

for writing a book. He sat down at a typewriter and he wrote it. I mean word-by-word. And every word he knew he was writing for that book. You know, kind of the way people like Dickens and Hemingway used to write books.

THE MT VOID

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Then suddenly a few years later we heard he was up to 200. Did he write the second hundred books that fast? Well, not really. He started republishing magazine articles collected into book form. Then we started getting anthologies of stories edited by Asimov, Greenberg, and usually one other collector. Asimov might write an introduction to the anthology, but who knew how much he did to pick the stories? I can tell you that Martin Greenberg seems to need little help in putting together anthologies. The Groff Conklin of the 1980s seems to edit about two thirds of all science fiction anthologies published these days. And that isn't counting all the mystery anthologies he publishes and who know what other kind of anthology he publishes. The man must do nothing in life but read short stories and talk to lawyers and agents.

In any case, even Asimov is starting to lose track, but it seems there is a new Asimov book out every 2.3 days. Old Isaac just sits back and relaxes as the number of his books--now over 400--just keeps growing. Asimov is not insisting that whenever a new Asimov book comes out he be informed in writing by the publishers. Every four or five Asimov books that come out, the publisher must send him copies so he can keep track. I asked Isaac if he counts in his book count issues of his science fiction magazine and he referred me to his book accountant. He was not sure since he had forgotten

that there even was an I s a a c A s i m o v' s S c i e n c e
F i c t i o n M a g a z i n e.

In any case, one publisher I talked to informs me that Asimov will eventually have at least 1000 books to his name. That will be at the turn of the century and that is a worst-case figure assuming Asimov dies tomorrow.

2. [From the NY Times, May ?, 1988] - Robert A. Heinlein is Dead at 80; Renowned Science-Fiction Writer:

Robert A. Heinlein, a former aviation engineer whose clever interweaving of imagination and technical expertise helped make him one of the country's most successful writers of science fiction, died Sunday morning at his home in Carmel, Calif. He was 80 years old and had been in ill health for some time.

Mr. Heinlein's fictional writings repeatedly anticipated scientific and technical advances. He managed to write a story about an atomic power plant some years before the first atomic bomb was detonated. Over the years, he won an enormous and loyal public, and his dozens of books sold more than 40 million copies.

His writing won many science-fiction awards, and some of it was made into movies. He also wrote several screenplays, as well as some nonfiction books and articles on technical subjects.

Mr. Heinlein's eminence stemmed partly from the success among young people of *A STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND*, which was published in

1961. Its sardonic attitude toward modern mores proved popular in a decade that saw students challenge many established institutions.

"Violence and Gusto"

Orville Prescott wrote in *The New York Times* that in the novel, Mr. Heinlein "expressed his sardonic opinions with violence and gusto." The reviewer also called an earlier Heinlein tale, *THE GREEN HILLS OF EARTH*, "a science-fiction classic."

Mr. Heinlein's writing style was generally simple, and so was his explanation of how he went about his writing.

"I start out with some characters and get them into trouble," he told one interviewer, "and when they get themselves out of trouble, the story's over."

Robert Anson Heinlein (Hine-Line) was born on Oct. 21, 1907 in Butler, Mo., and grew up a fan of such classic science-fiction authors as H. G. Wells and Jules Verne. He graduated from the

United States Naval Academy in 1929 and remained in the service until 1934. He later did graduate work in physics and mathematics at the University of California at Los Angeles.

He turned to writing full time in 1939, beginning with stories for the pulp magazines. "They didn't want it good," he said in a 1980 interview in The Times. "They wanted it Wednesday."

He interrupted his writing during World War II, which he spent as an aviation engineer with the Navy. After the war, he wrote for major magazines, including THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, and then took up writing science-fiction novels, initially for young people and then, beginning in the 1950's, for adults.

Mr. Heinlein was married in 1948 to Virginia Doris Gerstenfeld, who survives him.

3. [From the Boston Globe, May 10, 1988] Robert A. Heinlein, 80, author of STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND

CARMEL, California--Robert Anson Heinlein, considered by many the most influential author of science fiction since H. G. Wells, died of heart failure Sunday at his Carmel home. Mr. Heinlein, 80, had suffered from heart ailments and emphysema for the past decade.

Mr. Heinlein was the winner of an unprecedented four Hugo awards, given by a popular vote of science-fiction fans for best novel of the year. The four books were DOUBLE STAR (1956), STARSHIP TROOPERS (1959), STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND (1961), and THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS (1975). Mr. Heinlein received the first Grand Master Nebula Award, given by the Science Fiction Writers of

America for a lifelong contribution to the genre.

His stature was also exemplified by his 1969 appearance as guest commentator, alongside CBS's Walter Cronkite, on the Apollo 11 mission, when Neil Armstrong left the first footprints on the moon.

In the SCIENCE-FICTION HANDBOOK, L. Sprague de Camp reported the results of a 1953 poll taken among 18 leading writers of

speculative fiction. They were asked to list authors who had influenced their work. Only 10 authors were mentioned by more than one of the 18, and of those 10 the only modern writer was Robert A. Heinlein.

STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND was Mr. Heinlein's third Hugo-winner and his most famous book. The tale of an alien who establishes a religious movement on earth, it became a cult classic in the '60s. He commented on the book's appeal in papers appended to the manuscript when he gave it to the University of California at Santa Cruz: "I still think it is a good story (but nothing more)--and I must confess that I am startled at the effect it has on many people."

STRANGER also added a new word to the language: "grok," meaning to understand thoroughly by means of intuition or empathy.

Mr. Heinlein sold his first story in 1939. He was inspired to write it by a \$50 prize offered by Thrilling Wonder Stories. But when he finished the story, he decided it was too good for the contest and sent it instead to Astounding Science Fiction. The magazine's editor, John W. Campbell Jr., bought it for \$70, then encouraged Mr. Heinlein to continue writing by buying one story after another for years.

Science fact and fiction writer Isaac Asimov once said that between 1939 and 1942 Mr. Heinlein "single-handedly, under the aegis of John Campbell, lifted science fiction to a new pitch of quality."

Mr. Heinlein's novel ROCKET SHIP GALILEO (1947) signaled the beginning of the period during which he did his most popular work.

Born in Bulter, MO, Mr. Heinlein was a graduate of the US Naval Academy at Annapolis, where he was a champion marksman and swordsman. In 1934, he contracted tuberculosis while serving on a destroyer and was retired at age 27. Although he never saw combat, the military experience played a large role in his thinking.

He went on to work as an aeronautical engineer, silver-mine owner, real estate agent and architect before turning to writing.

After World War II, Mr. Heinlein was divorced from his first wife, Leslyn Macdonald, to whom he had been married while in the Navy.

In 1948, he remarried, to Virginia Gerstenfeld, a woman who excelled in many fields from biochemistry to figure skating. She became the model for many of the red-haired and seemingly improbably talented women in Mr. Heinlein's stories. He is survived by her.

In Part 2 of THE ROAD TO SCIENCE FICTION, by James Gunn, there is this summing up of Mr. Heinlein's work: "More than any other writer, Heinlein had the ability to present carefully crafted backgrounds, including entire societies, in economical but convincing detail. This and, at its best, his narrative drive and his spare, vigorous prose provided science fiction with models for the authors who followed after."

4. Since Heinlein was known for his support of blood drives, some fans around Los Angeles have contacted the Red Cross about a Robert Heinlein Memorial Blood Drive. Anyone wishing to contribute should just go to her/his local Red Cross donation center and fill in "Heinlein" in the "donor group" box. [-ecl]

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