

Re: Phonemes

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2005-06/msg01456.html>

- *From:* mithomps@xxxxxxxxxxxx
 - *Date:* 27 Jun 2005 12:21:43 -0700
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David Wright Sr. wrote:

- > "The Roads Must Roll" is stereotypical of the Heinlein 'What If.' story
- > based on the technique of taking some change(s) in technology or society and
- > extrapolating what the consequences might be. Here he postulates a method of
- > getting around a severe limitation on the oil supply to the point that only
- > the military would have access to it for defense purposes, the invention of
- > the sun-power screen and the moving beltway and tries to suggest some results
- > of that 'what if' situation.
- > ...
- > Oh yes, one other thing. This story proves that Heinlein was anti-union
- > since he brought 'military' force to quell the 'strikers'. It is clear that
- > RAH did no such thing. The bulk of the union was represented by Harvey, a
- > founder and well-respected member of the transport worker's union and who was
- > killed by the 'strikers'. It was also made clear that this was a very small
- > group of dissidents who had been collected together in one place to get
- > sufficient strength to carry out their threat. There was no general strike
- > nor sympathy with any of the unions with this action.

And the strike was in the name of an ideology that struck me as very corporatist, if not fascist. Had it succeeded, it would have been a typical putsch. Significant too is that it was attempted in a heavily centralized industry organized with some measure of government authority. Besides showing how increasing centralization makes for increasing fragility and how it makes for increasing social distortions (an academy of engineers, for example, which struck me as a vague allusion to Napoleon's educational reforms), the story asks "Quis custodiet" and doesn't give a final answer. It's a subtler story than many people give him credit for.

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- > He is said to be 'socialistic'. Note: *_Beyond This Horizon_* and *_For Us, The Living_*, where money is created based on productivity and doled out among
 - > the population.

Written when he was still under the spell of Upton Sinclair, just after he had run for office on his Production for Use platform and lost. (To fill in details that Brian Scott alluded to earlier in the thread.)

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- > He is said to be 'capitalistic'. Note: *_Time Enough For Love_* and the
- > LL's control of the money supply on *New Beginnings*.
- >
- > He is said to be jingoistic. Note: The justification for expanding through
- > the universe in *_Starship Troopers_*.
- >
- > He is said to be non-jingoistic. Note: The speech of Bonforte's in *_Double*
- > *Star_* where he speaks of dealing honestly and non-belligerently with
- > non-humans.

A lot of that is a failure to distinguish the author's ideas from his characters' words. That might be valid with Asimov's main characters, but it doesn't follow that Heinlein's writing's so shallow.

- > He is said to be anti-feminist. Note: His 'women' are all 'beautiful' and
- > serve only as 'sex objects', unless they are among the large number of
- > old, fat, complaining biddies. His so-called 'competent' women are
- > 'unbelievable'. (This of course ignores the fact that his wife Ginny served
- > as the model for his 'unbelievable' women and could actually do many of the
- > things that his fictional 'competent' women did.)

I've read that his second wife also served as a model for some of them. (Ginny was his third wife.)

- > He is said to be feminist: He has women characters who are all smart, and
- > competent, except for a lot of old, fat, complaining biddies.

His female characters are usually interesting people and his heroines excellent people, ambitious, intelligent, attractive, and solid, but they do have a dismaying tendency to be crazy for marriage. But then, so are many of his heroes. Too 50s for my sensibilities...

Mikael Thompson

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- *Follow-Ups:*

- ◆ **Re: Phonemes**

- ◇ *From:* David Wright Sr.

- *References:*

- ◆ **Phonemes**

- ◇ *From:* David Wright Sr.

- ◆ **Re: Phonemes**

- ◇ *From:* Peter T. Daniels

- ◆ **Re: Phonemes**

- ◇ *From:* David Wright Sr.

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