CHILD AS PROTAGONIST IN ROBERT HEINLEIN’S SCIENCE FICTION

ABSTRACT

Chapter- I, Science is an integral aspect of life in the twentieth century which has witnessed the fundamental metamorphosis in the pattern of life as a consequence of scientific and technological developments. Literature and science, fundamentally different activities of the human mind, have not been at daggers drawn with each other. The two activities, the scientific and the literary, have always gone side by side, and each has been influenced by the other. Literature has not moved in an isolated grove of sensibility, untouched and unaffected by the scientific progress of the times. Science has not been coloured by the poetic vision of great seers and poets. There has always been a close relationship between science and literature and each has exercised a potent influence on the other. Scientists have been men of letters, and literary men scientists. There have been poets deeply interested in science and there have been scientists who have been deeply influenced by poetry. Scientists as well as literary artists have always realized that an exclusively scientific training well brings about a mental tour as surely as well an exclusively literary training. Well known scientists like Tyndall, Darwin, Thomas Huxley, and Jagdish Chandra Bose were deeply interested in literature. Sir Ronald Ross set down his spiritual diary of seven long years of exile devoted to researches into tropical malaria in verse. In spite of the fundamental differences in attitudes of the scientists and the literary artists, the influence of the scientists is on the men of letters and of science on literature has been quite Prominent. In so far any scientific theory opens up new vistas of the significance or duration of human life, it will determine a change of tone in literature. Literature has always changed its tone in obedience to the various scientific discoveries and theories propounded from time to time.

Robert Heinlein has played a long and significant role in the evolution of science fiction into a more sophisticated genre. He began writing in the post –
depression science fiction magazine era when simplistic plots and farfetched gadgets were the norm. His witty style and use of social themes and realistic technology helped give rise to speculative science fiction. This emphasizes probable technology and societal developments projected into future worlds.

**Chapter-II,** *Rocket Ship Galileo* was the first novel in the author’s juvenile series, depicting the initial flight to the moon. The novel follows the adventures of three boys, Art, Morrie, and Ross. Seemingly around the age of twelve these interchangeable kids are a mix of precocious scientific savants who spend their weekends indulging in a spot of full-sized rocketry, electronics, and space flight. The story is the history of an alternate timeline, in which the atomic weapons use to end World War II were succeeded by more succeeded by a more vigorous development of nuclear power as well as the growth of internationalism into a more powerful form of world government. Rocket ships are used routinely to carry passengers and freight to the ends of the Earth. *Space Cadet* is concerns the challenges and adventures encountered by Matt Dodson and his three friends Tex, Oscar, and Pete all report for tainting to enter the interplanetary patrol in the year 2075. As cadet, they go through the training period typical of any present-day military academy, such as west point or the Naval Academy. They are put through a selection Process that includes intelligence, emotional, physiological, and psychological tests. They hassled by upperclassmen, subjected to rigorous trading, and pounded through academic course. They put in time in practical training with real and simulated equipment. The patrol is charged with keeping the peace on earth and her dominions in the solar system and is considered the premier military organization in the system. Entering and completing the course of study at the academy is challenging even for the best at Matt discovers early on. Despite setback frustration and at one point, an aborted decision to quit, Matt perseveres and eventfully earns a duty assignment on the petrol mission.

**Chapter- III,** In 1950 *Farmer in the Sky* was entered in the series, Bill Lerner – child protagonist, is an Eagle Scout and star student whose life is just getting back to normal following his mother’s death. His father decides to emigrate to the Jupiter moon of Ganymede but wishes Bill to remain on Earth to finish his schooling. Bill is adamant in his desire to remain with his father and succeeds in being accepted for emigration himself. The rigors of the spaceflight to his new home, as well as the hardships encountered on the primitive outpost of
Ganymede, are but two of the obstacles to Bill’s acceptance of his new life. He also must adjust to the fact that his father has remarried—single men are not eligible for emigration. During the flight, Bill encounters other scouts, and they form new troop which continues its activities on Ganymede. This novel, in a condensed version and under the title “Satellite Scout,” had been previously serialized in the Boy Scout publication, ‘Boy’s Life magazine.

*In The Rolling Stones*, Castor and Pollux Stone are teenage twin brothers, they decided are going to make their fortune by investing their trust fund in a used spaceship to get into the transport business. Cocky, smart, and perhaps over-confident the twins set their plan in motion only to be vetoed by the man in charge, their father, Roger Stone. There is no way that the senior Stone is going to let his sons skip past their education to go gallivanting off among the stars… at least not without proper supervision. And so a series of family “discussion” leads Roger Stone to purchase a used ship to take the entire family on a trip from their home in Luna City on Earth’s moon to the planet mars. Along the way the boys will get an education and perhaps a chance to put their much talked about sales acumen to the best.

**Chapter- IV, In Starman Jones,** Max Jones is a dirt poor farm teenage child on a far future earth who dreams of sailing among the stars, following in the footsteps of his uncle, Arthur ‘Chet’ Jones, who was an upstanding member of the Astrogator’s guide. A kick in the pants from fate, in the form of a sleazy new step father sends Max Jones out into the dark night on the road to adventure. Though a series of mishaps, misadventures, and a healthy dose of deceit, Max is given the chance to test the old adage “be careful what you wish for.” As a protagonist Max is the embodiment of the fantasy life of any boy or girl, who has looked up at the stars and longed to travel among them. Max is a genuinely likable noble character who is unused to the world of half—truths and politics that he finds himself in upon leaving the farming life. Early in his journey he meets up with a good-natured scoundrel, Sam, whose unspoken secrets, worldly wisdom is the catalyst for much that happens, both good, and ill, to Max throughout the rest of the story Max is also blessed with an eidetic memory which plays a large role in the direction his life takes.

*Citizen of the Galaxy* is the tenth of the Heinlein juveniles and took place in a far distant future where humankind has spread widely through the Galaxy. Probably around age ten or twelve at the beginning of the story, Thorby, the main protagonist, is a teenager
boy, who lives on a planet where despite being set far in the future, the social organization resembles that of ancient Babylon

**Chapter-V, Rocket Ship Galileo**, this novel is both dated and ahead of its time. The dialogue is mostly typical of the time, yet the technology is futuristic even today. Most of the reference nuclear poser may seem quaint, since the safeguards mandated by today’s regulatory agencies are obviously lacking. Also, the references to walking on the glassy ground that was directly below a nuclear blast makes toe curl. However, the military conducted nuclear tests with army personnel in trenches within a few miles of ground zero during the early 1950’s. Moreover, the risks of induced radioactivity were not really known at that time. *Space Cadet* is, the action of the story is interspersed with science lesson: such as zero gravity, space walking, human transfer orbits, recycling in self-contained environments and numerous other subjects, except of specific matters pertaining of conditions of Venues, which were unknown at the time the book was written most of the science presented in the story remains unchallenged.

*Farmer in the Sky* celebrates 19th century American frontier life and homesteading by imagining much the same situations on Ganymede. But that demands terraforming, whereby sentient life from Earth transforms the very nature of non-sentient worlds. By this system, life from Earth-non just human-grows independent of the fate of the Earth. Heinlein assumed, based on the best scientific knowledge of the time, that Ganymede has a rocky surface under an ice layer – which we now know it does, plus a deep ocean. By enormous amounts of work, ingenuity, and heartbreaking perseverance these raw materials can be slowly reworked into a richly welcoming world. In *The Rolling Stones*, Heinlein described computers, communication technology, Astrogation systems, radar, neat stuff, zero-g, and the solar system very systematically. The ship’s computer is described in the book as being of ‘the standard of three time variety’ which means in today’s terms that it had three processing cores with internal self – checking.

*In Starman Jones*, various technologies are used by Heinlein. Computer is part of the ships navigation system is impressive, given IBM shipped its first electronic computer during the time when Heinlein wrote this story. Much of the flight deck routine is dated and clearly unbelievable given the level of contemporary technological sophistication, but the heart and soul of this book are
timeless. At its core, this is not a story about as rogation the galaxy. It is a coming–of age novel about a young man who is learning to navigate through life.

Heinlein’s view, everyone has the potential, though education and experience, to make a difference in the world – both ways small and large. And to restrict or suppress that potential in any way is the worst thing possible. This novel is probable Heinlein’s most mature juvenile novel and is certainly one of his most inspirational. It contains a sweeping indictment of slavery and provides a stirring message about citizenship and civil responsibility.

The most significant impact the juveniles had on the field is that of capturing the imaginative of countless teens and adolescents, inspiring many of them to pursue careers in the sciences. Many current NASA employees have credited Robert Heinlein and other science fiction writers as the main impetus in their choice of careers. Following his death in 1988, Heinlein was posthumously awarded the medal for distinguished public service by NASA, and during the ceremonies in his honor many of the participants expressed such sentiments. Other science fiction writers also have credited Heinlein as almost single-handedly creating what is perceived to be modern science fiction.

Chapter-VI, Heinlein’s protagonists are typically geniuses, often with perfect memory and a love for mathematics. Also his protagonist is consist of extended test of endurance, loyalty, courage, intelligence, integrity, fortitude, caring for others, perseverance, resourcefulness, a belief in oneself and optimism. They dramatize a personal ethics and pervasive social Darwinism, displaying how and why ‘fit’ types survive while the ‘unfit’ – the sulkers, the weaklings, the winners, the lazy, the self–centered, and the vicious-are not eliminated. His protagonist have held opinions covering most of the political spectrum, to the point where the oft-made argument. Heinlein’s heroes all have his political opinion needs to account for the fact that the sum total of political opinions held by Heinlein protagonists includes many mutually contradictory ideas.

Mutual respect and personal autonomy are key themes, and polymore is presented as the most rational and incest – in any case, family bonds are always very strong. Education is a vital process, and on occasion there are allusions to naive forms of chaos magic. In Heinlein’s protagonist tend to bluff rather than use lethal violence. Racism is also always rejected. Heinlein was indirect about it, but many of his main characters are implied to be multiracial or at least not white.
Heinlein’s child protagonists can serve as role models for children and serve role model as how to obtain insights in universe. Many main characters are strong role models because they rise above their own negative traits or weaknesses and overcome personal challenges. We often find protagonist, inspiring because they demonstrate the need for individuals to be resilient and to respond proactively to challenging circumstances.

There is undeniable a link between science fact and the ideas that emerge in science fiction. Science fiction authors are inspired by actual scientific and technological discoveries but allow themselves the freedom to project the possible future course of these discoveries and their potential impact on society, perhaps reaming only weakly tethered to the fact… scientists, in turn, often derive inspiration from the imaginative possibilities that exist in fictional worlds, but are constrained to follow the laws of nature that apply in this world. The inventions in fictional worlds seldom transition to the real world – at least not in the way they are first imagined. Science fiction for children reflects the implications of technology and the possibilities for the future. Thought it can be provided a method of developing an awareness of some of the alternatives of the world’s future.

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