

Critical Insights: Robert A. Heinlein

“This volume in the *Critical Insights* series devotes its pages to the author Robert A. Heinlein, creator of many essays, story collections, novels, and more, most notably in the genre of science fiction. In fact, Heinlein is considered to be **one of the most influential authors in the contemporary version of the genre**. Much of his work conveys themes of individual liberty, societal repression of nonconformist thought, the influence of organized religion on society, and more along similar lines.

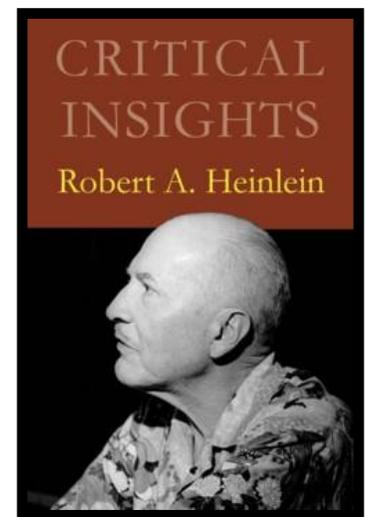
Opening chapters introduce readers to Heinlein via a rather **general discussion of his works and legacy, and a brief biography** which takes him from his early-twentieth-century birth through the naval academy, three marriages, and ultimately to his prolific writing career. The Critical Contexts section then discusses a number of topics which **help establish an understanding of Heinlein and his times**, as well as the many different types of criticism he endured as an author.

The Critical Readings section is comprised of 10 essays which **analyze the span of Heinlein’s career** starting with his shorter pieces published in pulp magazines and ending with his longer ruminating works. John J. Pierce writes a smart survey of Heinlein’s “juveniles” in “Growing Up with Heinlein.” Anna R. McHugh explores Heinlein’s notion of extraterrestrial realities vis à vis a relatively new understanding of Einstein’s theories in her piece “Compulsively Fruitful: Proliferation in the Short Fiction of Robert A. Heinlein, 1939-1952.” Wolf Forest explores the ways philosophy, economics, and ethics are conveyed throughout 25 years of Heinlein’s writing. And Ira Halpern looks at Heinlein’s *Stranger in a Strange Land*, arguably his most famous work, as a disingenuously satirical, inadvertently (perhaps) utopian novel.

This volume concludes with a **chronology of Heinlein’s life**, a **listing of his many works**, a **bibliography**, and an **index**.”

—ARBA Staff Reviewer

Text Reviews



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