

A Listing of Errors in Leon Stover's **ROBERT A. HEINLEIN**

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Introduction

Leon Stover's 1988 critique of Robert Heinlein, *Robert A. Heinlein*, is significant in that it was the first full-length scholarly analysis of Heinlein and his work to take a positive approach and appraise Heinlein as a great and significant American writer. All prior major critical works, such as those by Alexei Panshin (*Heinlein In Dimension*), James Blish (various essays including "Heinlein, Son of Heinlein"), Brian Aldiss (*Billion-Year Spree* and update, *Trillion-Year Spree*), George Slusser ("Robert A. Heinlein: Stranger in His Own Land" and "The Classic Years of Robert A. Heinlein"), and most especially H. Bruce Franklin (*Robert A. Heinlein: America As Science Fiction*) were harshly critical of Heinlein, his attitudes, and his work.

Stover's comparison of Heinlein with Twain and his analysis of Heinlein's use of Calvinist and classical doctrines are interesting, well worked out, and (in my opinion) largely on the mark. In much of its literary analysis and "positioning" of Heinlein in the literary spectrum, *Robert A. Heinlein* is an excellent, well-wrought work.

It is all the more disappointing, then, to read Stover and find one factual error after another, and incorrect analyses based thereon. He misquotes names, confuses events, and completely misstates the plots of stories. Errors such as these are not acceptable even in casual literary discussion, and are completely out of place and near-unforgivable in a published scholarly work.

Some of these errors are minor, such as a misspelling of a character's name. Others are quite serious, including fundamental misstatements of stories's plot elements that render that entire portion of his analysis suspect. And, while it may seem petty of me to point out typographical errors, I feel their presence reflects on the overall quality of the editing and technical review of this work. While most are insignificant in their effect, there is one that calls a significant portion of Stover's evaluation into question (see item for Page 43).

Let me put it in perspective: If Stover had written a book on Mark Twain in which he described Tom Sawyer as black, gave his girlfriend's name as Betty, and said that Tom sailed down the Missouri river and induced his friends to whitewash a house, he would be laughed out of serious critical circles... as well as out of most high school literature classes. Yet this is precisely the level of errors I have found in *Robert A. Heinlein*. This situation is appalling and unacceptable: Here we have a book that at long last gives Heinlein his rightful due in critical circles... yet it is flawed by a raft of elementary errors that would earn one of Professor Stover's students an F on a paper, no matter how brilliant the theses.

I should make it crystal-clear that I have nothing but respect for Professor Stover and his intentions; *Robert A. Heinlein* is a major milestone in the literary analysis of Heinlein, and perhaps will be seen later as a turning point. As Panshin's book opened the floodgates of harsh criticism, perhaps Stover's will open a flood of warmer, more insightful works. However, sloppiness only serves to hurt the cause of those of us who greatly admire Heinlein and his work. This paper is intended to serve notice to Heinlein analysts and critics that sloppiness in such elementary areas as reading the man's works will not be tolerated—not by me, at least.

A word about my background is in order. I am a writer and several other sorts of literary craftsman, but neither my writing or educational credentials give me “sanctioned” authority in this area. My authority comes from a very deep and thorough familiarity with Heinlein's works and the critical works regarding them. I have near-total recall of all characters, plots, events, bibliographic data, and much of what has been said about them by both Heinlein and critics and reviewers. It is this authoritative knowledge, plus my extended library of Heinlein and Heinleiniana, on which I relied in preparing this analysis.

The first draft of this paper was written in October of 1989, shortly after I first obtained a copy of Stover's book. A second version quickly followed, and a third, much tidier version has circulated electronically and in paper form since 1990.

This version (regrettably, an expanded one) results from a re-reading of *Robert A. Heinlein* done as part of the preparatory work on my forthcoming book, *Robert A. Heinlein: A Reader's Companion*. This book (a non-critical and largely non-analytical guide to Heinlein's *oeuvre*) has been in research and preparation for many years, but personal and professional considerations have delayed its writing until now. I hope to see it on the shelf in mid-1994.

I welcome contact and comment from all Heinlein readers, fans and critics. Comment on this paper is especially invited.

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My primary thanks go to Cally Soukup for uncomplainingly loaning me her shiny-new copy of *Robert A. Heinlein* for vicious marking-up and reference. Lawrence Watt Evans corrected an error on my part that appeared in the first version of this paper. And dozens of participants in Fidonet's SF conference gave me feedback, information, and alternate viewpoints to consider.

Thanks to all.

Error Listing

The following errors have been found in Leon Stover's *Robert A. Heinlein* (Twayne's United States Author Series #522, Twayne Publishers: Boston, 1988).

Most of the errors are of fact—a character's name, job, or actions are misstated, a sequence of events is confused, etc. I have also included significant typographical errors and misspellings on the grounds that they damage the relevant portions of the work. In a few cases, I have pointed out a section of the book that is very nearly correct in every word and sentence, yet presents a “false portrait” of what the work under discussion actually says or implies. These are often the most borderline errors, and perhaps come down to a difference in interpretation between Stover and myself.

In all cases, I have given the relevant page numbers and quoted short passages from the book to make my comments clear. No permission has been secured for this quoting, it being in my judgement within the realm of “fair use.” I have not given page numbers or detailed references for the refutation of each point. The multiplicity of editions and printings of Heinlein's work makes this difficult, and in many cases, a thorough reading of the work under discussion is necessary to understand the error. I apologize if this lack causes any difficulties.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS (no page number)

Stover refers to the article “The Man Who Writes Through Time”, by Eric Hoffer, in the 9 Feb 1986 *San Francisco Examiner* Sunday magazine *Image*. This article is laden with errors about Heinlein's work; Stover's citation of it is disappointing.

(I find it annoying that Heinlein, notably sparing in granting interviews, granted one to a writer who apparently knew very little about him or his work.)

CHRONOLOGY (no page number)

The chronology of Heinlein's life makes no mention of his first marriage to Leslyn MacDonald (divorced 1947). This is likely a personal concession to Heinlein and/or his wife, not an oversight by Stover.

(Addendum, 1990: since Virginia Heinlein was relatively candid about the relationship between herself, Leslyn, and Robert in *Grumbles from the Grave*, I am forced to conclude that it was his wish that the matter not be discussed during his lifetime.)

Page 1: [Introductory material]

The opening three paragraphs are a close copy of the introduction that Damon Knight wrote for the collection *The Past Through Tomorrow*. Although Stover credits the “gambit” in an endnote, that note is distant and the net effect is disturbing.

Page 11: [re *Podkayne of Mars*]

Stover extrapolates Podkayne Fries's portrait of Earth to an unreasonable degree. Where Podkayne merely mentions that she (a Marsman) regards Earth as uninhabitable and clucks her tongue over its population of eight billion, Stover adds in fanciful extrapolation about global pollution and unending warfare, not supported by the text.

Page 18: [re *Double Star*]: “In one choice passage a supposed new ambassador to Mars (actually an actor playing the part)...”

Neither John Joseph Bonforte or the actor doubling for him (Lorenzo Smythe or Lawrence Smith) is an ambassador. He is a member of the Grand Assembly (the Solar system's parliament), and the leader of the opposition party.

Page 20: **"In Heinlein's next-to-last novel [*The Cat Who Walks Through Walls*] its hero of senatorial rank..."**

Richard Ames/Colin Campbell is not a senator. The "senator" guise is forced on him by a mysterious opposition, and he quickly adopts the ruse in order to get off the Golden Rule space habitat alive. Except for this brief time, he never actually impersonates or acts as "the Senator from Standard Oil."

"In the event, this murder [of 'Enrico Schultz'] goes unresolved."

Gwen/Hazel admits killing 'Schultz' in the last pages of the novel.

[Speaking of characters crying over spilt milk] "If they do, as does the lachrymose owner of Pete in *The Door Into Summer*..."

Daniel Boone Davis never cries over his lost cat, Pete, and never expresses anything very close to sorrow. (Regret, yes, and he does vow vengeance on Belle Darkin and Miles Gentry for causing him to be lost.)

Page 22: **"[Virginia Heinlein] spent two years learning Russian in advance of their trip to the Soviet Union in 1950."**

The trip was in 1960.

Page 25: **"The first flight of discovery to the moon (in '*The Man Who Sold The Moon*') is by the spaceship *Santa Maria* (differently named the *Lunatic* in a related story, '*Requiem*')..."**

The first moonship is named the *Pioneer*. The *Lunatic* is a previously unnamed space yacht that carries D.D. Harriman to his death on the Moon, many years later.

Page 27: **"Harriman's *Santa Maria* is a rechristened space shuttle, formerly the *Care Free*. Under that name it had served to safely maintain nuclear power plants in Earth orbit, where atomic fuel is generated for the *Santa Maria*. As Harriman watches it lift off, one of his associates remarks, 'He looks as Moses must have looked, when he gazed out over the promised land.'"**

(This is one of the most erroneous passages in the entire book. Stover has confused no less than six different spaceships and thrown in other errors in the process.)

At the time D.D. Harriman begins his moon venture, there is a single orbiting power plant (not "plants"), serviced by a nuclear-fueled shuttle named the *Charon*. Harriman had taken a suborbital freighter, named the *City of Brisbane*, out of service and had it refitted for nuclear fuel, renaming it the *Santa Maria*.

As *The Man Who Sold The Moon* opens, the power satellite has blown up, taking the *Charon* with it (or perhaps vice versa). There is no nuclear fuel for the *Santa Maria*, and never will be, so it is abandoned.

Harriman dedicates his considerable financial muscle to building a chemically-powered rocket to carry three men to the Moon, one of them himself. It develops that a large-enough rocket can't be built quickly enough, so the plans are revised and a smaller ship, to carry one man (not Harriman) is built. This ship, the *Pioneer*, is the first successful moonship.

With the feasibility of moon travel demonstrated, work begins on a larger ship, the *Mayflower*, which will carry the first colonists to the Moon. Harriman is prevented by legal

- means from traveling in this ship (he's too important to risk), and it is as this ship lifts off that the Moses comment is made.
- Many, many years later, the aged Harriman comes upon two cashiered rocket pilots flying a decrepit junker of a ship, the *Care Free*, as a carnival attraction. This ship later crashes, leaving the two pilots without a livelihood. They agree to convert a suborbital space yacht to escape fuel and fly Harriman to the Moon. This converted ship is named (at the last moment) the *Lunatic*. Harriman dies shortly after landing on the Moon.
- Page 28: **"Once his captain lands and returns the *Santa Maria*..."**
Pioneer.
- Page 30: **"...the bureaucratic sort that put the struggling hero of a story called '*Let There Be Light*' out of business."**
- Heroes, not hero, and this is an unconscionable error, given the story. The heroes are Drs. Douglas and Martin. The short shrift given Dr. Mary Lou Martin because of her gender is one of the critical elements of the story; Stover's error on this point is thus doubly annoying.
- Stover may also have confused Dr. Douglas's father (a character in the story who is being squeezed out of business by unfair power rates) with the two protagonists.
- See also comments re page 45.
- Page 31: **[re "*The Black Pits of Luna*"] "But his father has political connections powerful enough to demand of the tour guides that the rules be waived in this case."**
- Nothing is stated in "*The Black Pits of Luna*" about the father having political clout. He merely makes a nuisance out of himself until he gets his way.
- "When the boy is discovered missing, his mother cries for bloodhounds(!), and his father meekly surrenders to her idiotic demand, even though he knows better."**
- The father turns from his wife's demand for bloodhounds to request that helicopters (oops) rockets be used in the search. The idea is sensible on the face of it but ultimately impractical, but he is not "surrendering" to his wife's "idiotic demand."
- [re *Tunnel in the Sky*]: "...another story...in which a saving youth rescues his fellow boys and girls from...a field test...gone wrong."**
- Although Rod Walker is one of the pivots around which the new society forms, he is not the first or only member who provides leadership and guidance.
- Page 32: **[re *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*] "The Moon's colonists are 'moonies..."**
- Colonists is a rather misused word here, since the people in question are criminal or political transportees. And the term is "loonies", not "moonies".
- "In time, the moon develops its own industries for export to Earth, this in addition to serving as a way station for deep-space exploration and colonization. Now economically independent, it declares political independence on 4 July 2076, in a new American Revolution. By then, however, the moon had attracted immigrants from all nations, as had America from the**

start. The moonstruck Loonies [sic] who declare lunar independence are drawn from all races and national cultures, and it is they who replay the American experience and the American Revolution of 1776."

This is a "false portrait" example. Almost everything in this paragraph is incorrect, but subtly so.

The only export industry mentioned is food, to Earth.

No mention is made in the book of settlements on other planets (at the end, Mannie mentions heading out to the mining colonies in the asteroids, but that is some fifty years later).

Political independence is not declared on 4 July (just as it wasn't in American history).

The Moon had very few, if any voluntary immigrants at any time covered by the story (through the end of the revolution).

The Loonies are not "moonstruck": much is made of their lack of patriotism. (The mentions of Loonies's patriotism are falsely made to the czars back on Earth.)

Page 36: **"But the editorial fiction that Heinlein and MacDonald were two different authors was kept up to the end..."**

Well, perhaps. But John W. Campbell spilled the beans quite early on by announcing a story ("*By His Bootstraps*," 1941) in the next issue by Robert Heinlein, then running it under the byline Anson MacDonald. (Campbell also exposed the Lyle Monroe pseudonym by including "*Let There Be Light*" on the Future History chart in May 1941.)

"...inventors of the Douglass-Martin sun-power-screens..."

It's Douglas. Repeatedly misspelled in the remainder of the book. This may have been a word-processing search-and-replace error involving the name Frederick Douglass, used elsewhere in the book.

Page 40: **[re *Citizen of the Galaxy*] "Here, trader starships the size of metropolitan cities..."**

The traders's ships had complements of 1-200 people, and were small enough to land on a planet in close proximity with many other such ships.

Page 41: **"...NASA astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrine..."**

Aldrin.

"Thus does Captain [Leslie] LeCroix greet a number of imaginary others, not unlike himself, at the...convention...that concludes *The Number of the Beast*."

Leslie LeCroix does not appear in this chapter, or (as best as I can determine; it's a gigantic book) anywhere else in *Beast*. (He is a minor character and a universe-identifier in *To Sail Beyond the Sunset*, of which Stover read a prepublication version while preparing his book.)

Page 43: **[Quoting Heinlein's comments to Walter Cronkite on the occasion of the first moon landing] "There's just one equation that everyone knows: $E=EC^2$." [sic]**

Tom Easton, reviewing *Robert A. Heinlein* in the December 1988 issue of *Analog*, pointed out that the fact that this error (it's " $E=mc^2$ ") slipped by Stover, his editors, and his proof-readers damages the validity of Heinlein's comment.

Page 45: **"'Let There Be Light'...tells of a small businessman ruined...when he attempts to market a new and cheaper power source of his own invention. But he gets his revenge by releasing the technical details to the press..."**

A repeat of the earlier error (see comments re page 30). There are two inventors involved (neither of whom can be fairly called "small businessmen"): Drs. Archie Douglas and Mary Lou Martin. Again, Dr. Martin's getting the short shrift because of her gender is a critical point in the story, and Stover's repeated error in this respect is annoying.

Page 47: **"Starship Troopers is the story of John Rico..."**

Juan Rico, or Johnny. I can find no example of "John."

Page 48: **"...a flashback [in which Rico] recalls the teachings of his high school instructor in History and Moral Philosophy, an optional course (like those of today's ROTC programs)..."**

The course is not optional. It is required, but not graded; it must be audited, not passed.

Page 49: **"Making no impression on [the critics of *Starship Troopers*] was the fact that 95 percent of the voters in Heinlein's veteranocracy are veterans of the Federation's civil-service bureaucracy."**

One of the stickiest points in all of Heinlein's writings comes down to the argument surrounding this claim. I have to make it clear that the following is my opinion vs. that of Stover and Heinlein. My opinion has been shaped by careful and repeated reading of the book and discussion with a number of other knowledgeable readers and critics.

I long supported the view that the great majority of Federal Service volunteers served in non-military positions. This is the attitude fostered by a cursory reading of the book, and directly stated by Heinlein himself in his comments in *Expanded Universe* (following "*Who Are The Heirs of Patrick Henry?*") A long and slightly acrimonious argument on Fidonet's SF echo, with the opposition forces led by conference moderator David Dyer-Bennet, forced me to change my mind. A careful reading of *Starship Troopers* and Heinlein's comments lead me to the following opinion:

In those places that it is stated clearly and unambiguously, the book makes it plain that Federal Service is entirely military and military-support in nature. No clear mention is ever made of civilian divisions or departments. Non-combatant divisions are mentioned several times, but "non-combatant" strongly implies that they are still military entities. It is also mentioned in several places that the military "hires civilians to do the ant work."

The overwhelming impression of the words of the book itself is that there are *no* civilian components to Federal Service. The argument that "95% of Federal Service volunteers are civilian" is not supported by the book. The only support for this view comes from non-objective reading of several vaguely-worded passages.*

So where does this leave Heinlein's own comment (in *Expanded Universe*) that:

"In *Starship Troopers* it is stated flatly and more than once that nineteen out of twenty volunteers are not military veterans. Instead, 95% of voters are what we call today 'former members of federal civil service.'?"

I don't know. In view of the above facts, it would seem to make the comment a case of special pleading (argument by authority). It also leaves me immensely disappointed. Pick

* A lengthy analysis by David Dyer-Bennet, quoting all relevant passages of *Troopers*, is available for electronic download from Fidonet 1:282/341 as STROOPER.ZIP. It can also be downloaded from the author's BBS, Fidonet 1:203/289 (presently 916-723-4296, v.32bis, 24 hours; after early 1994, please ask a local Fidonet system operator for the current number).

up *Starship Troopers* and read it carefully—what is actually said, what is implied, and where, if anywhere, are Heinlein's comments supported? I'd very much like to be proved wrong on this one.

Page 55: **"[Valentine Michael Smith] is tutored in American ways by...Jubal Harshaw, who advises him how to make commercial use of his powers by setting up a profitable religious cult."**

Harshaw does no such thing. He is horrified when told that Michael has founded a religion, and doubly so when he finds that he himself is the church's patron saint.

Page 62: **[re *I Will Fear No Evil*] "...[Johann Smith's] intelligent and sexy black secretary [Eunice Evans Branca...]"**

Eunice has been referred to by many readers and critics as being black, yet there is no support in the book for this claim. In fact, there is no mention of and not the slightest clue towards her race. Those who claim support for Eunice being black are reduced to such trivial references as the shade of makeup and colors of clothing she chooses. This is nonsense.

Heinlein himself once said in a private conversation, "Did you happen to notice that our lovely heroine is black?" but this comment is not well documented. However, in a lengthy private letter, he did admit that on beginning the book, he placed two photos in front of him: one of a very beautiful blonde, and another of a very beautiful black. It is clear that he struggled for a careful ambiguity. But there is no evidence whatsoever in the book for Eunice's race—be it white, black, hispanic, or Martian.

Page 63: **"...for example, Johann/Joan getting himself/herself impregnated by the old man's lawyer [Jake]..."**

Joan has herself impregnated using Johann's sperm, stored long before the death of his male body. (She is pregnant when she later seduces Jake, who dies in her arms near the end of the novel and whose consciousness apparently joins with Johann/Joan.)

Page 67: **"After that came *Friday*, whose heroine...is one of those mythical creatures of science-fiction convention, a bionic construct, partly human and partly artificial."**

Friday Jones/Baldwin is neither bionic nor artificial. She is what is referred to in the novel as an "artificial person," a genetically engineered being of wholly human parentage. Her genetic engineering and special training give her superhuman strength, speed, and intelligence, but she is 100% human... which is one of the most important points of the whole story. Another egregious error on Stover's part, and one that renders his entire analysis of the story suspect.

"...the story line deals with the heroic efforts of one man to reverse [the balkanization of Earth's nations]."

This is not at all clear from the story, and is close to being a misstatement.

Friday's boss is the head of an organization struggling to hold things together, but it takes much assumption on Stover's part to conclude that Boss is the "one man struggling" with the problem. Much of this assumption may come from adding in the short story "*Gulf*," featuring Friday's boss many years earlier, in which he is indeed trying to control the world for its own good. There is no real indication in *Friday* that these are still his motives.

"...her boss, Hartly Baldwin..."

Hartley.

Page 69: **"After [Friday] has done her reading assignment in a book titled *The Last Days of the Sweet Land of Liberty*, the Boss asks her if she found any useful clues in it. [She replies to the effect that yes, particularism is a deadly sign.]"**

Friday's researches that lead to her reply involve a large number of books. After she recounts her research list to Boss (and shortly before she delivers her answer), he recommends she also read *Last Days*.

Page 70: **"Friday is next assigned to research the costs and benefits of colonizing a new world out there in the great beyond."**

There are already many colonized worlds, including "Olympia," the planet chosen by Hartley Baldwin's fellow *Homo Novis* supermen. What Boss advises her to do is select one for herself, to get away from the irretrievably socially fractured Earth.

"...Friday at last retires from her exotic business and settles for the pioneering life of a 'colonial housewife,' in a group marriage adapted to the conditions of a faraway frontier planet, short of females."

Friday's retirement is more forced by circumstances than a free choice. The distribution of males and females in her final marriage is equal (four and four); there is no evidence that females are in a significant minority on Botany Bay.

"...her final group marriage is left to the reader to judge as licentious or not."

This is a peculiar and out-of-place comment. Friday was for several years a wife in a large and wealthy group marriage in New Zealand (losing her place when she revealed her status as a masquerading Artificial Person). There is little in the description of either marriage that invites special consideration by the reader; Friday's entire life, in and out of bed, in and out of marriage, must be judged as licentious or not.

"...her job also called now and again for the judicious assassination..."

This statement also has a confusing interpretation. Friday could and did kill in the line of her job (she kills one man on the opening page of the novel, another in a situation outside her employment). However, she is not an assassin in the usual meaning of the word, nor are these two killings "assassinations" in the usual sense of the word. Early in the novel, she is offered an assassin's position by Boss (perhaps more in jest than seriousness), and is allowed to read classified materials about the principles and practice of assassination. (She rejects the position, and vice versa.)

Page 79: **[re *Job: A Comedy Of Justice*] "The troubles visited upon Alex and his wife Margrethe are created by illusion, with the aid of 'hollow grams' on a continental scale, so that the couple seem to be switched from one parallel world to another, in confusing succession."**

Holograms are not a part of the world-changing illusions. Yahweh/Jehovah and Loki are actually rebuilding parts of the world each time to confuse Alex and Marga. ("Time is not a constraint on the god level.") The holograms are only used in Jerry/Lucifer's Texas home, openly, as part of the furnishings.

"Alex there [in Hell] appeals to Lucifer who, after switching off Hell's holographic scenery..."

The scenery in Hell is real, not holograms. The illusions, such as Jerry's changing his size and appearance, are "godlike actions."

Page 81: **"Lucifer [Jerry] takes Alex to meet Koshchei. It is the latter, in his normal-looking lawyer's office constructed for the occasion somewhere in the grayness of nowhere space..."**

Alex sees Koshchei (Lucifer and Yahweh's superior being) in the guise of a veterinarian from his childhood. At one point, he is even induced to see puppies and kittens in a nearby courtyard.

"In the end, Koshchei appeals to a higher power and Alex's wife is restored to him." (also Page 82)

No, Koshchei himself overrides Yahweh and Loki and grants Alex a continued (after)life as it was promised to him.

Page 90: **[re *Have Space Suit: Will Travel*] "So speaks the father of Pewee..."**

Peewee. (This repeated typo makes the next few pages hard to read without laughing.)

"...as is [Peewee's] sixteen-year-old boyfriend, Kip..."

Boyfriend is a rather strong word in this context. Boy friend, maybe. And Kip is eighteen (at least, he has completed high school) at the time he is captured by Wormface and meets Peewee.

"After sentencing planet Earth to extinction for its possible long-term threat to galactic order..."

That the sentence is imminent is clear. However, it is never passed or specifically mentioned by the "judge."

"Turning to Pewee [sic] after the reprieve is given, [Kip] says, "Die trying" is the proudest human thing."

He does not. This line is part of Kip's internal dialogue, and it precedes the reprieve (actually, the favorable verdict) by some time.

Page 98: **[re *The Year of the Jackpot*] "The city is hit one after the other by earthquakes, tidal waves, and Russian missiles..."**

There is no mention of tidal waves in the story.

Page 99: **[re *By His Bootstraps*] "The subject of [Bob Wilson's] careless and slipshod thesis is the nature of time..."**

No, it's not. The title is "An Investigation into Certain Mathematical Aspects of a Rigor of Metaphysics." At the moment he is interrupted, he is using the concept of time travel as an example of something that may be imagined, but is impossible.

"When a Time Gate opens in the wall of [Wilson's] little study..."

It opens in his apartment, in the middle of the room. (He walks behind it at one point.)

(Stover's entire analysis of this story is in terms of Calvinist determinism, and he emphasizes that Bob Wilson is trapped in a circle of damnation, looping forever to confront himself. Yet he overlooks that "Diktor"—the oldest Bob Wilson—eventually does escape.)

Page 101: **[re "Life-Line"] "...but the judge exonerates Pinero."**

Not precisely. He either dismisses or suspends the suit (lifting the temporary injunction and refusing to issue a permanent one), and suggests that they put Pinero's machine to the test Pinero originally proposed at the first meeting of the Academy of Science, with the warning that he will rule against them if they do not.

"After the trial, Pinero is visited by newspaper reporters. They test the machine, verifying its accuracy on birth dates; but they are too cowardly to want to know their death dates, which Pinero then places in sealed envelopes. Following Pinero's murder (known to himself, of course, to the exact moment), they reenter his office and burn every envelope, all except Pinero's which they open with astonishment."

Pinero is visited by the reporters after the debacle at the Academy of Science, long before the trial. The reporters are not especially reluctant to have their death dates told, but when one challenges Pinero as to whether he can actually do it, the other reporters egg him into getting his reading. (It is predicted that he will die within 24 hours, and he does.)

The death dates placed in sealed envelopes are those of the members of the Academy, in accordance with the judge's suggestion and Pinero's original proposed test. They are kept somewhere other than Pinero's apartment (apparently, at the Academy itself).

"Explaining it to Rogers, one of the reporters calling upon Pinero during their first visit..."

Only visit, long before the trial.

Page 105: **[re "Misfit"] "Only Libby, with his intuitive gift, spots the error [in a propulsion charge]...he is proved correct, and the explosive charges are recalculated. 'Well done, EM-3,' radios the chief of operations from his flagship."**

The helio (not radio) from the Admiral (not chief of operations, necessarily) is sent after "Eighty-Eight" is successfully placed in orbit as EM-3, a considerable time after the incident of the miscalculated charges.

[re "Requiem"] "...D.D. Harriman's hasty grave on the Moon."

There is no evidence that Harriman was buried by his pilots (nor is there evidence they did not, although the timing of the final events would not seem to be adequate for a man in a pressure suit to have buried someone, even hastily). It would seem more likely that Harriman was left sitting on the surface of the Moon, with the shipping tag and its epitaph pinned next to him.

There is no final resolution on this point; it all hinges on the reader's evaluation of whether Charlie's comment that he "did what was necessary" involved digging a grave. (More likely, in my opinion, is that he wrote the epitaph and pinned it to the ground, and let the air out of Harriman's suit to preserve the body. The final line of the story ["They did not bother closing the airlock behind them"] would seem to support this interpretation.)

Page 111: **"For another example, take D.D. Harriman (or Dee Dee as he is affectionately known to his associates)..."**

He is referred to as "D.D." in a few places, but the spelled out version is never used. (It is used in *To Sail Beyond the Sunset*, the draft of which Stover read while preparing his book.)

Page 115: **[re *Starman Jones*] "Max Jones begins working in the holds of a passenger starship, cleaning catboxes for pets belonging to the ship's ritzy passengers, one of whom he romances and marries in the end."**

Max is responsible for caring for the animals aboard ship; changing catboxes is the most minimal of his duties. He (being a typically naive Heinlein juvenile protagonist) fails to see Ellie's romantic moves, and does not "romance" her. She ends up marrying the boy back home, the one her father shipped her off-planet to separate her from.

"It is young Max who saves the day, bringing the ship back home, after the captain appoints him chief astrogator."

It is the Purser (i.e., the groundside master of the ship) who appoints him captain.

"...Jones wins his place when the captain notices he has all the [astrogation] tables in his head."

It is the chief computerman (Kelly) and then the chief astrogator (Hendrix) who notice.

"[Max] has what it takes to begin with, inherently, in addition to his claim to hereditary [astrogator's] guild membership."

Max lies and cheats his way into space because he does not have the hereditary membership in the guild that he initially thought he had.

Page 118: **[re "*Coventry*"] "[David MacKinnon's] patriotism is excited when he learns of this revolutionary plot from Fader Magee, who turns out to be the head of the [United States] Secret Service."**

Fader Magee aka Captain Randall is an agent for the Secret Service. It is highly unlikely, having exposed himself to danger and capture as a spy in Coventry, that he is the head of the service. Nothing in the story supports this contention.

"MacKinnon [signs up with] the Secret Service."

The story ends with MacKinnon considering the decision.

"MacKinnon...comes to work as Fader Magee's right-hand man."

A completely unsupported assertion, since the story ends before MacKinnon has even made up his mind to join the Service.

"The rules of the Two Alternatives are waived for [MacKinnon]. [H]e is permitted to reenter the world of the Covenant without undergoing rehabilitation, as is required for all who decide to come back."

It is clearly stated that MacKinnon was interviewed (possibly under hypnosis, since he has no recollection of it) by four psychotechnicians who pronounced him cured—he had cured himself while in Coventry.

Page 119: **[re "*The Green Hills of Earth*"] "When duty called [in the form of a rocket malfunction], [Noisy Rhysling] did not hesitate as did the other jetmen."**

He was the jetman on watch at the time of the accident.

Stover also implies in adjacent paragraphs that Rhysling was a rogue and writer of doggerel before the accident, and a writer of "finer verse" afterwards. What change there was was much more gradual; see *Green Hills* and also *Time Enough for Love*, where Lazarus tells of Rhysling's life on Mars after his accident.

"[Rhysling is remembered] for his finest poem, composed while he worked and picked up by mikes in the engine room and recorded in the captain's cabin."

The work is, of course, "*The Green Hills of Earth*." It is made clear that Rhysling worked at this piece over a long period, perhaps most of the era after his blinding. What is recorded (more likely on the bridge than the captain's cabin) is the last, most complete version.

Page 123: **[re *To Sail Beyond the Sunset*] "Maureen is no less her father's protegee, even learning chess from him at the age of four, as did Heinlein from Dr. Lyle."**

Woodrow Wilson Smith (aka Lazarus Long) learned chess from Dr. Johnson at the age of four, as did Heinlein from his grandfather. Although it is mentioned in *Sunset* that Dr. Johnson also taught Maureen to play, it is not stated or implied that it was at any particular age, or even an especially young one.

Page 124: **[Heinlein] has [Maureen] speak of a weaker sister [Marian] in the same situation...**

Unless Stover is using "sister" in a generic sense, this is incorrect. Marian is a widow and family friend, not related by blood to Maureen, whom Maureen's husband Brian wishes to marry after divorcing Maureen.

Page 125: **"...her son [Lazarus] came to her in the person of Captain Bronson..."**

Corporal (Theodore) Bronson. (He is later a sergeant, but loses his stripes after returning to the war, and "dies" as Corporal Bronson.)

Page 129: **(In letter from Heinlein, regarding the anagrams in *The Number of the Beast*) "Neil O'Heret Brian = Robert A. Heinlein"**

Neil O'Heret Brain. (An essential pun in the story.)

Conclusion

This list is not necessarily complete, although this fourth revision contains some twenty entries not included in the prior versions. There are many other passages in *Robert A. Heinlein* that trouble me, although it is difficult to pin down a definite error of fact or interpretation. These passages are not necessarily “wrong” in my mind because I disagree with Stover’s analysis; there are many points over which I disagree with Stover, but understand how he arrived at his conclusions. The passages that trouble me seem to be based on incorrect or incomplete reading of the work in question, as demonstrated in many of the entries above.

My open suggestion to Professor Stover is that a second edition of *Robert A. Heinlein* is in order. The beautiful analysis of many of Heinlein’s themes and constructs deserves to be presented shorn of the egregious errors and flaws listed herein. And I have no doubt that five years have added considerably to Stover’s store of knowledge regarding Heinlein. A second edition, corrected and expanded, would truly be a beautiful thing.

2004 Update: Professor Stover is quite elderly now and in very poor health. He spent the last several years completing a much more important work, an annotated collection of the works of H.G. Wells, which is recommended to all who are interested. An updated edition of *Robert A. Heinlein* by Stover is quite unlikely, which is why this paper has finally been released more publicly.
