

*Libertarian Utopia and Racist Dystopia: Social
Commentary in Robert Heinlein's "Farnham's Freehold"*

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Robert Heinlein's 1960s Novels

In her essay published in *Science Fiction Studies* Julia List argues that publication of several key science fiction novels in the 1960s, Robert Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land*, Frank Herbert's *Dune*, and Roger Zelazny's *Lord of Light*, marks the turning point in the history of the genre. She calls that decade "a period when the genre's focus shifted dramatically towards exploring the social ramifications of scientific developments rather than the intricacies of the technologies themselves" (List 2009). Heinlein's novel, published in 1961, seems to be the most important of these three because its controversial meaning resulted in strong feedback, both positive (Hugo award for the best novel) and negative (banning of the book from the public school libraries). The most important aspect of *Stranger in a Strange Land* was developing public awareness of the genre and the constantly growing, widespread notion that a science fiction novel may carry an important message on various aspects of contemporary world. The two remaining Robert Heinlein's novels, the 1964's *Farnham's Freehold* and the 1966's *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, also tackle various social topics making them a form of social trilogy, in which the author tries to produce a sharp critique of the contemporary society.

The novels share one common strategy: although the plot of every one of them is set in the future, their true message deals with, more or less indirectly, the state

and intricacies of the modern society. For the first time in American science fiction literature a novel using the plot and setting of the typical science fiction narrative is used to tell a story that relates closely to the everyday reality of a potential reader. This strategy was used a decade earlier by Polish writer Stanislaw Lem, whose several early works, although appearing to be typical interstellar futuristic narratives, in fact contained readable allusions to the political and social reality of the communist Poland of 1950's (see Leś 1998). Lem's books, for example *Star Diaries* and *Eden*, are marked by heavy use of utopian and dystopian narrative strategies (see Fenrns 1999; Jameson 2011; Claeys 2013; Blaim 2013; Juszczuk 2014) in order to discuss topics that could not be addressed directly under the scrutiny of communist censorship. Heinlein uses a similar strategy and, although he is not restricted by direct censorship, from many author's statements one could learn that he was aware of a potential turmoil his novels could raise. Therefore, similarly to Lem, he uses science fiction disguise which allows him to produce a commentary on the contemporary society. The purpose of this paper is not to deliver a detailed interpretation of each of the mentioned novels, not only due to the limitations of this paper but mainly because such interpretations already exist (Patterson, Thornton 2001; Cusack 2001). Instead, I will concentrate on utopian/dystopian aspect of Heinlein's 1960s novels.

Stranger in a Strange Land is a unique science fiction novel for a number of reasons. Firstly, its science fiction setting is mostly a pretext: although it is set in the future when technological advancement allows interstellar travel, the society portrayed in the novel resembles the society of the early 1960s almost in every way. Secondly, the cross-cultural clash, typical of science fiction, is reversed: it is not the Earthlings who explore the outer worlds, it is the Earth that is being explored in the novel. Thirdly, a large part of the narrative is satirical in mood and form, and includes strong mentor statements voiced by Jubal Hershaw, which makes the novel a hybrid, as it is composed of a satirical novel and a social commentary. One element of the novel's poetics, however, should be strongly emphasized. Like many classical exploratory science fiction novels, *Stranger* has its roots in the Enlightenment narratives. Although its travel pattern is reversed, it still resembles one of the classical texts of the Enlightenment—*Persian Letters* by Charles Louis de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu. Montesquieu's epistolary novel was revolutionary because, instead of giving a typical exploratory narrative depicting faraway or imaginative lands, it portrayed the eighteen-century Europe. In *Persian Letters* it is the eponymous Persians

who come to Europe and observe it as a great curiosity. This strategy is used by Montesquieu in order to provide an acute satire on many crucial elements of the social life of his times: religion, the form of the government, law and culture. Heinlein, in his famous novel, reproduces the French philosopher's technique and does so in order to achieve the same goal—provide a sharp critical judgment of his times. Similarly to the Persian travelers in *Persian Letters*, the main protagonist of the novel, a Martian named Micheal Smith, being completely unfamiliar with the most elementary aspects of human and earthly life, and culture, observes it as the highest curiosity. Also as in *Persian Letters*, Heinlein uses in *Stranger in a Strange Land* the opportunity to provide a severe criticism of the crucial elements of the contemporary world—religion (see chapters XIV, XXIII, XXIV, XXV, XXXV), sex (numerous remarks throughout the book), the government (chapter XXXV), democracy, law, and culture (chapter XIII), and so on.

It is the question whether *Stranger in a Strange Land* delivers a coherent intellectual alternative for the criticized “way of the world”, thus making it a form of a utopian narrative. The central element of the plot, the creation of The Church of All Worlds, proved to be highly influential as *Strange in a Strange Land*, along with *The Lord of the Rings* and *Steppenwolf*, is well-known for being one of the beloved readings of the flower-power generation of the late 1960s. Although the novel resembles a utopian narrative in some aspects one must not forget that the crucial elements of the novel are numerous remarks of the second main character, Jubal Hershaw, who was highly critical of many of Smith's actions. Heinlein himself also stated that his novel was not conceived as a coherent proposition of how the world should be reorganized, it was merely an intellectual exercise inviting a potential reader to review his basic notions:

I was not giving answers. I was trying to shake the reader loose from some preconceptions and induce him to think for himself, along new and fresh lines. In consequence, each reader gets something different out of that book because he himself supplies the answers [...]. It is an invitation to think—not to believe (Nicholls 1990).

The Moon is a Harsh Mistress refers strongly to the utopian narrative strategy as well. The history of the Moon's penal colony's rise to independence intentionally bears resemblance to the actual historical events of the American Revolution of 1776. Similarly to previous novels, *The Moon is A Harsh Mistress* proposes clear social com-

mentary combined with a vision of a perfect society. Two sides of the political conflict that drive the plot of the novel also reflect the ideological dichotomy of *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*: a satirical view of the old, corrupted and bureaucratic Earth, and ideal utopian state of the Moon organized, or rather unorganized, according to libertarian beliefs (Feofanov 1995). Heinlein's vision of the ideal state is quite straightforward: any form of government that is truly trying to govern any human activities is redundant. People are capable of running their lives without the need of any form of surveillance. Typical aspects of an oppressive state such as army, police, income tax and institutionalized justice are easily replaceable with various forms of social agreement. This notion has its roots in the most fundamental belief of libertarianism, which was stated *expressis verbis* in the novel—every state is in fact a collection of individuals, and each and every one of these individuals takes responsibility for his or her own actions, lives, and decisions.

In terms of morals there is no such thing as a 'state'. Just men. Individuals. Each responsible for his own acts. I am free, no matter what rules surround me. If I find them tolerable, I tolerate them; if I find them too obnoxious, I break them. I am free, because I know that I alone am morally responsible for everything that I do (Heinlein 1997: 216).

In creating his vision of an ideal libertarian state Heinlein refers strongly to the history of the United States, not only by making lunar revolutionists proclaim independence exactly three hundred years after the American Declaration of Independence. The social life of the lunar colony is obviously shaped in the image of *modus vivendi* of the eighteen-century colonists and the nineteenth-century conquerors of the Wild West, with significant modifications made according to Heinlein's own beliefs. Justice is served by the members of the society without professional lawyers, the death penalty is carried out for violating the rules of a social agreement, the shortage of women gives them great power and social respect, and causes men to protect them at any cost, even if they are not „their” women. Respect is considered to be the greatest value of human life, as it is gained by actions that do not conflict with freedom and possessions of other individuals. The most basic form of social organization and, in fact, the only kind of social organization, is family, but family shaped in accordance with standards completely different from the Christian ones. Marriages are polygamous, with the smallest form of marriage consisting of two men and a woman. Larger families are built around the so-called „line marriages” consisting of several dozens of members, always with a woman as a head of the family. With

every citizen of lunar nation being a member of some family, no other form of social organization or state institution is virtually needed.

The ending of *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* is mixed. Although the lunar revolution finally prevails, the main characters and actual leaders of the revolution do not take part in the new government. Professor De La Paz dies, Mannie remains an outsider and MIKE, the computer which passes himself for the revolution's leader, Adam Selene, loses his ability to communicate with humans as artificial intelligence. Such an ending might be perceived as Heinlein's regret over "innocence lost", reflecting his own views regarding transition of the United States from the "home of the brave and land of the free" to the bureaucratic society of modern America.

Farnham's Freehold and Its Controversies

Farnham's Freehold differs from the two aforementioned novels in many ways. It is divided into two separate parts: the first one is set in a realistic setting of the early 1960's Cold War, the second part is set two thousand years later in highly transformed (socially and geographically) Northern America. The realistic part serves as a starting point of the plot, explaining why and how the following fantastic events took place. But the early part of the novel serves also as an introduction of the main theme of the novel—freedom of the individual and racial aspects of social order. The eponymous character, along with his grown-up daughter, son and wife survives the nuclear attack on the United States and finds himself in the wilderness, not knowing where or when he is. Among the survivors are also a young female friend of the family and a black servant named Joe. The survivors believe themselves to be the only people left on Earth after the nuclear war, therefore, under the command of resourceful Hubert Farnham, they start to recreate the lost civilization. However, after a couple of months, it turns out that the survivors were somehow transferred to the future. Soon they learn that as a result of the nuclear war, the whole northern hemisphere was virtually depopulated making the white race a minority in the world. White people were blamed for bringing the humanity to the verge of extinction and, in consequence, turned into slaves. The survivors from 1964 try to accommodate to the new circumstances.

Farnham's Freehold is often described as one of the most controversial novels in the history of science fiction. The authors of Heinlein monographs were critical of

the novel (Franklin 1980; Gifford 1980). A British author, Charles Stross, while referring to *Farnham's Freehold* and *Sixth Column*, said: "Some of his work is deeply, irredeemably flawed and should probably be taken out back and shot" (Stross 2013). It is certainly not one of Heinlein's best in terms of the plot and character development, but on the other hand its significance in raising the difficult questions of the early 1960s cannot be overlooked. Heinlein's message is highly pessimistic and not as biased towards white privileged males as it is often accused of. Any kind of social organization is, one way or the other, based on inequality and domination—societies composed of free people simply do not exist. In the short period of a Robinson-like living outside of the human society, despite Farnham's efforts, the rest of the white survivors do not treat the Negro Joe as equal and almost all of them strongly despise Farnham's idea of interracial mating in order to broaden the gene pool of a potential reborn society. In the dystopian part of the novel, when Hubert Farnham is turned into a slave and his former servant climbs the steps of the social ladder, he does not return the favor and is eager to uphold the state of social inequality making Hugh his majordomo. Thus, after losing the imperfect reality of the 1960s, after failing in creating the new society from scratch, and after a short experience of living in a dystopian future—when given a choice—Hugh decides on a risky time travel. The ending of *Farnham's Freehold* is vague—his younger female partner and he return to the past, but it is unclear whether the former state of the society is restored. It is suggested, partially explaining the title of the novel, that he lives in a state bearing resemblance to the state of nature making his own family basis for the social living.

Evolutionary Philosophy and the Question of Race

On the intellectual level *Farnham's Freehold* contrasts the evolutionary philosophy with various forms of organized society. Hugh Farnham, being clearly Heinlein's *porte-parole* in the novel, when asked about "humanity" of his black servant, replies:

Karen, you know that color does not matter to me. I want to know other things about a man. Is his word good? Does he meet his obligations? Does he do honest work? Is he brave? Will he stand up and be counted? Joe is very much a man by all standards that interest me (Heinlein 2006: 105).

In contrast to Hugh's views any kind of society suppresses these elementary human values in favor of skin-colour based superstitions. In the dystopian part of the

novel this notion is represented by the state-organized birth control, preventing the white minority from free breeding.

It is hard not to read Heinlein's novel in a clear context of racial disturbances of his era. When Hugh and Joe talk about their present relationship in the dystopian state of black superiors, soon their conversation turns into a quarrel and the demons of the past (which, in fact, is the present at the time of the novel's publication) return:

"I could resent that."

Hugh Farnham was angry and feeling reckless. "Go ahead and resent it! I can't stop you. You're a Chosen, I'm a servant. Can I fetch your white sheet for you, Massah? What time does the Klan meet?"
"Shut up!"

Hugh Farnham shut up. Joe went on quietly, "I won't bandy words with you. I suppose it does look that way to you. If so, do you expect me to weep? The shoe is on the other foot, that's all—and high time. I used to be a servant, now I'm a respected businessman—with a good chance of becoming a nephew by marriage of some noble family. Do you think I would swap back, even if I could? For *Duke*? Not for anybody, I'm no hypocrite. I was a servant, now you are one. What are you beefing about?"

"Joe, you were a decently treated employee. You were not a slave."

The younger man's eyes suddenly became opaque and his features took on an ebony hardness Hugh had never seen in him before. "Hugh," he said softly, "have you ever made a bus trip through Alabama? As a 'nigger'?"

"No."

"Then shut up. You don't know what you are talking about" (Heinlein 2006: 236-237).

The question of race and racial segregation is a pivotal element of the novel's message. Farnham's views are obviously shaped in the image of Heinlein's own experiences which differ significantly from WASP-oriented white conservative way of thinking, as well as from the Negro-friendly leftists' ideas. In fact, both groups take supposed racial differences for granted and consider them to be scientific facts—these facts, however, are nothing but cultural prejudices:

This matter of racial differences—or the nonsense notion of "racial equality"—had never been examined scientifically; there was too much emotion on both sides. Nobody *wanted* honest data.

Hugh recalled an area of Pernambuco he had seen while in the Navy, a place where rich plantation owners, dignified, polished, educated in France, were black, while their servants and field hands—giggling, shuffling, shiftless knuckleheads "obviously" incapable of better things—were mostly white men. He had stopped telling this anecdote in the States; it was never really believed and it was almost always resented—even by whites who made a big thing of how anxious they were to "help the American Negro improve himself." Hugh had formed the opinion that almost all of those bleeding hearts wanted the Negro's lot improved until it was *almost* as high as their own—and no longer on their consciences—but the idea that the tables could ever be turned was one they rejected emotionally.

Hugh knew that the tables could indeed be turned. He had seen it once, now he was experiencing it (Heinlein 2006: 259-260).

The matter of race itself is, according to Farnham's views, falsely regarded. In terms of sheer science, Hugh claims that as the notion of a pure race simply does not exist—at least in reference to the “whites” populating Europe and their American descendants.

But Hugh knew that the situation was still more confused. Many Roman citizens had been “black as the ace of spades” and many slaves of Romans had been as blond as Hitler wanted to be—so any “white man” of European ancestry was certain to have a dash of Negro blood. Sometimes more than a dash. That southern Senator, what was his name?—the one who had built his career on “white supremacy.” Hugh had come across two sardonic facts: This old boy had died from cancer and had had many transfusions—and his blood type was such that the chances were two hundred to one that its owner had not just a touch of the tarbrush but practically the whole tar barrel. A navy surgeon had gleefully pointed this out to Hugh and had proved both points in medical literature.

Nevertheless, this confused matter of races would never be straightened out—because almost nobody wanted the truth. [...].

Well, he knew who wasn't equal here—despite his statistically certain drop of black blood. Hugh Farnham, namely. He found that he agreed with Joe: When things were unequal, it was much nicer to be on top! (Heinlein 2006: 260-261).

Therefore, social prejudices are based on a lie, however, to the protagonist's surprise, the new “improved” society of the future is based on the same lie as well. The only thing that has been altered is that “the tables have turned” and the whites are the suppressed and enslaved minority. The black rulers are only capable of creating pseudo-feudal society founded on yet another lie. As the white elite of the 20th century believed themselves to be superior for the reasons far from the actual anthropological knowledge, current black aristocracy is eager to believe in lies and pseudo-religious explanations of the social inequality—as whites did centuries ago. Furthermore, there comes a question of the deliberate forgery of classic texts of culture. Hugh Farnham is a well-read man, although his formal education is limited to skills useful in everyday life, he is a devoted reader and he regards books as a foundation for the civilization.

He felt sudden grief that abstract knowledge of deaths of millions had not given him. Somehow, the burning of millions of books felt more brutally obscene than the killing of people. All men must die, it was their single common heritage. But a book need never die and should not be killed; books were the immortal part of man. Book burners—to rape a defenceless friendly book (Heinlein 2006: 73-74).

Thus, it is clear that his nuclear shelter has an extensive library covering almost all aspects of human knowledge and culture. When transferred to the future, Farnham learns that books and knowledge are almost non-existent in the lives of his new contemporaries and the ones that are still in use, have been forged.

Either way, the Koran had been the only book officially exempt from the torch—and Hugh harbored a suspicion that the Koran had not been spared either. He had owned a translation of the Koran, had read it several times.

He wished now that he had put it into the shelter, for the Koran as he now read it in “Language” did not match his memory. For one thing, he had thought that Mahomet was a redheaded Arab; this “Koran” mentioned his skin color repeatedly, as black. And he was sure that the Koran was free of racism. This “improved” version was rabid with it.

Furthermore, this Koran had a new testament with a martyred Messiah. He had taught and had been hanged for it—religious scrolls were all marked with a gallows. Hugh did not object to a new testament; there had been time for a new revelation and religions had them as naturally as a cat has kittens. What he objected to was some revisionist working over the words of the Prophet, apparently to make them fit this new book. That wasn’t fair, that was cheating (Heinlein 2006: 189).

Soon he learns that the whole history of mankind has been deliberately rewritten in order to present black people as the saviours of humanity.

But how about the rest of it? It says here that the United States, at the time of the war, held its black population as slaves. Somebody had chopped out a century. On purpose? Or was it honest confusion and almost no records? There had been, he knew, a great book burning for two centuries during the Turmoil, and even after the Change.

Was it lost history, like Crete? Or did the priests like it better this way?

And since when were the Chinese classed as “white” and the Hindus as “black”? Yes, purely on skin color Chinese and Japanese were as light as the average “white” of his time, and Hindus were certainly as dark as most Africans—but it was not the accepted anthropological ordering of his day.

Of course, if all they meant was skin shade—and apparently that was what they did mean—he couldn’t argue. The story maintained that the whites, with their evil ways, destroyed each other almost to the last man [...] leaving the innocent, charitable, merciful dark race—beloved by Uncle the Mighty—to inherit the Earth.

The few white survivors, spared by Uncle’s mercy, had been succored and cherished as children and now again were waxing numerous under the benevolent guidance of the Chosen. So it read (Heinlein 2006: 188).

Contemporary Times as Racist Dystopia

The conclusions which can be drawn from that forgery are fairly obvious and for, a number of reasons, critical to understanding the Heinlein’s version of dystopia. The most important difference between *Farnham’s Freehold* and the other two “social”

novels Heinlein wrote in the 1960s is *Farnham's Freehold* depicts two organized societies instead of one. *Stranger in a Strange Land* can be regarded as a satire bearing features of an Enlightenment work on modern society in the manner of works of de Montesquieu (*Persian Letters*) or Voltaire (*L'engénu*, *The Letters of Amabed*, *The Princess of Babylon*). *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, on the other hand, is rather a straightforward utopia presenting an image of an almost ideal libertarian state without a government. In *Farnham's Freehold*, however, Heinlein places his protagonist in two states: first in the realistic environment of a contemporary America, then in the dystopian future and does so in order to put an equality mark between those two. Despite the cultural differences between the 1960s America and the pseudo-feudal state of the future, both are based on the same lie: in consequence of putting one race above the other they are incapable of seeing the truth. This way Heinlein achieves roughly the same effect as he does in *Stranger in a Strange Land*, saying that the contemporary world, or at least the United States of the early 1960s, truly is a dystopia. As it has been said before, all these the novels prove, each in its own way, that Heinlein was highly sceptical of the possibility of creating a state that would provide freedom for all of its members. The way he portrays his protagonist is the key to novel's interpretation.

Heinlein depicts Hugh Farnham not only as an outspoken libertarian but also makes it clear that many of his actions and decisions are influenced by the evolutionary philosophy. Farnham is a survivor type and that term has to be taken literally. He is ready for the nuclear "end of the world as we know it", which of course does not make him special in the times of the Cold War paranoia (Farnham's shelter resembles Heinlein's own fallout shelter in Colorado Springs). More important is the way Hugh sees and treats his family. His vision of a family life has nothing in common with traditional Christian and bourgeois "family values". For him family is just meant for breeding and nursing children, which is crucial for survival of the human race. By putting Hugh Farnham and his companions in the face of a critical situation and extreme crisis, which might cause human extinction, Heinlein contrasts his protagonist's mindset with the attitude of his family members. Even in normal life, presented in the first chapters of the novel, Hugh's ideas and views are quite unconventional. However, when he together with the rest of the survivors find themselves in the state of nature believing themselves to be the only people left on Earth—desperate times call for desperate measures. Farnham immediately loses interest in his lawful wife and encourages free sexual intercourse between the rest of the survivors—his son, his daughter, the Negro Joe, and Karen. Hugh's idea and his open relationship

with much younger Barbara immediately lead to a conflict within the group. Hostile relations with his son, which include open death threats, are presented by Heinlein as a typical fight for dominance, which is to determine who will be the alpha male in the group. Nevertheless, Hugh Farnham is not given a chance to fulfil his plan of recreating the society as the whole group soon is to be captured by the new rulers of the world.

The laconic ending of the novel assumingly marks the return of the evolutionary theme presented earlier. Disappointed with social life and probably finding himself in the alternate reality, Hugh gives up the hope of reconstruction of the social order and decides on living only with his lover Barbara outside of any societies. This decision, being clearly the epitome of libertarian individualism, connotes the intellectual climate of the early 60s and the American literature of the previous decade. Joseph E. Brewer argues that beatnik antiheroes of *On the Road*, instead of changing the oppressive system, choose to “glory their own system” (Brewer 1967: 73); Hugh Farnham’s voluntary reclusion from society might be regarded him glorifying his own system.

But one should remark that once again the novel does not provide any constructive way of reorganizing the society in order to heal its imperfections. Just like *Stranger in a Strange Land*, *Farnham’s Freehold* raises many questions but does not bring any answers, except for the typical libertarian belief in the power of the individual and the key role of the family in human life.

Heinlein’s novels are also proof of something that may be called “maturing” of science fiction in contrast to science fiction written before 1960, which may be simply regarded as a form of modernist literature depicting human life against a background of technological advancement. Thus Heinlein’s novels become some sort of a milestone for fantastic fiction broadening its topical horizons. Although differing significantly in terms of the plot, setting and visions of society, the famous three novels published by Robert Heinlein in the 1960s share some key elements making it possible to classify them a form of a social trilogy. The novels mark the beginning of a social trend in science fiction directing its attention not only towards visions of “probable” societies but also providing the judgment on the existing contemporary ones. The narrative strategies are used in rhetorical manner: in *The Stranger in a Strange Land* the introduction of an outside or “naive” observer allows to show the Earth’s reality as a form of dystopia, making it literally “a strange land”. *Farnham’s Freehold’s* grim vision of dystopian future is, in fact, a reflection of the contemporary

reality depicting human incapability of creating societies not founded on social inequality. In *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* utopian vision of a lunar society is used as an acute contrast with the satirical portrayal of Earth, reminding at the same time of glory of American past.

In each of these novels the key question of world-building and storytelling is race. Although being often labelled as right-wing military male WASP, Heinlein actually believed racial integration to be the natural and inevitable process, thus he strongly criticized any form of state-ruled racial segregation which is a recurring motive in all three novels. For example, in *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* almost every member of the lunar nation—in contrast to inhabitants of Earth—is of mixed race. Along with that comes Heinlein's utter disbelief in organized religion.

The key element of these three novels is the presence of a mentor-like figure that is eager to comment on almost every aspect of the story. Mentors are voiced by Jubal Hershaw, Hubert Farnham himself, and Professor De La Paz—all of these characters serve also as a *porte-parole* for Robert Heinlein expressing his libertarian views, giving explanation of many elements of the plot and providing a clear interpretation of the novels' themes.

Robert Heinlein's 1960s novels are not utopias or dystopias *per se*. In each of them a utopian or a dystopian setting is used in a paradoxical and rhetorical manner: the contemporary society on Earth is depicted as inferior. In *Stranger in a Strange Land* Heinlein uses various satirical strategies in his vision of the "future" America and in *Moon is a Harsh Mistress* an even sharper satire is used to show the earthly life in contrast to an ideal libertarian society. Therefore, a science fiction novel becomes a flexible and convenient tool for social criticism in the fantastic disguise.

Farnham's Freehold differs slightly from Heinlein's more famous novels and—for obvious reasons—is regarded as inferior. However, the clumsy plot, poorly developed characters and the background should not obscure the novel's importance. When put in the perspective of Heinlein's message conveyed by the other two novels *Farnham's Freehold* loses many of its supposed controversies and thus makes the author's concept clear. The novel is yet another praise of human individualism, freedom and, on the other hand, once again provides a severe criticism of societies controlled by any kind of state. Thereby Heinlein's libertarianism becomes a form of devoted humanism.

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