

## Robert A. Heinlein: America as Science Fiction

*H. Bruce Franklin*

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**H. Bruce Franklin : Robert A. Heinlein: America as Science Fiction** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Robert A. Heinlein: America as Science Fiction:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The best critical writing on Heinlein (who's not easy to write ...By Michael GoodwinThe best critical writing on Heinlein (who's not easy to write about) I've ever read. Franklin tracks life-long themes as well as cultural-political dialectics. Fun to read too.0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Michael SchuesslerVery pleased.4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A flawed and constricted view of Robert A Heinlein.By BuxtehudeFirst of all, the author did a very good job of searching out what are probably all of Mr Heinlein's fictional works, as you would expect from a trained academic, so three stars right there. What spoils the book for an objective person is the deep and blind Marxist analysis and commentary found throughout, combined with the fact that like a true modern academic, he obviously did not actually read many of the short stories and novels, judging from the consistent errors he makes about the characters place in the story, their back histories, and events. In addition, what he did read was hardly done with a sympathetic eye, given the observed prejudices hardly surprising considering that Heinlein was a notoriously right wing libertarian. Mr Franklin for instance misses the fact that the protagonist of 'Tunnel In The Sky' is a black teen, (as is Podkayne Of Mars, or at least she has a black uncle). Things like that are extremely rare (not to say courageous) statements for a juvenile author making a living in the 1950s, and they show Heinlein's well-known loathing for racism and segregation. But as I say, there nothing about that from Mr Franklin.The Marxist bias in the book is most blatant in the author's pure (non-

literary) commentary- when he talks about "The First American Revolution" in the context of American history and it takes one a while to realise he's expecting a second one, the Real one, the inevitable American Communist Revolution, presumably followed by The Dictatorship Of The American Proletariat (not a direct statement of the author but it's there). Throughout, Mr Franklin contemptuously dismisses Mr Heinlein's faith in things like free enterprise and the value of freedom of choice as the senile enthusiasms of someone from the pre WWII generation who hadn't yet found the truth (of Marxism). Some of the author's other commentary on American history includes the hardline Chinese Communist propaganda line from the early 1950s that the Allies used germ warfare against them in the Korean War, a throwaway statement so puerile that I felt obliged to stop actually reading and to skim through the rest of the book in the same way the author obviously skimmed most of Heinlein's. I'm keeping this book in mind for use in debates where someone claims that academia isn't shot through with communist travellers, things like that. Plus, as I said, a pretty good list of Heinlein's fictional bibliography.