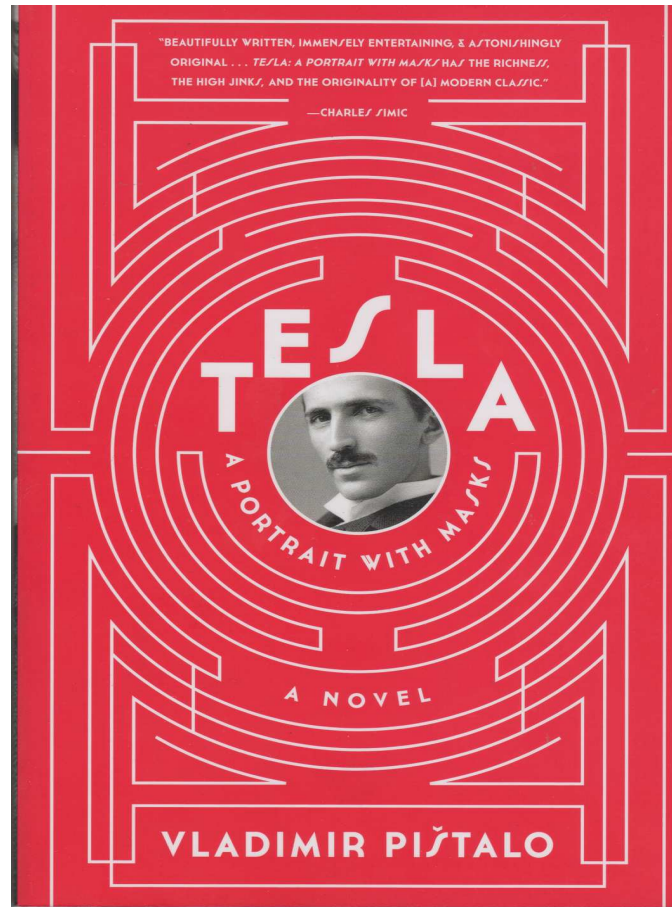
signals from Mars, he may well, according to Carlson, have heard radio noise generated between Jupiter and its moon Io.

“Nikola Tesla was a major contributor to the electrical revolution that transformed daily life at the turn of the twentieth century. His inventions, patents, and theoretical work formed the basis of modern AC electricity, and contributed to the development of radio and television. Like his competitor Thomas Edison, Tesla was one of America's first celebrity scientists, enjoying the company of New York high society and dazzling the likes of Mark Twain with his electrical demonstrations. An astute self-promoter and gifted showman, he cultivated a public image of the eccentric genius. Even at the end of his life when he was living in poverty, Tesla still attracted reporters to his annual birthday interview, regaling them with claims that he had invented a particle-beam weapon capable of bringing down enemy aircraft.

“Plenty of biographies glamorize Tesla and his eccentricities, but until now none has carefully examined what, how, and why he invented. In this groundbreaking book, W. Bernard Carlson demystifies the legendary inventor, placing him within the cultural and technological context of his time, and focusing on his inventions themselves as well as the creation and maintenance of his celebrity. Drawing on original documents from Tesla's private and public life, Carlson shows how he was an ‘idealist’ inventor who sought the perfect experimental realization of a great idea or principle, and who skillfully sold his inventions to the public through mythmaking and illusion.

“This major biography sheds new light on Tesla's visionary approach to invention and the business strategies behind his most important technological breakthroughs.”

Pistalo's novel, *Tesla - A portrait with Masks*, on the other hand, is almost like a dream sequence.



Pistalo, a fellow Serb, imagines Tesla's mind. This is much harder to do than to imagine his inventions. Who Tesla was, and *how* Tesla was Tesla, is easier to understand as Pistalo explains that he came from a millennium of warrior priests: Nikola Tesla, knight of technology and priest of the new world.

Carlson says of this novel: “[It] imagines Tesla’s inner life, and in so doing, probes the cultural and spiritual consequences of modernity.”

(de K6VK) ##