

# Speculation

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THIRD  
ANNIVERSARY  
ISSUE

Presenting  
"THE PERIOD  
OF SUCCESS",  
Chapter 3  
of  
Alexei  
Panshin's  
critical  
volume,  
"HEINLEIN  
IN  
DIMENSION".





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VOL. 2. NO. 2. (Issue 14)

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# HEINLEIN IN DIMENSION

The following is a description and discussion of the writing of Robert Heinlein from the end of World War II through 1958. It is part of a larger discussion, portions of which have appeared in Zenith Speculation & Riverside Quarterly.

by alexei panshin

## Chapter 3: THE PERIOD OF SUCCESS

Illustrated by

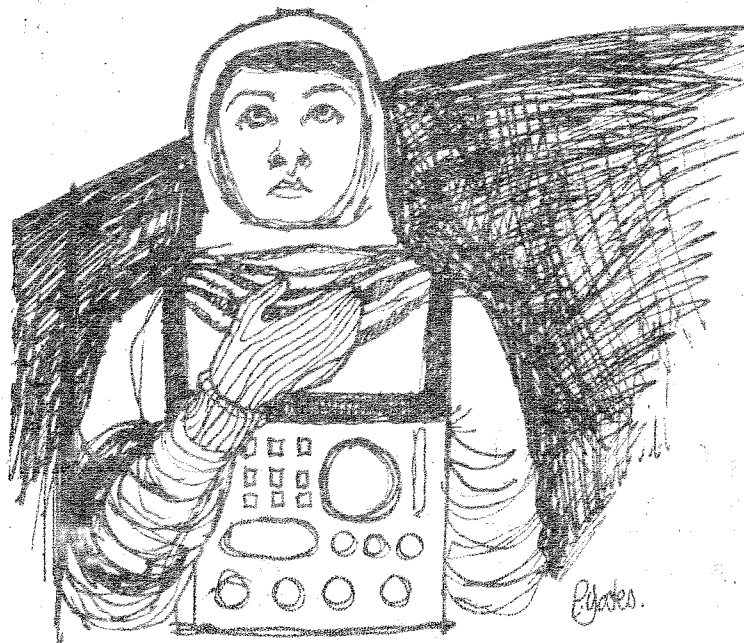
Pam Yates & Ivor Latto

### 1. Heinlein's Second Period.

It is not at all difficult to justify calling Heinlein's second period his 'Period of Success'. The period begins with his return to writing after the war, and ends, as did his first period, with one of his best stories, in this case the juvenile-novel HAVE SPACE SUIT-WILL TRAVEL, published in 1958. These years were both economically and artistically successful ones for Heinlein. Of Heinlein's best stories, two, "Waldo" and BEYOND THIS HORIZON, belong to his first period and five, RED PLANET, STARMAN JONES THE STAR BEAST, CITIZEN OF THE GALAXY, and HAVE SPACE SUIT-WILL TRAVEL, belong to his second. Moreover, during this second period, Heinlein was in solid control of his writing tools, and nearly everything he did was first rate. It is only in his third period that his control has begun to slip, his writing mannerisms get out of control, and some of his ideas have begun to seem compulsive, the equivalent perhaps of stiffening joints.

All five of the novels that I have named as being the best of Heinlein's second period are juveniles, or at least were published in book form as juveniles. Three of the five were published in adult magazines as adult novels, prior to their book appearances. This leads to a very interesting question, that is, whether Heinlein's second period is his strongest because the juveniles that he was writing then allowed him the opportunity to show off all that was best in his writing; or are these novels so uniformly good because they happened to be written at the time that Heinlein was at the height of his writing powers? I have no firm answer for this. The question may not be answerable at all, any more than any other chicken-and-egg question. Nonetheless, I can't help but find it an intriguing one. There is another possibility, of course, that my estimation of these novels is completely mistaken, but we shall see about this when we come to examine the individual stories. In any case, the period is bounded on

Illustration  
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PODKAYNE OF MARS



one end by Heinlein's first juvenile for Scribner's and on the other by his last, and the period could, if you wish, be called his Scribner's Period.

During this middle period Heinlein switched his writing from an emphasis on short stories to an emphasis on novels. Until 1947, he had had no books published. He had sold twenty-eight science fiction and fantasy stories, one quarter of which might be called novels. The emphasis was clearly on short fiction. In his second period, Heinlein published twenty-two short stories

and fifteen new novels, but sixteen of the short stories were published by 1950, and eleven of the novels were published after 1950, a distinct change in emphasis. The change in emphasis has been even more marked in his third period, which so far has seen six novels and only three short stories.

Of all the magazines in the science fiction field, Astounding averages the best payment, between three and four cents per word. If you consider \$10,000 a year to be a good living, you can set up a neat equation;  $.035X$  equals 10,000. That

is to say, X number of words at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cents per word equals 10,000 dollars. X turns out to be exactly 285,714 and  $\frac{2}{7}$ ths words.

285,714 words is the equivalent of four novels, or the equivalent of one novel, ten novelettes, and sixteen short stories per year. Astounding, of course, wouldn't buy that much material from any one man, and the other magazines don't pay as well, which means writing even more to make up the difference. In other words, making a living by selling magazine science fiction is not an easy thing. That is why so many science fiction writers turn to historical novels, or pornography, or remain amateurs.

Robert Heinlein had twenty of his twenty-eight pre-war stories published in Astounding. After the war, he must have decided that if he was going to make a living at writing, and was going to write science fiction, he would have to find more profitable outlets for the work he did. That is why, since 1942, Heinlein has had only three stories published in Astounding. One was a short novel written as a favour, and the other two were novels that were published as books as soon as their serial appearances were ended.

Instead, Heinlein did find new markets. The movies and television were two. Another was to locate book publishers for his pre-war stories. A fourth and very important one was the juvenile book market. It is almost impossible to find five or ten-year-old adult novels that are still in print, outside of immensely popular titles, but good juvenile novels continue to sell year after year and to stay in print. Scribner's has said that they expect the Heinlein novels they have published to stay in print for a long, long time. Heinlein's last new market was the slick magazines.

## 2. 1947

Heinlein's first post-war story was "The Green Hills Of Earth", in the February 8, 1947, issue of the Saturday Evening Post. It is a very pretty sentimental narrative. Rhysling, an atomic power plant "jetman" on the early spaceships, has been blinded by a defective jet. He then spends twenty years bumming around the Solar System, making up songs. Finally on a trip to Earth another jet goes haywire, the regular jetman is killed, and Rhysling takes over, mends the trouble, records one last version of his most famous song, and dies.

The story begins, "This is the story of Rhysling, the Blind Singer of the spaceways - but not the official version." I don't know why it couldn't be the official version. There are admissions that Rhysling drank, wore a dirty eyepatch, and made up dirty songs from time to time, but these strike me as the sort of failings that are made to order for the official version of a life. Very romantic.

"Space Jockey" was in the April 26 Post. This one is about a pilot who is having troubles with his wife because his job, piloting between Earth and the Inner Space Stations, takes him away from home too much. At the end he has a new job piloting between the Lunar Space Station and the Moon, and his wife will be seeing much more of him. This is much more detailed than "The Green Hills Of Earth," and much more prosaic.

Both of these stories are typical of the new approach Heinlein adopted for his slick stories. He invented simple problems and handled them very straight-forwardly, perhaps the only approach that would have been effective for the slick magazines. Both these stories are primarily human stories, too, rather than stories of process, and that too was something new for Heinlein, and again, probably necessary for his new market.

"Columbus Was A Dope" may have been intended for the Post, as well - it does have a very simple story line. Or it may have been an older Heinlein story, left over from before the war. In any case, it was published in Startling Stories for May, the last story to appear under the name of Lyle Monroe, and the only Heinlein science fiction story to appear under a pseudonym after 1942. It is not a people story - it is a short, simple, beautiful, gimmick. A good gimmick story is probably the easiest kind of story to sell and the most likely kind to be reprinted. They are also the shallowest and most easily forgotten.

The story itself is a bar conversation between two salesmen, the bartender, and the chief engineer of the first starship, now under construction. One of the salesmen doesn't see any point in sixty-year trips, particularly ones that are unlikely to succeed. They are unnatural. But it turns out that the conversation is taking place in a bar on the Moon. Simple, short, and effective.

"It's Great to be Back" was in the Post for July 26, and it is another 'people' story. When their contracts are up, a young man and his wife quit their highly paid jobs on the Moon, and with a sigh of relief head back to Earth again. They find, however, that Earth isn't quite the paradise they remember - they have changed, they no longer fit. At the end they are headed back to the Moon, where they really belong.

While it is true that much of what we think of as "human nature" is really a result of our own culture, I do believe that people in some regards are much the same everywhere. A story like this one that asks the question, "Where is home?" is going to be intelligible to almost every man. This is a good, eternal, valid story.

I know of four good stories that ask the question, "What is a man?". One is "Conditionally Human" by Walter M Miller, Jr. One is H. Beam Piper's set of novels, LITTLE FUZZY, and THE OTHER HUMAN RACE (and the unpublished third book in the series), really forming one long story and probably Piper's best work. A third is Ver or's YOU SHALL KNOW THEM. Heinlein is the author of the earliest of the four, a story called "Jerry Is A Man", that appeared in Thrilling Wonder in October 1947.

In a future in which genetic manipulation of animals is a commonplace, a woman with a soft heart and an extremely large bank account forms an affection for a "neo-chimpanzee" worker named Jerry, who has cataracts and consequently is scheduled to be turned into dog food. Jerry can't think very deeply, but he can talk, shoot craps, enjoy television, and sing off-key. The question of whether he is a man or not is finally tested in the

courts, and to help us decide the question we are presented for contrast with a very intelligent and unpleasant Martian geneticist who has been acknowledged by treaty to be a "man". The answer is given clearly that Jerry is a man, indefinable as the thing may be.

It is interesting, by the way, that of the four stories on the question of humanity, three find their resolution in the courts. If such a test is ever made, I suspect that the answer will be the same one that Heinlein, Piper and Vercors arrived at, simply because to include us all, any legal definition of humanity has to be a broad one.

"Jerry Is A Man" is hardly long enough or deep enough to allow us to extract any final answers from it. For instance, if Jerry is a man, why isn't Nappy, the miniature elephant in the story who can read and write, who enjoys music and even beats time with his trunk? The story is, however, an entertaining, honest and serious treatment of a serious subject.

By this point, Heinlein was fully in control of the human problem story, starting from the comparative lowpoint of "The Green Hills Of Earth". Look again at "Jerry Is A Man". This is a process story. The author's original question is "What is a man?" The story concerns the settling of this question. The people in the story are interesting to look at, but they aren't what the story is about. Human problem stories are attacked from another angle. They consist of taking a person who has certain characteristics and putting him into a situation at odds with his nature, then observing what happens.

"Water Is For Washing" (Argosy, November 1947) is an apt example of a people story. It takes a man who doesn't like water, puts him in the Imperial Valley in California, and then throws an earthquake and the whole Pacific Ocean at him. This is science fiction only by courtesy, but it does add up to a readable story.

ROCKET SHIP GALILEO is the first and least of Heinlein's juveniles for Scribner's. Either Heinlein underestimated his audience or was misled by someone who thought he knew what juvenile books should be like. The result is a book that I would unhesitatingly give to an eleven-year-old, but to no-one older.

Its greatest weakness is its stock parts. There is a scientist who has invented a superior rocket drive - but nobody will listen to him. There are the three young boys who serve as his crew on the first trip to the Moon. There are mysterious prowlers, blackjackers, and saboteurs who lurk in the nighttime. There are the left-over Nazis Behind It All and the Nazi base on the moon. Luckily of course the scientist just happens to have a rifle on board his spaceship, and that is enough for any American boy to win.

You could call 1947 a year of marking time and preparing for new markets.



### 3. 1948

In 1948, Heinlein published just three short stories and one novel. The three stories are very closely related psychologically. All three use a science fictional context to put extreme stress on a main character. The stories differ in what the stress causes the characters to learn about themselves. A very influential historian, Frederick Jackson Turner, has argued that America's strength has been based on the fact that it has had a constant frontier to serve as both a psychological goal and as a test. In these stories, Heinlein uses a space frontier in much the same way as a testing ground of character.

"The Black Pits Of Luna" (January 10, 1948) was the last and probably the most effective of Heinlein's Saturday Evening Post stories. It is quite a simple story; the spoiled son of a family on the Moon for a business trip wanders off, and his older brother, the narrator, eventually finds him in a hole in the lunar surface, when no-one else can. The reaction of the boy's family is to head back where they belong. The reaction of the narrator is to plan to come back again.

"Gentlemen, Be Seated!" (Argosy, May) is based on an incident from the end of "Space Jockey", the story about the pilot with wife trouble. In that story, a seal on a lunar tunnel is mentioned as having blown. "Gentlemen, Be Seated!" takes up the plight of some men caught in the leaking tunnel. Their problem is to put a temporary seal on the leak until help reaches them, and they solve the problem by taking turns sitting on the hole. The narrator of this story joins the parents of "The Black Pits Of Luna" - his first impulse when rescued is to head back to Des Moines.

"Ordeal In Space" (Town and Country, May) is a quiet story about a man who has lost his nerve in space and come back to Earth - in effect, it takes up the dropouts from the first two stories. The man gains his nerve again in the process of rescuing a kitten from a thirty-fifth floor ledge, and at the end is prepared to give space another try.

Heinlein's second juvenile, SPACE CADET, is markedly better than his first, mainly because its plot is not nearly so over-simplified. ROCKET SHIP GALILEO had some nice details, but these were largely obscured by its goshwow plot. SPACE CADET, on the other hand, is far less melodramatic and much more relaxed, and consequently is far more successful.

The story is about the training of a cadet in the "Interplanetary Patrol". (As ROCKET SHIP GALILEO, in radically different form, was the basis of the movie "Destination Moon", so the seeds of "Tom Corbett" can be seen in SPACE CADET.) In this case, Heinlein knows his material particularly well, - the training he writes about is quite clearly an analogue of the training he himself received at Annapolis. There are a number of novels about the US Naval Academy, and comparison will show the basic similarity. If this transference were all that Heinlein was doing, he

he might as well not have bothered. James Blish has labelled stories of this sort "call a rabbit a smerp" and describes the standard justification as, "They look like rabbits, but if you call them smerps, that makes it science fiction." However, Heinlein is doing a job of extrapolation, not merely a simple job of reporting. There is a similarity, but not a one-to-one correspondence.

The course of the story takes the hero, Matt Dodson, through qualification to be a cadet, training, personal doubts, and eventual self-realisation, the standard pattern for a story of this sort. What is good about the book are some of the moments along the way.

One, very nicely underplayed, has Matt as an advanced cadet doing a minor detail, guiding a bunch of newly-arrived cadets, a scene we saw before when Matt himself was newly-arrived. The difference in perspective is startling, and it is a measure of the distance he has travelled. The problems that bothered his earlier self are simply not the problems he has now. It is a compelling little scene and is a good illustration of the central point of the book - the growth of a boy into a man.

Another, near the end of the book, finds Matt and several fellow cadets in the position of straightening-out a touchy situation on Venus, and of getting off the planet again with a sick man and a prisoner. Their success is important for the way it is received, as no more than the sort of performance expected of them. Nicely done.

I would like to digress here for a moment, and mention Clifford Geary, the illustrator of eight of Heinlein's novels for Scribner's, beginning with SPACE CADET. A few of the pictures are ordinary drawings, but the bulk of them are something quite different, very unusual and striking. The figures are black, and the backgrounds and detail white, instead of just the opposite as found in most pictures. The technique used is known as "scratchboard", in which a dark medium is laid down and then blocked out and scraped away to form a picture. In Geary's hands, the result was quite odd, and added an unusual flavour to the books he illustrated. It's hard to say whether they were an ornament or not, but I rather think they were.

#### 4. 1949

1949 saw another handful of short stories, one of Heinlein's best books, and a very odd short novel that is still considered controversial. This flurry of short stories was almost Heinlein's last - he has had very few published since then. Science fiction, because of its strangeness, needs room for development, and Robert Heinlein's strength has always been in the development of his backgrounds, two reasons, perhaps, why Heinlein has never been at his most effective in the short story form. I don't propose to spend much space on Heinlein's shorts, but I do want to talk at some length about his juvenile novel, RED PLANET, and his short novel, "Gulf".

"Our Fair City" is a fantasy, an amiable trifle involving a corrupt city government, a crusading reporter, and a sentient whirlwind named Kitten. Judging from the tone of the story, I suspect that it was written originally for Unknown Worlds, and only wound up in the January 1949 issue of Weird Tales by default.

"Nothing Ever Happens On The Moon" ran as a two-part serial in Boys Life in April and May, but it is actually only about 13,000 words long. It was written directly for Boys Life, and has neither been reprinted in a Heinlein collection, nor anthologised. The story is about a young Eagle Scout moving to Venus with his family, travelling by way of the Moon. The boy's ambition is to become the first Triple Eagle in history and he has to use every moment of his three weeks on the Moon in order to qualify as a Moon-type Eagle. He makes it, but only after getting into trouble in company with another boy through mutual overconfidence, and then getting out again.

"Delilah and the Space Rigger" (Blue Book, December) is a smoothly written but empty little bit of nothing about women breaking into previously all-male space jobs. The ending is a foregone conclusion; Gloria wins her job.

"The Long Watch" was published in December 1949 in American Legion Magazine, and is long on glory. These last few stories may have been a sign that Heinlein was growing tired of writing simple, slick stories. In this case, there is a grab for power by military officers stationed on the Moon which is forestalled by another young officer who disobeys orders, dismantles all the bombs and destroys them, saving the Earth and getting himself killed by radioactivity in the process. The story derives from a few sentences in SPACE CADET (which leads to some interesting conclusions as to the nature of the 'Future History', a subject that will be discussed in a later chapter.) Probably the American Legion Magazine was the perfect place for this story; - the hero of "The Long Watch" is the pluperfect model of the American Legion image.

If SPACE CADET was an advance over ROCKET SHIP GALILEO, then RED PLANET, Heinlein's third juvenile, marked another and far greater advance. It is a boy's book rather than a book for both adults and youngsters as are so many of Heinlein's later 'juveniles', but it is a superlatively good boy's book. It is more tightly-plotted than his two earlier juvenile novels, and far more original. Where the Nazis of ROCKET SHIP GALILEO make it seem terribly dated, and SPACE CADET, for all its virtues, is a very obvious story, RED PLANET is not at all obvious.

The backgrounds of both of Heinlein's earlier Scribner books were conventional ones; middle-class boys off on a toot to the Moon, or to a military academy. In the case of RED PLANET, however, I think Heinlein started from an entirely different angle - first he worked out social, economic and physical conditions, and then planned a story that might arise from them. In many ways this is the most effective way of writing

....Heinlein is vaguely consistent in his books, in an infuriating way, about the life forms of the nearby planets. In various of his juvenovels he will, for instance, allude to life on Mars and Venus, but while Martian life is always tripedal, Venus may be populated by either intelligent water life or giant lizards, depending on whether you're reading SPACE CADET or BETWEEN PLANETS.

The most obvious overlap from book to book has been the Martians. Always tripedal and triple-organelled where we are double-organelled (eyes, nostrils, etc) they have remained fairly constant in the upheaval of Heinlein's fictitious universe. In RED PLANET (of 17 years ago) Heinlein introduced the Martians of STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND. All three stages of Martians were present; Willis the nymph, Ghekko, the adult Martian, and the Old One, a "ghost" or soul. These were presented without much explanation at the time, and aroused my curiosity. In STRANGER, 12 years later, we were given the metaphysics of the Martian set-up, including the missing background material and "explanation" of their powers. RED PLANET also presents for the first time the concepts heavily exploited in STRANGER,

a science fiction story. Backgrounds are always more difficult to invent than plots. Once worked out, any detailed background can provide room for a number of plots, characters and situations that are completely independent of each other, and any story that is set against such a detailed background automatically has a solid base. On the other hand, stories in which backgrounds are constructed to suit plot vagaries often seem makeshift and hollow.

For RED PLANET, Heinlein began by accepting the 'canals' of Dr Percival Lowell - one of Lowell's maps is reproduced as an end paper in the book. Heinlein then worked out a migratory pattern of life for human colonists, in which, to avoid the one-hundred-degree-below Martian ~~weather~~ ice-scooters and boats are used to transport them from one pole to another each year, via the canals. He worked out respiratory masks and suits with which the climate might be braved. He set forth the situation of living; Mars under the control of an Earth-based company with whom the colonists have contracts; the various projects under way to make Mars livable, including the major one of unlocking oxygen from Martian sands. Most important, he worked out the nature of the Martians. All of these things are central and antecedent to the plot of the story.

The story proper is actually composed of two interlocking lines. One is the relations of the colonists with the proprietary company. Things go awry partly because the people who control the company are back on Earth and have little conception of actual conditions on Mars, and partly because in spite of the non-profit nature of the company, those who represent it on the spot are largely pocket-fillers. Ignorance and cupidity cause an attempt to halt the regular migrations and cause the colonists to sit tight through the winter, when more colonists will be imported to take advantage of the unused

of water-brotherhood and the "growing together" There are, of course, no sexual overtones in the earlier book.

DOUBLE STAR gives us another view of Mars. Here the Martians(adult) are about as described in RED PLANET & STRANGER, but their "young" are apparently only junior editions, and not "nymphs" like Willis. The characterisation of the Martians is similar and includes a water ceremony. In this book however, a "life wand" is thrown in as the magical doodad which creates deaths and disappearances. THE ROLLING STONES alludes to the mythos of RED PLANET but introduces a lower Martian life-form, the tripedal "flat-cat!"

All of these books seem to point in the same direction but any attempt to dovetail them will fail. The most useful chronology I've been able to work out (strictly in relation to Mars) is that of STRANGER first, RED PLANET second, THE ROLLING STONES third, and DOUBLE STAR last. These books seem to show continuing stages of political development on Mars and portions of the Solar System, but ignore various side-issues raised in each, such as the effect of Smith (STRANGER) on society & civilisation. I doubt there can be any resolution of this; Heinlein has been, as I said, only partially consistent from book to book....Ted White, VOID 28, 1961, on "STRANGER.."

Buildings at the other pole. The colonists learn about this before things have gone too far, rebel against the company and proclaim their independence.

The other major plot line is the relations of the colonists with the native Martians. Though the colonists have been on Mars for some time, the Martians are still an enigma to them. Before things are finally straightened out, the Martians are about to throw all humans off the planet, a result in the main caused by the wrong-headed policies of the proprietary company. This problem is solved, too, but not before there seems a distinct possibility that the Martians may solve what they perceive as a threat in the simplest possible manner, by exterminating every human on Mars.

It should be apparent that this plot is one that an adult novel could easily use. RED PLANET is a boy's book not because it is something less than good, but because for the most part we are given a simple, boys-eye view of the revolution; and the same boy is the first to discover that the Martians are much more complicated creatures than had been hitherto thought.

In almost every one of Heinlein's juveniles, as in so many of his other stories, there are small seasonings of mysticism, perhaps included simply for flavour, perhaps to remind us again that there are more things in heaven and earth than can be explained by the ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA. In ROCKET SHIP GALILEO, this salt is evidence of long-extinct Lunarians, in SPACE CADET it is an intimation that the asteroids were a self-destroyed fifth planet. Mysticism, of course, can easily get out of control and ruin a story, but the only cases in which this has happened to Heinlein that I can think of are three early pieces - "Beyond Doubt", his collaborative story set in Mu; "Elsewhen" and "Lost Legion"; -- and a story we will

come to a little chapter, "The Man Who Travelled in Elephants". In all four of these stories, mysticism has not been just added value for your penny, but all that the penny buys. More often though, as in "Waldo", SPACE CADET, RED PLANET, or any number of others, Heinlein has used mysticism simply as an added value, with much better results. In RED PLANET, the mysticism is the question of whether or not the Martian elders are ghosts, a notion that Heinlein expanded upon considerably in his more recent novel, STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND.

The November 1949 issue of Astounding was an odd one. One year earlier in the letter column of the November 1948 issue, a reader had written to criticise the articles and stories in an imaginary November 1949 issue. John Campbell not only printed that letter, but purely for the fun of it did his best to make the actual issue identical to the 'predicted' one. Among the stories the reader mentioned was a serial, "Gulf", by Anson MacDonald.

"Gulf" did appear in the November 1949 issue, but since Heinlein had long since given up the MacDonald pen-name, the story came out under his own name. It did appear a story, too, but only by courtesy since the story was really a short novel, comparable in length to "Waldo", "Coventry" and "By His Bootstraps". The story marked Heinlein's first appearance in Astounding since 1942.

I have a very marked distaste for "Gulf". It is a superficially exciting story and a continually interesting one, and this hides somewhat its sloppy construction; but I have the feeling that it was written in a hurry and that first answers were used when better ones might have been arrived at. As it is, the story is shoddy not only in construction but in basic thinking. If it had been written during Heinlein's period of apprenticeship, it could be dismissed in a short paragraph along with some of his other trial efforts, but coming as it does among his mature stories, it cannot be set aside quite so easily.

The gulf of the title is the narrow but distinct gap between ordinary men and a set of self-identified supermen. The supermen do none of the silly things that the comic strip character or A.E. van Vogt's creations do -- they differ only in their ability to think. Heinlein makes a very good case for this, and I accept his reasoning. However, I don't think that he has demonstrated his case in action.

The plot is as follows: the hero, a security agent, is bringing back films of an ultimate weapon, "the nova effect" from the Moon. He changes his appearance and identity on the way. A bellhop approaches him and solicits him to stay at the New Age hotel, a super-posh establishment. The agent agrees, but then minutes later catches the bellhop's hand on his wallet, and dismisses him.

Soon after the agent discovers that the bellhop switched his wallet for a replica identical in cards, pictures, even down to a scratch and an ink-stain. The agent assumes he has been detected, and had better get rid of

the films while he can. He mails them after disposing of several people who try to stop him, and then goes on to the New Age hotel. He is captured there by fake policemen, knocked out, and then put into a bare room with a solitaire-playing helicopter salesman named Baldwin. He and Baldwin find a way to communicate using the red cards of the two decks Baldwin is playing with. Then the agent is taken out and briefly interrogated by an evil and wealthy old woman named Mrs Keithley. When the agent is returned to the room he was held in before, he and Baldwin conspire to escape and manage to get away without much trouble.

Once free, the agent checks in with his home office, only to find that the all-important films never arrived, and that he is suspected of having sold out to the enemy. The agent runs, calls Baldwin, and is flown by one of Baldwin's men to a ranch. Baldwin turns out to be top dog in an organisation of supermen, and seems to think that the agent might qualify to join. Moreover, he has the lost films, which he destroys.

When the agent's new training is complete, Baldwin informs him that Mrs Keithley has obtained a copy of the films of the nova effect, has installed the world-destroying bomb in the New Age hotel, and has the bomb set up to be triggered from the Moon. The agent and another superman, female model, go to the Moon, are hired by Mrs Keithley as servants, kill her, and then disarm the bomb trigger by blowing it, and themselves, to pieces. A plaque to their memory is placed on the spot.

It takes thirty-six pages and about one day in time to get the hero to the ranch. This narrative is exciting. It takes another thirty-six pages and about six months in time to explain the supermen and train the hero. This is thoroughly interesting. It then takes a final four pages, and one day, to dispose of Mrs Keithley and the story. The excitement and interest that the story generates are enough to entertain, but only if the story is not examined closely.

To raise a few obvious objections to all this: Why are films of such importance entrusted to a single agent, rather than to an armed team? And why did this agent stop over at a hotel instead of going directly to his home office? Why on Earth did Mrs Keithley's people switch his wallet (and how did they make an exact copy), an action that served only to alert the hero. After all this, why didn't the agent suspect the New Age hotel might be a trap? Why does Mrs Keithley -- who knows enough about our hero to penetrate his disguise and duplicate his wallet -- believe Baldwin is a fellow security agent (he isn't), and why did she put them in the same room?

The communication with cards sounds good, but is simply not credible, particularly since they are pretending to play a card game at the same time they are stacking all those red and black cards to form messages. Try to stack 104 cards, pass messages in the way described, and pretend to play a card game at the same time: two to one you drop the lot on the floor!

HEINLEIN IN DIMENSION

Why is it that Mrs Keithley's bomb and the ending of our hero's, six months long, coincide so remarkably? Why is a beginner given the job of disposing of her, particularly when any slip means the end of the world? If our hero is so smart, couldn't he find a better way of solving the problem than by getting himself blown up? If the organisation of supermen is so good, couldn't they find a better way of solving the problem than by sacrificing an agent they have just spent six months training? Unless of course, they were simply picking the easiest way to get rid of someone who just didn't work out.

(Why, in view of all the hero's stupidities, is he ever accepted into the organisation of supermen? Why, in view of all their stupidities --- Baldwin is responsible for the nova effect --- he wanted to prove it couldn't be done --- does our hero accept the organisation as the supermen they claim to be.)

More important than these considerations of plot, however, are some of the careless notions that Heinlein delivers himself of during the course of the story. His supermen are not only good people --- all of the evil people in the world are on the other side --- but anything they do is justified. In a long conversation, Baldwin tells our hero who and what the supermen are. The agent says, "You chaps sound like a bunch of stinkers, Kettle Belly." Baldwin terms this 'monkey talk', and says that the agent will come around after he sees how things really are. He does come around, but the supermen still sound like a bunch of megalomaniac stinkers.

Heinlein says of a girl tortured by Mrs Keithley; "She stood, swaying, and staring stupidly at her poor hands, forever damaged even for the futile purposes to which she had been capable of putting them." All his hero had seen is order beer from her, but on that little evidence, he is willing to slap the label "clearly not bright" on her. The girl is defined, both by Heinlein and his hero, as stupid and futile, but she isn't shown to be. Do futile people have a magic mark on their foreheads by which they can be known?

The ending, too, with its deaths and its memorial plaque, is an attempt to force sentiment. I can't help asking myself if the sentiment and glory were made inevitable by the things that came before, and I can only say that they seem gratuitous.

But if all you want is excitement....

## 5. 1950

Of Heinlein's three stories about first trips to the Moon, all unconnected, two were first published in 1950. Heinlein has not been one for repeating his stories, though he has certainly returned to a number of themes, and it is legitimate to wonder when two stories on the same subject turn up in one year. However, the point of view and handling of the stories are different enough that the question of repetition doesn't really enter. In fact, if anything, these stories are complementary.



One of the two is "The Man Who Sold The Moon", the last story to be written in the Future History series. The central character of "Requiem", Heinlein's third published story, was D.D.Harriman, the man who made space travel possible, whose dream was always to go to the Moon himself, but who had never been able to go. This later story tells how he made space travel possible.

The second story is "Destination Moon", a story based on Heinlein's screenplay which appeared in Short Stories Magazine in September 1950, just about the same time as the release of the movie.

These stories are complementary to the extent that "The Man Who Sold The Moon" is concerned with how the first trip to the Moon - actually the first two trips - might be arranged and financed, while "Destination Moon" is concerned solely with the course of the first trip itself. Both stories also have in common the premise that the first trip to the Moon will be made by private business rather than by a government.

"Destination Moon" hews close to the line of the film, but it begins at a later point than the film does, just about twenty-one hours before the ship takes off. The trip is successful in that the ship does reach the Moon, but everything that can possibly go awry does go wrong, and it is by no means certain at the end that the ship will successfully return to Earth. As Jim Harmon has pointed out, most of whatever problems solved are handled by the commanding officer of the ship's yelling at everybody else until somebody gets around to putting things right. The story is a skeleton, worth a glance but not much more.

"The Man Who Sold The Moon" is more interesting. It is in many ways every bit as unlikely as "Destination Moon", but it is fascinating to watch old D.D.Harriman juggling, conniving, pushing, arguing, and dealing to get a ship off the Earth. When somebody wants something that badly and is willing to do that much dealing to get it, things are bound to be interesting. At the end of "Destination Moon" it isn't clear whether or not the ship will make it back home - but the problem, unfortunately, is more intellectual than emotional - the characters are so lightly sketched that it is difficult to care whether or not they get home. Not so with "The Man Who Sold The Moon". At the end of that story, it is shown that Harriman cannot go to the Moon - if he were to be killed, the whole project, precariously put together, would fall apart. He can't have the one thing he most wants, and unlike the ending of "Gulf", this conclusion does arise **from** what has gone before. The finance in the story may be old-fashioned and the solutions of the problems of the story not always the most likely, but the story is a human one. It can be felt.

A large part of FARMER IN THE SKY appeared as a four-part serial in Boy's Life, under the title "Satellite Scout". Like "Nothing Ever Happens On The Moon", Heinlein's first story for Boy's Life, Scouting is a major concern of the story, but in this case Scouting is not all that the story is concerned with.

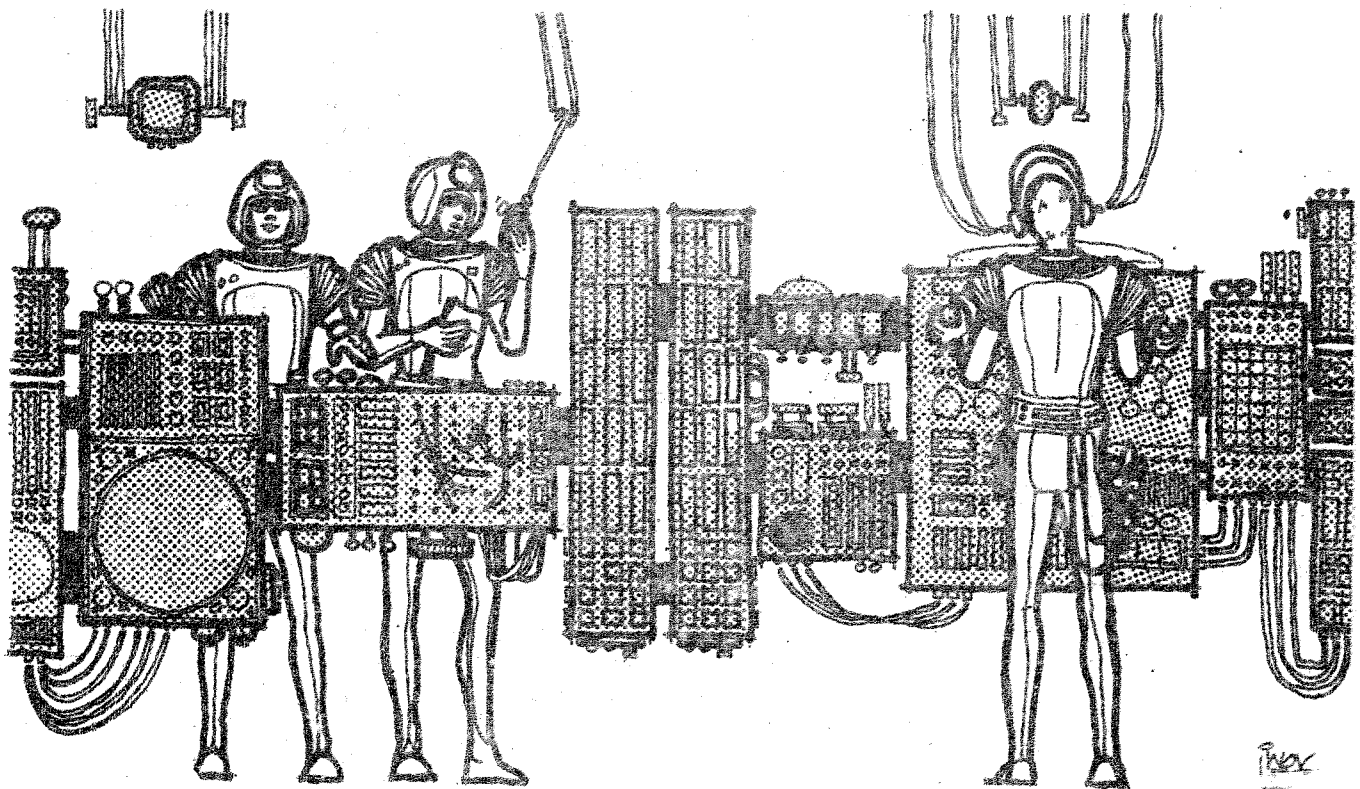
Heinlein seems to have a particular fondness for Ganymede; one of the fellows in SPACE CADET was a Ganymedean colonist; the hero of BETWEEN PLANETS was born in a ship that was on its way to Ganymede; FARMER IN THE SKY is about the settling of Ganymede. The moon is one of the four major satellites of Jupiter, a moon three thousand miles in diameter with a gravity one-third of Earth normal. In FARMER IN THE SKY, a heat trap that holds heat and light has been set up to give the moon a livable climate. The whole place is nothing but rock, and it has to be turned into a farming world.

The story's narrator is Bill Lermer, a boy of about fifteen. He emigrates from over-crowded Earth with his engineer father, and his new step-mother and step-sister. The main portions of the story are the trip to Ganymede, finding that things aren't as rosy as they had been promised, going ahead and carving out a good life anyway, living through a disaster -- an earthquake that knocks out the heat trap and kills two-thirds of the population, and a final side-journey at the end in which traces of past inhabitants of Ganymede are found.

The novel is very impressive in many ways. Until the day that we do have an actual colony on Ganymede, I can't imagine a more likely account of what things will be like. The story is real and the technical thinking that must have gone into it is overwhelming. On the other hand, the actual telling of the story is diffuse, particularly towards the end, when we are given the sort of synopsis that might be found in a diary kept by a not-too-conscientious person, six months covered in a paragraph. For instance, though Bill reports a considerable interest in a girl named Gretchen who is mentioned with fair regularity, Heinlein only sets down two words; ("Suit yourself") that she says in all the time that Bill is involved with her. I could multiply my example, but the point is that enough is left out and told rather than shown that I have the feeling of missing something. What we are given is good, but I wish there were more.

## 6. 1951

This year was clearly the watershed in Heinlein's change of emphasis short stories to novels. In that year, he published two novels and no short stories. In 1952 there was one short, and in 1953 two more, but after that there were none until 1957. The advantages of novel length for science fiction are plain;-- one is the same as for all fiction -- all a short story can be is a bon mot, a glimpse of a situation, a snapshot, while a novel can be the mot juste, the situation as it gathers, joins, shatters, pictures that change. More important, however, is that science fiction almost always involves settings and situations that cannot be indicated with a word, as can the desert, the city, the jungle, or the Pentagon, for example. Science fictional settings have to be built carefully and demonstrated in action, something almost impossible to do in the length of a short story.



On the other hand, the novel length in science fiction is far from exclusively used, again for obvious reasons - discipline, time, and risk. It takes far more discipline to spend months or even years writing one single story than it does to throw out a few magazine pieces. It also takes more time, not just in writing but in return. A short story may be sold a week after it is written and the cheque cashed, but a novel may not be published, even after acceptance, for six months or a year, and advances cannot be indefinitely extended. Finally, banking all on a long story that might fail is a risky business. An unsold short story is only four thousand wasted words, but a novel that isn't published or that sells poorly is a disaster. Apparently by 1951, Heinlein felt he could afford to take the risk and concentrate on writing novels.

His novels for 1951 were *THE PUPPET MASTERS*, his first adult novel since *BEYOND THIS HORIZON* in 1942, and *BETWEEN PLANETS*, the first of his novels for Scribners to be serialised in an adult magazine (*Blue Book*, Sept, Oct, November 1951 under the title "Planets in Combat") before book publication.

Donald Harvey, the hero of *BETWEEN PLANETS*, like John Lyle of "If This Goes On" and Larry Smith of *DOUBLE STAR*, is an apolitical fellow who gets into politics up to his neck. Lyle gets involved for the love of a fair

maid, Smith for love of eating regularly; Harvey becomes involved for the most likely reason of all; he has no other choice.

In the world of BETWEEN PLANETS, humans have colonies on both Mars and Venus. The Martians are an old and dying race, the Venerians - long-lived "dragons" are a lively, intelligent race fully on a par with our own. Over a period of two centuries Earth government policy has been growing more and more repressive, both with its colonies and at home. The colony on Venus is on the point of revolt. Don Harvey could not be less involved - he was born in orbit between Luna and Ganymede, his mother a Venus national his father a citizen of Earth. Harvey, a schoolboy of seventeen or so, has no fixed political ideas, no national allegiance.

This situation is the author's way of setting his hero up for the kill. Take a nice, fresh young boy wrapped in his own concerns and then put him in a situation where he has to worry about his liberty. If somebody treats you as an enemy and simply won't go away and leave you alone, then like it or not, you are involved. And that is exactly what happens to Don Harvey.

As the story opens, Harvey is in school in New Mexico. There is war in the air. Suddenly he gets a message from his parents, distinguished scientists doing work in the small human community on Mars, that he is to drop out of school now, in the middle of the term, and come to Mars. And he is to see Dr Jefferson, a friend of his parents, before he goes.

Heinlein thoroughly demonstrates the repressive nature of the Earth government, so much so that when Don gets to the space station around Earth and finds that a raiding party from Venus has come to blow it up, (and has seized his ship for Mars at the same time), he opts to head for Venus rather than back to Earth. However he is still apolitical, - his interest is in getting to Mars, not in fighting for Venus. It takes a landing on Venus by Earth troops, butchery, and Don's grasping of the idea that he is very definitely wanted by the security police (for a ring that he has been given by Dr Jefferson to take to his parents) for Don to definitely decide that there is a time to start fighting.

The ring turns out to be the key to the whole story. There has been an interplanetary brotherhood of scientists, trying to keep information free and circulating in spite of the government. Dr Jefferson, Don's parents, and most of the people Don makes friends with throughout the story all belong. The ring contains one-half of the information needed to end the war. The information was meant to be assembled on Mars, but the war has caused both fragments to wind up on Venus. No-one is aware that Don Harvey, a last-minute choice as an unknowing courier, has the information, or that he is on Venus. The information is eventually assembled, and the new discoveries are enough to end the war. As usual Heinlein takes an engineering attitude to this - his interest is in what it does rather than in how it works - but at the same time he avoids doubletalk in explanation, and doesn't produce miracles in ten minutes. In other words, he has the engineer's respect for science.

There is a certain amount of melodrama inherent in a plot like this, but to Heinlein's credit, the melodrama only occasionally becomes overwhelming, particularly in lines like, "Don held the knife with the relaxed, thumb-and-two-finger grip of those who understand steel." (I understand that everybody at US Steel holds his knife in this manner.) The Venus setting is very well done, and so is the feeling of an uncertain, unstable time. Again, however, as in FARMER IN THE SKY, there is the feeling that something is missing, that after a certain point Heinlein has grown tired and is simply trying to tie things together, and end the story as quickly as he can.

THE PUPPET MASTERS (Galaxy, September, October, November 1951) is the most ambitious of the specifically adult novels that Heinlein wrote between BEYOND THIS HORIZON in 1942 and STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND in 1961. As a story it is both typical and atypical of Heinlein. It shares with BETWEEN PLANETS the theme of preserving liberty, a very common Heinlein theme. However, it is one of the very few Heinlein stories that is aimed at the viscera rather than at the intellect. The liberty that Heinlein aims to preserve is freedom of the mind, and he means us to feel his case as well as understand it.

The basic theme of THE PUPPET MASTERS is, I'm told, an old one. Boucher McComas, for instance, in reviewing THE PUPPET MASTERS in The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction said, "In THE PUPPET MASTERS he's chosen a theme which old-line aficionados will consider tired and even tiresome; the invasion of Earth by interplanetary parasites who fasten upon men and convert them into soulless zombies." I can believe that this is an ancient idea - it is so compelling, so frightening, so elemental that it is bound to be - but the actual incidence of its appearance in modern science fiction is actually quite small. And Heinlein's handling of the theme, as Boucher and McComas continued to point out, is a tremendously effective one.

The parasites are slugs from Titan, the largest of Saturn's moons. Their vehicles are flying saucers, the earliest fictional use of them that I can recall. The slugs attach themselves to the backs of humans and turn them into automatons. In abstract this is bad enough, but Heinlein has his narrator, a tough, smart, and of course competent security agent, ridden for a time by the slugs so that you know and feel what it is like. It is not a pleasant thing to read about.

The slugs are well on their way to taking over the country before the government can begin to mobilise. The situation eventually stabilises precariously with the slugs in possession of the middle third of the United States, as well as probably in control of Russia. Then it is discovered that the slugs are susceptible to a Venerian disease that kills humans in nine days, slugs in less. After the menace has been brought under control, the story ends with a human fleet bound for Titan, to give the slugs hell on their own ground.

One of the most chilling things in the story is the degeneration of people under the control of the slugs. They don't bathe, shave, eat, go to the bathroom, or do anything else unless the slugs let them, and much of the time the slugs don't let them. A real point is made of this: "there was a little guy called "Jake" who was a washroom attendant, but he had to be disposed of later - his master would not let him take time out for necessities." This seems self-defeating for the slugs. They have command of the knowledge of the people they ride - why wouldn't they pamper us as we pamper the animals that we live off? The answer of course is that degeneration is meaningful as an emotion, and as a symbol of what happens to people who have lost their independence, something that genuinely affects Heinlein at his deepest level.

There are many similarities between THE PUPPET MASTERS and Heinlein's 1959 prize-winning novel, STARSHIP TROOPERS. The nature of the enemy is much the same; implacable and sharing a common mind. The nature of the fight is the same; all-or-nothing, total defeat or total victory. And as George Price has pointed out, the nature of the given solution is the same; man is the hairiest fighting animal in this end of the universe; tackle him at your own peril. The final words of THE PUPPET MASTERS are "I feel exhilarated. Puppet masters - the free men are coming to kill you! Death and Destruction!" Given the premises of the two stories, this is Heinlein's answer. I think THE PUPPET MASTERS states problem and solution better, and is definitely the more successful book.

I don't place this book among Heinlein's very best, though I think it is a good story and as disturbing a book as I have ever read. I can, however, see a case for anyone who wants to nominate it for one of Heinlein's best. It is compelling.

7. 1952

It seems to me that fiction generally has to suppose the existence of free will - if a story's end is determined before the story begins, it is hardly necessary to read it to find out what happens. That is oversimple, of course, but I do prefer stories that are about human problems solved by human beings. Anything else is more a statement of a situation than a story.

"The Year Of The Jackpot", a novelette in the March 1952 Galaxy is nothing but the statement of a situation. There is a human problem; everybody is acting unsanely. There is no human solution, however. The reason given for our actions is that we are caught in the grip of cycles, cycles in fashions, cycles in economics, cycles in everything. As the statistician protagonist of the story, who has been charting all of the cycles, says, we are lemmings. We can't help ourselves. The jackpot year of the title is the one in which all the good cycles are at their lowest and all of the bad ones at their peak. The story ends on the culmination of one final cycle

But still, in spite of this story's being no more than the statement of a situation, I do like "The Year Of The Jackpot". Perhaps it is because the main characters remain interesting and attractive, for all their helplessness, until the end.

Heinlein's novel for Scribner's in 1952 was THE ROLLING STONES, entitled "Tramp Space Ship" when it was serialised in Boy's Life. It may have been written directly for Boy's Life, certainly its simple, uncomplicated plot is likely to appeal to boys a year or two younger than BETWEEN PLANETS, or some of Heinlein's other juveniles. A change in the nature of Heinlein's juvenile protagonists can be seen from his earlier books. In all those up through THE ROLLING STONES, with the exception of BETWEEN PLANETS, we read about 'heroes' who were essentially dependent on their parents, or on other adults. In all the books after THE ROLLING STONES, with the exception of PODKAYNE OF MARS, (which is not a Scribner's book and falls in a different period) we are presented with heroes who are not dependent on adults in the same way, but who make their own way in the world. An important change, it seems to me.

THE ROLLING STONES is constructed in the simplest possible manner. The author begins the story and then adds "ands" until it has gone on long enough and he decides to end it. The "ands" are additional episodes. It is an uncomplicated way of telling a story, tedious if done badly, easy to enjoy if done well.

The Stones are a family. Roger, ex-mayor of Luna City, engineer, and author of the video serial The Scourge Of The Spaceways, is the head of the family. Hazel Stone, his mother, is a fresh, lively oldster, one of the original citizens of the Moon, and an engineer herself. She takes over writing the video serial soon after the story begins. Edith Stone, Roger's wife, is a doctor and sculptress. Their children are Lowell, four years old but able to beat Hazel at chess, use a slide rule and Lord knows what-all-else; Meade, a bright but undefined girl of something less than twenty; and Castor and Pollux, fifteen-year-old twins, inventors of a "frostproof rebreather valve" from which they have realised a considerable amount of money, budding young businessmen, general hell-raisers, and story protagonists.

The Scourge Of The Spaceways and the unlimiting nature of the various skills spread throughout the family make it financially possible for them to buy a spaceship and simply leave home on a Vanderjahr. The original impetus for the move is the goading of the twins, who were in mind to do it all by themselves, but the whole family finds itself in favour. The family travels from the Moon to Mars, and when Mars palls they push on to the site of a mining strike in the Asteroids. At the end, they are bound on to Titan, the largest moon of Saturn, and on from there to...

As punctuation there is Heinlein's usual wealth of detail and a number of little adventures - epidemic on board another ship, jettisoning and recovering cargo, a space-scooter lost with Hazel and Lowell aboard - that are underplayed enough to seem exactly the sort of thing that might happen to normal people like the Stones rather than to idiot-adventure heroes like the Scourge of the Spaceways.

Before I leave this story, I would like to point out one last thing that I particularly liked. Writing is not completely unlike juggling and it is difficult to do everything at once. Scenes with one or two characters are not at all hard to write, but every extra character you add and use makes the scene that much more difficult. To approach a scene with five living, breathing, thinking characters in it takes nerve and determination. Several times however, in THE ROLLING STONES, including the first chapter, Heinlein has all seven members of the Stone family on stage at once, all talking, all going at cross-purposes. I would respect him for even trying it, but he brings the situation off beautifully.

## 8. 1953

"Project Nightmare" (Amazing, April 1953) is smoothly written but crudely constructed. It is quite obvious that if you make the proper premises you can force almost any conclusion as "right" and "inevitable". Heinlein's premises in this story are that the military has located people with wild talents of a sophisticated order, and that the Russians try to blackmail the United States into capitulation by planting atomic devices in thirty-eight of our major cities. The spectacular crudeness of this story can be seen in that the ultimatum from Russia comes on the very day that the ESPers prove that they can mentally set off atomic weapons. It turns out that they can also damp them, and they prevent bombs from going off in thirty-seven of the thirty-eight cities, until they can be located and de-fused. At the end of the story, the ESPers are prepared to set off all of Russia's stockpiled nuclear weapons.

"Skylift" (Imagination, November 1953) is a simpler and much more impressive story. A small scientific community on Pluto has been struck by a degenerative blood disease, and they need a blood bank. Getting it to them requires two men to blast at an acceleration of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  Gravities for nine days. Two hundred and seventy people are saved, but at the cost of the rescuers.

The issues of "Project Nightmare" are artificial ones; those of "Skylift" are real, immediate and important. That is the difference between a story that means something and one that doesn't.

STARMAN JONES is one of Heinlein's most effective books. It shows a young man in a situation where anything he does is bound to put him in the wrong. That is a nice, difficult sort of problem, the sort that fiction really ought to be concerned with. Heinlein's solution is the most viable one that I can imagine; when all your choices are "wrong", you pick the one you like best and live with its consequences.

The Earth, in the time of STARMAN JONES, is crowded and jobs are at a premium. For this reason, the best jobs are held by inheritance, passed down through a restrictive guild system. If you don't like what you have inherited presuming that you have inherited something, it takes a trade and money to get something else. If you have no money and no guild job, you are just out of luck.



FOR THE BENEFIT OF NEW  
READERS...

Speculation is an amateur magazine, produced as the editor's hobby. No payment can be made for any material, and correspondents should not expect the prompt & efficient service of a professional, profit making magazine. Every effort is made to publish Speculation every quarter. The magazine normally contains a selection of material about science fiction, and not one long chapter as in this issue. In December: Leiber, Silverberg, Bulmer, Busby, Coulson & Pelz

Max Jones, this story's hero, is a hill boy whose uncle belonged to the Astrogator's Guild, but who died before he could nominate Max for membership. Max wants nothing more than to serve on a starship, but without the nomination he doesn't stand a chance. Not only does the Guild deny Max the chance he thought he had in space, but it takes from him his uncle's books (the secret mathematics of the Guild that outsiders must not see) and gives him pennies in compensation. Since the only other alternative is to return home to a fatuous stepmother and her new husband, a complete louse, Max joins with a dubious acquaintance and with the aid of false papers the two sneak their way into menial starship jobs, Max figuring this is better than nothing.

On Max's side are the facts that his uncle was known and respected, and his own mathematical ability and photographic memory. He knows those "secret" books, and he has the brains to learn how to use them. Against him is the fact that eventually he will be found out.

The abilities Max demonstrates earn him a try at the job of astrogator, exactly what he has always wanted. For all the restrictions of the Guild, there are hardly enough people around with the requisite abilities to fill the jobs open. (That, by the way, caused me to wonder if a job such as astrogator would ever be handled by a Guild system. Plumber's and truck driving jobs, yes, but advanced mathematical positions?) In any case, a death, a senile breakdown and a case of paranoia leave Max with the job of bringing the ship home when she gets lost. The consequences that Max has to accept are a reprimand and a stiff fine, but at the end of the story he is ready to ship out again.

STARMAN JONES demonstrates the advantages in having an older protagonist. First, that the world he can move in is much wider, and second, that a Max Jones bringing the ship home is credible, while a Pollux Stone doing likewise would not be. This is a long book, over 300 pages, and a rich one. It is a solid, detailed, fascinating piece of work.

## 9. 1954

This brings me to the question of just what a juvenile novel is, anyway. As our publishing industry is run, in most cases, there isn't much question. Freddy the Pig is on one side of the line, and Lolita on the other, sharply distinct.

However, there are plenty of so-called "adult" books that are of legitimate interest to children, and any good children's book will very likely be read by adults as well. Is Charlotte's Web just a children's book? MOBY DICK and HUCKLEBERRY FINN, counted the two best American novels, are read by children. It seems to me that any book published for children that adults cannot enjoy is likely to be a pretty poor book. And if some adult books cannot be enjoyed or understood by children, there are plenty of adults who cannot enjoy or understand them either. I don't see any distinct line and I have my doubts that there is one. As it is now, a juvenile book is a book that the publishing industry packages and sells as a juvenile, regardless of content.

THE STAR BEAST, Heinlein's "juvenile" novel for 1954 is a good illustration. It was serialised as an adult novel in The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction (May, June, July 1954) and then published by Scribner's as a juvenile novel and marketed in a package with a simple-minded blurb that begins, "Robert Heinlein's 'space zoo' is unique -- there is an unusual animal in each of his books" (untrue, by the way, of even his books for Scribner's). Either Scribner's has a much higher opinion of the minds of children than most publishers -- a notion belied by their jacket blurbs -- or they were so used to publishing Heinlein's books as juveniles that they never stopped to think twice about marketing THE STAR BEAST. A third alternative doesn't occur to me.

THE STAR BEAST is essentially about a diplomatic incident, not about Lummo or John Thomas Stuart.

Lummo is an extra-terrestrial brought home by John Thomas' great grandfather, a crew member on one of the earliest interstellar ships of exploration. Lummo loves steel (he once ate a second-hand Buick) and is the size of half a house (either half). When he inadvertently causes a considerable amount of damage, starting with a dog and some rose bushes and ending with a department store, he is scheduled to be done away with. It turns out, however, that Lummo is a sentient alien, and that a ship appears from its own world that is quite capable of destroying the Earth if its occupants are frustrated in getting Lummo back. It is then up to the Department of Spacial Affairs, and the Permanent Under Secretary, Henry Kiku, to straighten things out.

Of Kiku, Damon Knight has said (IN SEARCH OF WONDER; Advent Publishers) "It's a pure delight to watch him at work. Heinlein's interest, as always, is in The Man Who Knows How, other types appearing only as caricatures, and if this makes for a distorted view of humanity, it also makes for close-textured, fascinating writing. Stories about know-nothings inevitably repeat the same stock motions; the repertory of competence is inexhaustible." Kiku, his understudy Sergei Greenberg, Dr Ftaeml the medusa humanoid go-between for the Hroshii, and their mutual dealings are fascinating. Only a little more than half of the book is directly concerned with John Thomas and Lummo, the rest is Kiku's show and he makes the most of it.

Besides the usual Heinlein touches (the double for the Secretary General of the Federation who sits through dull formal programmes, an idea that later grew into an entire book of its own in DOUBLE STAR, for instance), this book stands by itself among Heinlein's books in being filled with satire and black humour:

John Thomas's girl friend, Betty Sorenson lives in the Westville Home for Free Children, she has divorced her parents for their odd ideas.

Mr Kiku's stomach can't stand snakes, so every time he meets Dr. Ftaeml, whose head writhes with tendrils, it is an ordeal for him.

As Damon Knight said, most of the characters in this book are caricatures, as of course, is likely to be true in any satirical book. The culmination is probably Mrs Beulah Murgatroyd, inventor of the popular puppet Pidgie-Widgie (Pidgie-Widgie on the Moon; Pidgie-Widgie Goes to Mars, etc) and the power behind "The Friends Of Lummox". Mrs Murgatroyd earnestly desires Mr Kiku to come on stereovision with her and Pidgie-Widgie, and talk things over while they all settle down to a nice bowl of Hunkies. Heinlein must have been pleased with that one, and with "the terrible, hushed-up occasion when a member of the official family of the Ambassador from Llador had been found, dead and stuffed, in a curiosity shop in the Virgin Islands."

And finally, Lummox's view of the matter is that she has been spending a hundred years in raising John Thomases, and she damned well plans to continue. She won't go home unless she has her way, and so, when she gets into her ship to leave the Earth, John Thomas and Betty go with her. Luck, Lummox.

## 10. 1955

As I say, juvenile publishing puzzles me. STARMAN JONES, THE STAR BEAST, and Heinlein's Scribner's novel for 1955, TUNNEL IN THE SKY, all share a darkness in tone that you just don't expect in children's books. It may be that there is a tremendous hunger for bleak children's books, and the manuscripts just cannot be found.

The blackness of STARMAN JONES lies in the society portrayed. The blackness of THE STAR BEAST lies in its attitude. These are both very successful novels. TUNNEL IN THE SKY is less successful, partly because as seems to happen in Heinlein stories in which the action is spread over a number of years, the author appears to get tired about two-thirds of the way through, and rushes his ending. The other reason for TUNNEL IN THE SKY's lack of complete realisation I will come to in a moment.

The basic idea for the story is one of the best ideas ever conceived, elemental enough to stand a thousand usings. In essence, it is to strip a character of everything but a toothpick and a piece of chicken wire, and chuck him out into a hostile wilderness. In a Murray Leinster story the character turns the chicken wire into a blaster and the toothpick into

a spaceship, and hops off to conquer the universe. In a Robert Heinlein story the character uses his native ingenuity, and just manages to survive.

In this case, the hero is Rod Walker, a high school senior enrolled in Advanced Survival, Course 410. The members of the class get their choice of weapons and equipment, and are then dropped; "(a) ANY planet, ANY climate, ANY terrain; (b) NO rules, ALL weapons, ANY equipment." If they are lucky, they will survive.

The "Ramsbotham Gate" - step through on one side, and step out somewhere else, - has made thousands of planets available to Earth, but most of them have their own particular dangers. Trained men are needed to cope with these, and courses in survival are given both at high school and at college level, to train them as much as possible.

Walker's group is dropped for a period of two to ten days, but the pickup is never made. They and other classes dropped on this who-knows-where have to band together and make something of themselves. The beauty of the story is that they do make something of themselves, believably and interestingly.

TUNNEL IN THE SKY is not a bad book, but it is not among Heinlein's best. The second of the things that flaw it, as I mentioned earlier, is the nature of its hero. By the evidence of this book, if he were to stand in the middle of the desert on a cloudless day, he would attract lightning. He is doubted, struck on the head, flim-flammed, ignored, shoved around, victimised, and treated as an incompetent, in the course of the story. He is naive (when asked whether or not he is sexually interested in a girl he goes off with on long hunting trips, he can't even understand the question), and he never, never, sees his next lump coming.

At the beginning, his instructor says, "I could drop you (from the course). Perhaps I should."

"But why, sir?"

"That's the point, I couldn't give a reason. On the record you're as promising a student as I have ever had."

I do know the reason. The instructor has nagging doubts about that "Kick Me" sign that Walker wears on his back.

## 11. 1956

In 1956, Heinlein had his most active year since before the war, and published three novels. Two of them were adult novels, his first in five years, and only his second and third since 1942.

Not too long ago, I had reason to look back over all the issues of Astounding and Galaxy published between 1950 and 1960 in search of stories dealing with politics. The bulk of such were wither about dictatorships or

about Galactic Empires. The dictatorships were all bad and deserved to be overthrown -- if the stories were long enough, they usually were. The Galactic Empires were either ruled by Galactic Emperors who stood alone while ministers plotted in antechambers, or were homes bases for secret corps of political sophisticates that spent their time manipulating native populations for their own good. This is all as exciting as hell, of course, but is crude entertainment. Robert Heinlein is one of the very few science fiction authors who has had any experience in practical politics, and this may partly explain his surer and less melodramatic handling of the subject.

The central idea of *DOUBLE STAR* (Astounding, February, March and April, 1956) may be melodramatic -- an actor taking the place of a stricken political leader -- but the development is not melodramatic but sure and real, because its concern is with the changes that take place within the actor. The story is not a public one, but a private and personnel one, and melodrama cannot be melodrama without a stage to strut on. Put the most flamboyant swashbuckler ever conceived into a prison cell by himself and leave him there, and he has to become something more or the story will die.

What Heinlein envisions is a parliamentary system and Empire like that of 19th Century England. John Joseph Bonforte is head of a coalition of minor parties whose interests are libertarian; "free trade, free travel, common citizenship, common currency, and a minimum of Imperial laws and restrictions." The main bone of contention is that common citizenship; Bonforte's Expansionists want to include the native populations of the planets in the Empire, while the party in power, the Humanists, takes a strict 'humans-first' attitude. Bonforte is about to be made a citizen of a Martian 'nest', when the story begins, and no excuse short of death will be sufficient for him to miss his appointment. Only days before he is due to be "adopted", a radical splinter group of the Humanists party kidnaps him, knowing his absence will provide exactly the sort of blood-in-the-streets incident that will serve their interests. It is in this situation that an out-of-work actor named Lawrence Smith -- "The Great Lorenzo" -- is persuaded and pressured to double for Bonforte during the adoption ceremony.

Smith the actor is originally completely apolitical, Martian-despising, and even cold to the idea of the impersonation. He is also a thorough-going self-admirer. But once inside the skin of Bonforte, he begins to grow. He learns to respect first the people around Bonforte, and then the man himself. At the end he is a larger, more pleasant, saner man. Perhaps the lesson is that accomplishment is a matter of both aptitude and the opportunity to demonstrate it.

There are a few minor carelessnesses that mar the story a little, that might have been eliminated by closer proofreading. One, for instance, is a character named Doc Scortia, mentioned on page twenty but never again, and replaced by a Doc Capek. There is a story behind that: Heinlein has

a physicist friend named Tom Scortia, and he wanted to do him the favour of slipping him into the story behind a beard and whiskers. Heinlein didn't know, however, that Scortia himself had started writing and selling science fiction, so the manuscript was combed over and the name replaced - in all but that one place.

On a different level, I wish that Heinlein had written this book a little differently. He has done a fine job of showing the metamorphosis of Smith into Bonforte, and he has described the political system extant in the book interestingly enough. But I wish he had brought the two together more intimately, and had let us see more of that political system in action. Smith tells us of it, but we never see more than glimpses of it in closeup. When one of his aides says to him at the end in trying to persuade him to stay on, "Chief, you remember those confounded executive committee meetings? You kept them in line. " We can't remember those meetings because we haven't seen them!

This is a fine novel - it won the Hugo Award as the best novel of its year - but if Heinlein had gone into the detail he might have done, this would have been a deeper and far more important novel than it is.

TIME FOR THE STARS was the last of Heinlein's Scribner's juveniles to be illustrated by Clifford Geary. Anthony Boucher thought the story was the best novel of its year and has said that the only thing that kept it from being serialised in F&SF was that it didn't divide well into parts.

In THE ROLLING STONES, Heinlein's central characters were the twins, Castor and Pollux Stone. Seen from the outside they present so united a front that it is really not possible to tell one from another. The hero of this later book is also one of a set of twins, but in this case we see twinhood from the inside, and get an entirely different picture of it.

When the story opens, the Earth has a population of five billion people, and a group of twelve star ships are about to be sent out to find favourable real estate for colonisation. Research has turned up the fact that some identical twins can communicate telepathically and that telepathy is not bound by the speed of light, thereby making a perfect communication media between Earth and ships that may be gone for as long as a century. The "prison yard whisper" that Tom Bartlett, the hero, and his twin, Pat, have been using for years turns out to be more than they thought it was, and they are signed up for the trip.

As a general rule, I have no affection for stories that involve extra-sensory perception. When the stories aren't foolish, which many of them are, the psionics are likely to be so important to the story that normal human motivations and concerns wind up missing entirely. In TIME FOR THE STARS, Heinlein has avoided such traps, and has presented telepathy as a major plot element without overwhelming the story.

This is partly because of the well-developed relationship shown to exist between Tom and Pat. Pat has more gab and winds up with the ship-board place, while Tom stays behind, cut out of the trip. Then Pat has an accident that paralyses his legs, and Tom is back in the picture again. The kicker is that neither of them really wants to go on the trip - for the ship is fairly certain never to get back safely - and Pat has won again. Tom's growing understanding of the real nature of his relationship with his twin is the core of the story.

Once again the author has skimmed on the finale of the story. It is a catalogue of places visited, "Whistle Stop wasn't worth a stop. We're on our way to Beta Ceti, sixty-three light years from Earth", people who die and of telepathic linkages lost. It is in fact the rushed nature of the last part of the story that, I think, made it impossible to serialise.

There are some very lovely things in the story. One is the idea of the foundation that sponsors the whole business, the "Long Range Foundation"; - "The charter goes on with a lot of lawyer's fog, but the way the directors have interpreted it has been to spend money only on things that no government and no other corporation would touch.... To make the LRF directors light up with enthusiasm you had to suggest something that cost a billion or more and probably wouldn't show results for ten generations, if ever...."

A final idea introduced by the author is his account of serendipity, which he defines as digging for worms and striking gold. He then, without pointing it out, demonstrates the concept beautifully with his faster-than-light ships, which are explained as the offspring of research done to explain the simultaneous nature of telepathic communication.

THE DOOR INTO SUMMER was another adult novel, the **second** in 1956. Like the other two novels published in that year, it was written in the first person, though for less obvious reason. While a story like DOUBLE STAR of one man changing into another can probably be told most easily in the first person, and this method of story-telling certainly makes the difference between identical twins easier to exposit, in a story like THE DOOR INTO SUMMER the choice of viewpoint seems to be less central, and might have been as easily decided otherwise than it was without causing any great change.

There is a certain continuity of thinking in these three books. In all three, for instance, comment is made to the effect that any man has the right to decide when and how he will die. John Joseph Bonforte's ship in DOUBLE STAR is named after Thomas Paine, and so is the hero of TIME FOR THAT STARS. And servo-mechanisms of the sort central in interest in THE DOOR INTO SUMMER are mentioned in passing in TIME FOR THE STARS, as though Heinlein had the idea in the back of his mind while writing the earlier book.

Daniel Boone Davis, hero of THE DOOR INTO SUMMER is an engineer in 1970, in partnership with a lawyer friend whom he met in the army. Davis has invented Hired Girl, a machine that will clean floors all day long without supervision, and Window Willie, a machine to wash windows. He is making a good deal of money, is having the time of his life, is engaged to the company's beautiful and talented secretary, and is about to finish Flexible Frank, a machine that will be capable of doing just about every household dirty job. But Davis and his partner are divided - the partner wants to rush Frank into production immediately, while Davis wants to hold it back until every part is plug-in replaceable. He has no taste for machines that are full of bugs. Davis won't budge, so the partner whose own taste is for being a wheeler-dealer, and the secretary-fiancee conspire to ease him out of control and out of the company.

You can, by the way, tell that lovely Belle Darkin, the fiancee, is really nasty - she and Davis' cat just don't see eye-to-eye. On the other hand, the partner's eleven-year-old stepdaughter Ricky, Davis, and Davis' cat make a very neat threesome. Little Ricky can't stand Belle either, showing that her childish instincts are good.

While on a drunken binge following his betrayal, Davis decides to take cold sleep, a suspended-animation process, for thirty years along with his cat, so that he can come back and sneer at lovely Belle when she isn't quite so lovely. He signs the papers, but then sobers up and changes his mind. However, when he goes to confront his ex-partner, he stumbles on a piece of information that will blow the whole mess to pieces, so Belle puts him out of commission, then brings him forward at the proper time for his cold sleep appointment and sends him off on a thirty-year trip to tomorrow.

Davis gets adjusted to the year 2000 and finds he likes it, turns himself into a good engineer again, then finds evidence that he has done more things in 1970 than he thought he had. A fellow with a proper time-machine is introduced, and from then on the story really gets complicated!

Time-travel stories are generally so complicated that they have to be tightly plotted if they are to be successful, and Heinlein's own time-travel stories as a group are probably his best constructed. This one is no exception. The story is thoroughly melodramatic but very good fun. I imagine it was a very enjoyable story for the author to write, particularly the nicely-developed engineering ideas. It must have been as though Heinlein the engineer said, "If I had the parts available, what little gadgets would I most enjoy building?" and then went ahead and built them fictionally. A good story.

## 12. 1957

That science fiction is a particularly difficult thing to write well has been recognised by almost everyone who has written on the point. Note that I did say "to write well". Bad science fiction is very easy to write which might be why there is so much more of it around.



Heinlein himself has gone so far as to say that speculative fiction is the most difficult of all prose forms, and to explain why. John W. Campbell, in his introduction to Heinlein's collection, THE MAN WHO SOLD THE MOON, has also explained why, succinctly and accurately; "Briefly stated, the science fiction author must put over to the reader (1), the mores and patterns of the cultural background, (2), interwoven with that -- stemming from it, and in turn forcing it into existence -- the technological background and then, finally, the characters. He may not use long descriptive passages for any of this necessary material." These requirements mean that most good science fiction short stories are going to depend on trick endings and gimmicks for their effect. It is difficult enough, as every author knows, to do the things Campbell is talking about, in a full-length novel. In a short story they are almost impossible to do, that is why so many science fiction shorts depend on stock backgrounds, Galactic Empires, and such, and suffer because of it.

I raise the point not for its own interest, but because it throws an interesting light on Heinlein's short story, "The Menace From Earth" (F&SF August 1957). Having given up the short story for the most part, presumably to take advantage of the added room in a novel, Heinlein here returned to it and did a truly brilliant job of preventing a strange background with strange mores, combined however with a plot that shouldn't happen to the Saturday Evening Post. Quite the opposite of what you expect.

The menace of the title is a beautiful third-rate actress in her middle thirties, who comes as a tourist to the Moon and temporarily dazzles the boyfriend of Holly Jones, the bright but completely humourless 15-year-old narrator of the story. Forget the plot. Luna City is real, that's what is so important. The jewel of the piece is the account of flying in the city air storage tank, an underground volcanic bubble two miles across. Flying is made possible by air at normal pressure combined with one-sixth normal gravitation. All the trappings are here, wing design (including brand-name snobbery for sauce), how the flying works, beginners areas, rules of the road, etc. The idea is brilliant and believable.

"The Elephant Circuit" (Saturn, October 1957), is a mistake, a sloppy, sentimental fantasy that I suspect was written at the very beginning of Heinlein's career and then went without a buyer until 1957. It is about a fat, fatuous, fair-loving retired salesman who spends his time in travelling, attending his beloved fairs. As an excuse to travel, he purports to sell elephants. He is killed in a bus wreck, and goes to Heaven to find it a super-fair. His dear dead wife Martha is there, and so is his dear, dead dog Bindlestiff, who "had been called away, shortly after Martha". And the salesman is hailed by one and all -- at the close he is leading the parade in an elephant-drawn carriage with wife and dog beside him. In the language of the story, you might say he has Passed On to His Great Reward.

CITIZEN OF THE GALAXY (Astounding, September, October, November and December) is another of Heinlein's adult juveniles. It is the longest and last Heinlein story to appear in Astounding/Analog.

The story is about many things, among them these: slavery seen from the inside, the slave trade, begging, education, spying, anthropology, trading, life in the military and corporate business. The scale of the story is also broad; based in the Terran Hegemony, a loose federation three thousand light years in circumference and in many human and non-human worlds at every level of civilisation outside.

There are properly four parts to CITIZEN OF THE GALAXY. In the first Thorby, a small, scared, dirty and sore-covered little boy, is sold as a slave to a one-eyed one-legged beggar in the city of Jubulpore, capital of the Nine Worlds, a notorious and repressive little empire outside the Hegemony. Baslim, the beggar, is unusual. During the day he sits at his usual place in the Plaza of Liberty and begs for alms. In his warren at night he puts on an expensive artificial leg. He gives the boy, over the years, a thorough education. He is engaged in some sort of illegal activity and sets Thorby to running messages for him, although for what purpose Thorby is not sure. Then Baslim is caught by the Sargon's police and "shortened", and Thorby has to run for cover. He has a set of messages memorised in languages he doesn't understand, for delivery to any one of a number of trading ships captains - one of these is in port at the moment and when Thorby delivers his message, he is taken in.

The second part of the story takes place aboard the "Free Trader", and is the longest part of the book. Baslim's message asks, for the sake of the debt owed to him, that the captain take Thorby aboard the ship and treat him as his own until the boy can be delivered to a vessel of the Hegemonic Guard, since Baslim has reason to believe that the boy originally came from a planet of the Hegemony. The traders have a very rigid, heavily stratified society with no place in it for an outsider, so Thorby is adopted, though only with reluctance.

Almost as soon as he has succeeded in making a place for himself in this society, however, opportunity and necessity conspire and Thorby is handed on to a ship of the Hegemonic Guard. They have no place for him either, short of adoption, so he is duly enlisted. At this point Thorby learns that Baslim was a high officer in the Guard, who had gone into the Nine Worlds to report on the slave trade, which the Guard views as pernicious and intolerable.

As soon as he arrives the Guard attempts to find out who Thorby is, and eventually succeeds. He is the heir to a vast fortune and manufacturing empire on Earth, and accordingly, off Thorby goes again. It takes him some time to discover himself for the fourth time, but eventually he succeeds and then is left with a very difficult job to keep him busy.

If this sounds disunited, in some ways it is. What ties everything together are two threads. The lesser is the process of Thorby's finding a solid and final place where he fits - it seems to be his fate to always be a stranger in a strange land, always out of place, always naive. At the end he does have some understanding of himself and what he is doing, and that

is one resolution of the story. The second theme is even more solid, as well as being typical of Heinlein; freedom and slavery.

The Free Traders are, if anything, an ironic comment on the problem of freedom. They, the most free in movement, are the least free personally of almost any people. since in order to live as they do, cooped in tiny ships, their society must be very restrictive.

CITIZEN OF THE GALAXY is, if not the most successful of Heinlein's juveniles, certainly the most ambitious. The point of view is an omniscient one - the interest is not just in Thorby or in what Thorby sees, but in Thorby as a context, and the reader sees far more than Thorby does, or do any of the characters, for that matter. This lifts the book far out of the category of simple adventure.

Out of all that is rich and good about the story, I want to pick out just two things to mention briefly. One is the elaborate social system of the Free Traders, with its moities, its involved family relationships, its inbred self-satisfaction, its rigidity, and its adoption of superior talents into the line of command. The other is Heinlein's own restraint with the character of Baslim. When the character is on-stage, the reader does not know enough about him or his activities to fully appreciate him. Appreciation only comes later, and then the character is seen as a man who was doing a dirty, nasty, difficult job. Heinlein doesn't try to make Baslim glamorous or dashing, and that is admirable restraint.

### 13. 1958

Heinlein only published two stories in 1958, both juveniles. "Tenderfoot In Space" was a serial appearing in Boy's Life, like "Nothing Ever Happens On The Moon" in 1949, written directly for the magazine and never reprinted in book form. The other story was HAVE SPACE SUIT - WILL TRAVEL, which for all its silly title, is a fine book, one of my two favourites along with BEYOND THIS HORIZON, among all those the author has written.

Although it ran for three months in Boys Life, "Tenderfoot in Space" is not any longer than an ordinary novelette of the sort that run two or three to the issue in adult science fiction magazines. The story is about a young boy scout and his dog. About one fifth of the story is told from the dog's point of view.

From time to time, almost everybody who reads science fiction finds himself asked by someone who doesn't, to recommend a story so that they can "find out what this crazy Buck Rogers stuff is all about". On the one hand you may proudly hand over a story that is completely incomprehensible to anyone who doesn't speak the language, and on the other hand be too careful and hand over something that is so much like the stories he is used to reading that the new reader can't see any difference. @

@ My own choice for a novice would be; SANDS OF MARS, DOUBLE STAR, and PUPPET MASTERS. That's technical, political and action novels. Editor.

My idea of what makes science fiction worth reading, is that it can prepare people to accept change, to think in terms of change being both natural and inevitable, and in that science fiction allows us to look at familiar things from new angles. My choice of a science fiction story to hand a non-reader would be a story that combines the unique virtues of science fiction with a comprehensible, attractive, entertaining story. I think I would recommend as my choice Robert Heinlein's last novel for Scribner's, HAVE SPACE SUIT - WILL TRAVEL.

The story begins gently enough for any non-science-fiction-reader; an eighteen-year-old boy wants to go to the Moon and aims to get there by entering a soap slogan contest which has a first prize offer of a trip to the Moon. What he wins instead is a stripped-down spacesuit. That isn't quite what he wanted, but he spends a summer putting it into working order in his spare time. Heinlein tells the reader exactly how he does it, and in the process the reader learns exactly what spacesuits are - the account given makes the description of space suits in ROCKET SHIP GALILEO, or in any other story you have ever read sound elementary, - and the whole thing is interesting and all pertinent to the story.

Heinlein's greatest weakness has always been his story construction. His very first stories were badly engineered - an odd criticism to make of an engineer - and even in CITIZEN OF THE GALAXY you have an example of a story whose parts don't hang together closely. On the other hand, HAVE SPACE SUIT - WILL TRAVEL is amazingly well put together. It is pure magic.

Once the space suit has been accepted, the story opens a little; the reader is taken to the Moon. Once the Moon has been accepted - and Heinlein makes it almost painfully real, for the Moon is his old stomping ground - the story opens again. And then again. First the Moon, then Pluto, then a planet of the star Vega, then the Lesser Magellanic Cloud. Each new place arises out of the last, each new thing implied in what has gone before. Then the story closes together and comes full circle, back home again.

The difference between this and the earlier book, CITIZEN..., is that Thorby becomes a part of each new place he comes to, and both he and the reader find it a wrench to leave before all the possibilities are explored while the roots of HAVE SPACE SUIT - WILL TRAVEL remain on Earth. The travelling simply demonstrates that the world is bigger than it once seemed to be. If you want, you can take it as a guide to acceptance of the whole universe.

The book is fun to read. The three main characters are all first; Kip Russell, the boy with the spacesuit; PeeWee, an exasperating eleven-year old girl who is smarter than anyone; and the Mother Thing, an alien who is small, furry, warm and protective, like the ultimate Security Blanket, but who is a lot more than that.

For frosting, the story turns a number of science fictional cliches inside out, as though to show there is a lot of delightful mileage left in

them; flying saucers, bug-eyed monsters, and the Galactic Council Where Earthmen Are Judged - and it has a fine old time in the process. I like to look at the story as the ultimate fairy tale; the knight errant rides forth to save the fair maiden from the all-time champion dragon - and so what if the damsel is only eleven?

The story is an entertainment, but not a mere entertainment. It has something to say about the values of brains, perseverance, and courage. These aren't lectured about, they are demonstrated and present through implication. They are there if you look. The story is multi-levelled enough to be enjoyed a by almost anyone, and it bears re-reading.

Only a misanthrope could dislike HAVE SPACE SUIT - WILL TRAVEL. It marks the end of Heinlein's most productive period.

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Chapter 4 : THE PERIOD OF ALIENATION (1959-to date) appeared in The Riverside Quarterly, Vol 2 No 1, January 1966

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This chapter of the book HEINLEIN IN DIMENSION appears by permission of the author, Alexei Panshin. THE PERIOD OF SUCCESS as published in this issue of Speculation is a somewhat condensed version of the original manuscript. A short explanation of the projected final book version, and its organisation, appears in The Melting Pot, in this issue.

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#### A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ROBERT A HEINLEIN, (1947-1958) by ALEXEI PANSHIN

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Boy's Life, May, Jun, Jul 1958

Have Space Suit - Will Travel

F&SF, Aug, Sep, Oct 1958

HAVE SPACE SUIT - WILL TRAVEL

Scribner's (juvenile; serialised 1958)

METHUSELAH'S CHILDREN

Gnome Press (novel, serialised 1941)

## ONE SANE MAN

" With due caution, then, let me say that in art at least, Heinlein seems to be as conservative as they come. He believes in a plain tale well told. Although he fancies his own Yukon-style verses, or used to, he has no patience with poetry-in-a-garret. The people he writes about are healthy, uninhibited, and positive, a totally different breed from the neurasthenic heroes of many of his colleagues. In a field whose most brilliant and well-established writers seem to flip sooner or later, Heinlein is preeminently sane. ....I have collected every adverse criticism of Heinlein I could find. So far I have two; (1) His plots are weak. (2) He uses slang. Both of these statements are obviously true, and one seems about as unimportant as the other. So there you are. Either Heinlein is the nearest thing to a great writer the science fiction field has yet produced, or with all my pennyweighting I'm hopelessly biased on the subject; take your choice. "

Damon Knight, in IN SEARCH OF WONDER, Advent Publishers, 1960, \$4.00  
HEINLEIN IN DIMENSION

# READER'S MELTING POT LETTERS

Dear Pete,

August 4th, 1966

....From his letter in the July Speculation, it seems clear to me that Sam Moskowitz has an itch somewhere and doesn't quite know where to scratch. Certainly his comment that the last section of my book, on Heinlein's non-fiction, is "not complete" is misplaced. The comment may, in fact, be accurate - I've found at least one additional entry in the last few months, an article in the November, 1952, School Library Association of California Bulletin. But considering that Moskowitz, along with a number of other people, was solicited for bibliographic information but didn't reply (one assumes from Jay Kay Klein's modest and inventive account in Yandro 160, in a letter commenting on my review of Moskowitz' SEEKERS OF TOMORROW, that Moskowitz thought that to supply me with sources would be doing too much of my work and might possibly spoil me), it seems graceless of him to carp now. The word "vapid" in further description seems to me more of an indication of Moskowitz' personal feelings than an accurate description of my writing. But if he wants to cite chapters and verse, I'd be willing to listen.

Moskowitz' other comment, to the effect that I am selling only plot summaries of Heinlein stories, plus other public and private reactions I have received on the Heinlein book, lead me to something else that perhaps I should have done long ago; to explain the pattern of criticism within the book. This may help your readers to make sense of that portion of the book that is contained in the present issue of Speculation.

The first draft of the manuscript contained some thirty-odd chapters, but it struck me most strongly when I was done and looking back over what I had written that the book was not unified, but simply a mass of little essays. I was not satisfied with this, and it was the primary cause of my re-drafting the manuscript. When I was done, I had a unified whole, a book meant to be read as a whole. I didn't dream at the time that it would be broken up into parts and read in several magazines over an extended period of time.



The chapters of the book are as follows: 1. An introduction containing a biography of Heinlein, an account of his working methods, and an account of the book's approach. 2. 3. & 4. Discussions, summaries, and criticism of Heinlein's fiction, year-by-year, with his writing career divided into three distinct periods. The chapter appearing in this current Speculation is the third. These chapters had a bibliographic purpose, but they were also intended to provide a basis for the discussions of later chapters. 5. An account of the basic materials out of which Heinlein has made his stories; characterisation, story backgrounds, story problems, and so on. 6. An account of the elements of Heinlein's style; dialogue, description, etc. 7. An examination of some of Heinlein's most important themes and fictional concerns. 8. Conclusions. 9. An appendix on Heinlein's non-fiction, particularly that which is related to his fiction.

At the present time, the only chapters which have been published are Chapters 2, 4, and 9, which are all mainly descriptive. People have somehow assumed, in many cases, that this is all that the book contains, and have complained as one of my correspondents did, that I leave off where I should have begun, in this case, that in discussing "Coventry" I should not have mentioned just that it illustrates Heinlein's concern with liberty and libertarianism, but that I should have discussed this concern. As it happens, (and I know that I am picking a self-serving example, if an actual one), liberty and libertarianism is one of the themes discussed in Chapter 7, with "Coventry" far from the only example mentioned.

The best I can say is pace, have patience. Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, & 9 are the ones that are due to be published, either here in Speculation, or in Riverside Quarterly. Until the complete book is published and read as a whole, or at least until the above-mentioned chapters are published, it seems to me that criticisms of my plan of attack and my inclusions and exclusions might decently be reserved. After that, Moskowitz and the rest of my well-wishers are welcome to drag out their hob-nail boots and jump away.

Alexei Panshin  
Chicago, U.S.

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LETTERS FOR THE NEXT ISSUE MUST BE RECEIVED BY DECEMBER 24, LATEST

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In the next issue of Speculation will be Robert Coulson's amusing paper, "SF Potboilers I have read". Fritz Leiber writes "All about the Change War", and Robert Silverberg explains his "Blue Fire" series. FANORAMA is conducted by Bruce Pelz, and is about fanzine collecting, while Buz Busby's "Plow" column is in fine form with "The Plow Revisited". Other articles and features, out in December. Don't miss it!

## BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

Lack of space prevents review of new & reprint SF books in this issue. The titles below have been recently received, and many of them will be reviewed in our regular column in the next issue of Speculation.

### From Gollancz

A HEINLEIN TRIAD, 426 pages, 21/- . contains "Waldo", "Magic, Inc" & "The Puppet Masters".

DUNE by Frank Herbert. 426 pages, 30/- . The Analog serials, "Dune World" & "Prophet of Dune", plus appendices. Reviewed in Zenith Speculation, Vol I, No 12, pages 21-24 by Archie & Beryl Mercer, and joint winner of the Hugo Award for 1965. Also winner of the Nebula Award for Best Novel of the Year, presented by the Science Fiction Writers of America.

CODE THREE by Rick Raphael. 252 pages, 21/- . contains three novelettes from Analog

MINDSWAP by Robert Sheckley. 216 pages, 21/- . Unusual type-faces including large text-size. Appears to be short novel from last year's Galaxy, more-or-less unextended.

BEST FROM F&SF 14th SERIES, edited by Avram Davidson. 250 pages, 21/- contains; Sacheverell, by Avram Davidson; Trade-In, Jack Sharkey; The Illuminated Man, by J.G. Ballard; A Bulletin From the Trustees, by Wilma Shore; Automatic Tiger, by Kit Reed; The Court of Tartary, by T.P. Caravan; Touchstone, by Terry Carr; Thaw & Serve, by Allen Kim Lang; Nada, by Thomas M Disch; Into The Shop, by Ron Goulart; A Rose For Ecclesiastes, by Roger Zelazny; Olsen and the Gull, by Eric St. Clair; Dark Conception, by Louis J.A. Adams; The Compleat Consummators, by Alan E Nourse; The House in the Crab-Apple Tree, by S.S. Johnson; The Girl with the Hundred-proof Eyes, by Ron Webb; Fred One, by James Ransom;

LORD OF THUNDER, by Andre Norton. 192 pages, 15/- . A Gollancz "juvenile", cheaper and better-packaged than the adult novels. A pretty good story, too.

### FROM DOBSON

THE STAR KING, by Jack Vance. 158 pages, 16/- . One of Vance's new series in his world of the Oikumene, sequels to which are "The Killing Machine" and "The Palace Of Love".

From Dobson:

THE MENACE FROM EARTH by Robert A. Heinlein. 255 pages, 21/-.  
A collection of eight stories from Heinlein's "Middle Period", the title story being the fabulous romp of a Luna City on wings.

THE FURY OUT OF TIME, by Lloyd Biggle, Jr. 256 pages, 21/-.  
An original novel, intricately plotted on a time-travel theme. The author's second for Dobson. (last year's ALL THE COLOURS OF DARKNESS)

ANDOVER AND THE ANDROID. by Kate Wilhelm. 160 pages, 16/-  
A collection of eleven stories, appearing to be a retitled of the PB "The Mile-Long Spaceship".

NEW WRITINGS IN SF-9, edited by John Carnell. 190 pages, 16/-.  
Seven stories, mostly above average, all new except a decade-old Russell piece, "Second Genesis". The others are: Poseidon Project, by John Rackham; Folly To Be Wise, by Douglas R Mason; Gifts Of The Gods, by Arthur Sellings; The Long Memory, by William Spencer; Guardian Angel, by Gerald W Page; Defence Mechanism, by Vincent King.

From Faber:

THE UNIVERSE BETWEEN, by Alan E Nourse. 220 pages, 18/-.  
Two stories from Analog, "High Threshold" & "The Universe Between", unified with additional writing into a "novel". One of Nourse's many books for Faber, intended mainly for the younger reader but all above-average. Well-packaged and a good story.

From Pyramid:

Tongues of the Moon, by Philip Jose Farmer. 144 pp, 50¢. Reprint of one of the author's poorest novels.

The Falling Torch, by Algis Budrys. 160 pp, 40¢. Made up mainly of two stories from Analog, "Hot Potato" & "The Man Who Did Not Fit". Excellent - and the first may be taken from Budrys' own experience as son of a Lithuanian cabinet minister.

Children of the Lens, by Edward E Smith. 254 pp, 60¢. Last of the 6-volume "Lens" series, reprinted by Pyramid.

From Panther:

Strange Relations, by Philip Jose Farmer 190 pp, 3/6d. collection of Farmer's "biological" stories, inc. "Father," "Mother", etc.

Time & Stars, by Poul Anderson. 170 pp, 3/6. collection 5 stories.

A Handful of Darkness by Philip K Dick. 190 pp, 3/6. A collection from the time before Dick became an "in" author, mainly straightforward SF stories, mostly competent and exciting.

The Worlds of Science Fiction, edited by Robert P. Mills. 290 pp, 5/-.

A reprint of the recent book edition published by Gollancz.

The Foundation Series by Isaac Asimov. 3 volumes, 3/6d each.

Once more reprinted in yet another new cover. Still best-sellers.

After an extended period in the Outer Darkness, from where ZENITH the magazine and its attendant hordes of editors & contributors have criticised "New-style British SF", we've finally tried actually reading some issues of the British "New Worlds" & "SF-Impulse".

At hand, thanks to the kindly services of Mike Moorcock & Langdon Jones at Compact Books H.Q., are issues 165 & 166 of New Worlds, and SF-Impulse 6,7,& 8.

The most notable thing about Impulse is Harry Harrison. Harry is hardly ever un-noticeable, and in Issue 8 of Impulse he takes on the full robes of Editor-in-chief, with Keith Roberts as Assistant Editor. Since Harry has returned to his native USA, one wonders how this arrangement will work - but one may also hope that Harry's position in the heart of US science-fictiondom will enable him to obtain more stories from US authors.

But more important than Harry's position and title is his new novel, MAKE ROOM, MAKE ROOM, which appears in these three issues of Impulse. After reading this novel, it is difficult to understand why Harry has been associated with the avante-garde of science fiction writers during the past few years. For this novel contains none of the pyrotechnics of style of such as Ballard and his imitators, but is instead a solid, workmanlike piece of true science fiction, that rare animal. It is a work that extrapolates from present circumstances and gives a truly realistic and horrifying account of the consequences of over-population. It is also far better-written than almost any other science fiction novel, and it is this quality that makes it stand out the more. Certainly a candidate for next year's Hugo, and Harrison's best to date.

The other stories in all three issues of Impulse are slightly more on the side of fantasy than can be found elsewhere in current SF magazines. All stories are competent and often amusing, but none are memorable, except perhaps for Fred Pohl's "DAY MILLION" in Impulse 8, which is remarkable.

In New Worlds, the first thing to mention is Michael Moorcock's long novelette, "Behold the Man" in Issue 166. This must surely be one of Moorcock's best yet, and one in which the author has really worked to put something of his own feelings into his story. It is, I suppose, about Christianity, and could even be called an "attack" on religion. I think there is more to the story than that, and it is a truly gripping piece of writing. In that same issue is a piece of rubbish from Arthur Sellings, a revoltingly original Brian Aldiss piece, and a piece "Signals," by John Calder, that was especially entertaining.

In New Worlds 165, Brian Aldiss leads off with his usual original style of thinking, even if the story "Amen and Out" seemed a little pointless to the reader. Most notable thing in the issue was Roger Zelazny's "Keys to December", which was moving and very fine. In all, this brief critique of five issues shows that the British magazines are worth reading, and are comfortably above average in the standard of content.

# THE SPECULATOR

This year's Hugo Awards were presented at the World Science Fiction Convention in Cleveland, held at the beginning of September. In what must be counted as a good year for science fiction, competition was very strong, with a number of worthwhile titles in every category.

The Award for Best Science Fiction Novel was for the first time ever presented jointly, to Frank Herbert's *DUNE* and Roger Zelazny's *AND CALL ME CONRAD*. Best Magazine was Fred Pohl's *Worlds of If*, a Hugo well earned in the past eighteen months, and the *Galaxy Group*'s first since 1953. Best short story was Harlan Ellison's "Repent, Harlequin, said the Ticktockman", already a winner of the Nebula Award from the Science Fiction Writers of America, as was also Frank Herbert's *DUNE*.

Best all-time series, this year's "additional category", was won by Isaac Asimov's "Foundation" series, in close competition with such works as the Tolkein books, Lensmen series, and the Future History series. The number of fantasy and/or Edgar Rice Burroughs fans present was attested to in that Camille Cazedessus' *ERB-dom* received a Hugo for "Best Amateur Magazine", and fantasy artists Frank Frazetta won the Award for "Best Artist". For the second year running, *Zenith* (as it was then) was on the "short list" of nominations in the "Best Amateur Magazine" category.

Next year's WorldCon will be held in New York City. Details of membership, etc, will be published in a later issue of this magazine. Perhaps this year a greater number of British readers will register, and cast their votes for the Hugo Awards. For \$1.00 (assuming procedure will follow this year's example), British & European readers can obtain all literature from the ConCommittee, and have the privilege of casting a vote for their choice of Novel, short story, etc.

As you will by now have noticed, the long-drawn out title-change from *ZENITH* to *Speculation* is completed with this issue. This was first planned a long time ago, way back at the end of 1964. That old, familiar "*Zenith*" is going to be missed for a while, but the new name should be an all-round better, more apt title. Only the name has been changed, the mixture remains as before.

While the cover blurbs "Third Anniversary", the gala plans made months ago for a special giant-size issue have remained on the shelf. Lack of time and money have kept the issue within the usual 50-page straitjacket, and the British G.P.O. haven't helped matters by raising postal charges and abolishing the printed paper rate. Alex Panshin's huge article in this issue has caused some of the usual features to be suspended, but they will all return in the next issue. A good, varied line-up is planned, and most of the issue is in preparation. Don't miss it!

# SPECULATION BACK ISSUES

Back issues of most issues of the magazine are no longer available.

A limited number of copies remain of Issue 6, dated September 1964, price 2/6d each, inc. postage.

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