



Citizen of the Galaxy

Robert A. Heinlein

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In a distant galaxy, the atrocity of slavery was alive and well, and young Thorby was just another orphaned boy sold at auction. But his new owner, Baslim, is not the disabled beggar he appears to be: adopting Thorby as his son, he fights relentlessly as an abolitionist spy. When the authorities close in on Baslim, Thorby must ride with the Free Traders — a league of merchant princes — throughout the many worlds of a hostile galaxy, finding the courage to live by his wits and fight his way from society's lowest rung. But Thorby's destiny will be forever changed when he discovers the truth about his own identity...

Citizen of the Galaxy Details

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From Reader Review Citizen of the Galaxy for online ebook

Monica says

Es bien sabido el ESPECIAL MENSAJE ALECCIONADOR Y FILOSÓFICO VITAL DE HEINLEIN EN SU TRABAJOS JUVENILES. PERO ÉSTE ES, QUIZÁ, EL MÁS INSISTENTE CON RESPECTO A LA LIBERTAD INDIVIDUAL QUE DEBE CONFORMAR EL CAMINO DE TODO SER, Y EL APRENDIZAJE A BASE DE ESFUERZO PARA LABRARSE UNA VISIÓN ACORDE CON LO QUE SERÁ SU POSIBLE FUTURO Y SU ELECCIÓN EN LA VIDA.

Se podría definir entre UN 'OLIVER TWIST' (PERO MUCHO MÁS DINÁMICO Y DIRECTO) Y 'EL PRINCIPITO' (IGUAL DE REALISTA PERO SIN EL TONO PESIMISTA DEL CLÁSICO INFANTIL)

Y es que la presente novela nos habla de Thorby, un esclavo infantil con un pasado nebuloso a la vez que tormentoso (por lo que deja entrever el autor; tremendo y duro), que llega a la capital de los nueve Reinos (un cooperativa de planetas totalmente fascista y autoritaria, regida por Sargon) y es nuevamente subastado. En ésta ocasión un mendigo con licencia: Baslim, el lisiado lo comprará y se convertirá en su amo, pero con el propósito de protegerlo, HACERLE VER LA VALÍA DE SU PERSONA, INCULCARLE UNOS PRINCIPIOS MORALES Y UN CONOCIMIENTO SUFICIENTE PARA QUE TOME LAS RIENDAS DE SU CAMINO.

Ésta primera parte se DEDICA A HABLARNOS DE LOS BUENOS VALORES QUE DEBEN REGIR AL INDIVIDUO, LA IMPORTANCIA DE LA PRECISA EDUCACIÓN Y CONOCIMIENTO PARA EL DESARROLLO DE CUALQUIER PERSONA ADEMÁS DE LA EXPERIENCIA, IMPRESCINDIBLE, DE CADA UNO, BUENA O MALA, PARA SU EVOLUCIÓN VITAL:

'Tampoco Baslim hubiese removido los recuerdos [...] tenía la firme creencia que las experiencias de un hombre le pertenecen y ni siquiera las peores deben extraerse sin su consentimiento'

Es un tramo de la novela tierno, aleccionador y con un final de aventuras tipo espionaje, en el que se sienta la premisa del resto de la obra.

En su segunda parte, Thorby viajará a bordo de una nave de Mercaderes libres : La Sisu (por encargo de su 'Pa', Lisbom). Allí se sentirá menospreciado al principio, PUES LA NOVELA TOCA, PRINCIPALMENTE EL TEMA DEL ESCLAVISMO EN TODAS SUS VERTIENTES (LOS INEVITABLES CONVENCIONALISMOS Y COSTUMBRES DE TODA SOCIEDAD O GRUPO, Y SUS NORMAS, OSTRACISMO GENERALIZADO), la nave está regida por un, para ellos, evolucionado Matriarcado (ahora son ellas las que eligen con quién casarse y cómo llevarlo al éxito) pero a toda vista inamovible y semi dogmático, COSA QUE VERÁ EL PROTAGONISTA A TRAVÉS DE UNA ANTROPÓLOGA INVITADA EN LA NAVE:

'La mayoría de las sociedades- continuó ella- practica tanto la exogamia como la endogamia: un hombre debe casarse fuera de su familia pero dentro de su nación, raza, religión o algún grupo grande' [...] vosotros no sois una excepción'

Pero, además, ésta parte tiene acción armada con combate y prácticas (Y teoría científica, descrita de manera simple y aclaratoria), ya que la nave debe eliminar a los piratas espaciales que trabajan para los nueve reinos traficando con esclavos. A todo esto nuestro joven SE PREGUNTARÁ SI A PESAR DE SER LIBRE, LO ES REALMENTE, SI CUENTAN SUS DECISIONES O NO Y SUS DESEOS DENTRO DE LA SISU, ya que por su desvinculación obligada, por costumbres culturales, con dos personas arraigadas a nivel sentimental allí, sentirá mal estar:

' [...] hubo dicho Pa era que un hombre no debía ser más libre que en su propia mente'

Los miembros de su 'presente familia' son UNOS CLASISTAS SIN APENAS VERLO, PERO SÍ MÁS ABIERTOS QUE OTROS, CLARO ESTÁ'

En el tercer tramo de la narración, Thorby es trasladado a una nave militar y se encarga de ser un guardián artillero hasta que su cuidador encuentre sus verdaderas raíces..la cual cosa el muchacho nunca pidió. Allí CONOCERÁ EL VERDADERO TRABAJO DE 'PA' BASLIM (UN REBELDE, INCLUSO EN SU CÍRCULO, PERO MUY ADMIRADO, NO OBSTANTE) Y CASI ENCONTRARÁ SU PROPÓSITO EN LA VIDA, PUÉS AÚN LE QUEDA UNA VUELTA MÁS QUE DAR...¿EL CAMINO NO ES SIEMPRE EL QUE UNO DESEA, AUNQUE LA FINALIDAD SEA LA MISMA! (conforme vives, eso queda muy patente, ya lo creo). Allí se sentirá a gusto y SABRÁ SER UN SER INDIVIDUAL Y LIBRE PENSADOR, GRACIAS A SU CÚMULO DE EXPERIENCIAS Y PUNTOS DE VISTA, pero sabe que no debe ser optimista aunque sí positivo con la ESCLAVITUD IMPERANTE DEL PLANETA:

‘[...]Cuando una cultura enferma de esclavismo, ése mal se arraiga en el sistema económico y en las leyes, en los hábitos y la actitud de los hombres. Si se logra abolir se convierte en clandestina [...]la gente de la mente que cree cómo su derecho natural a poseer otras personas’

¿EL LIBRO MÁS INDIVIDUALISTA DE HEINLEIN Y LIBERALISTA? EL JUVENIL, SIN DUDA ALGUNA Y EN GENERAL EL DE MENSAJE MÁS INDIVIDUALISTA.

Aquí el autor plantea al lector si todos somos o no esclavos (quizá parezca manido actualmente) pero para tratarse de un libro juvenil de los cincuenta, es casi un atentado a las restricciones que quieren imponer los fascistas...bien seguro que sería quemado en otra época).

Ya en la última parte asistimos a la llegada a la Tierra de Thorby, la conexión con sus familiares opulentos y codiciosos, y su DESCONTENTO GENERAL CON SU FAMILIA Y ACTUAL STATUS. ODIAS LAS VÍBORAS CON LAS QUE TRATA Y SUS VERICUETOS LEGALES, SUS RESTRICCIONES BUROCRÁTICAS, SUS TRAPICHEOS POR EL PODER Y SU, AL FIN, INFELICIDAD SIN DARSE CUENTA. Pero ahí es cuando él TOMARÁ ASIENTO DEL POTENCIAL DE SU SITUACIÓN Y EN ENCAUZAMIENTO DE LAS PREMISAS DE SU MISIÓN VITAL IDEAL: LA ABOLICIÓN DEL ESCLAVISMO, NO SIN SACRIFICAR SU PROPIA LIBERTAD DE POR MEDIO (la victoria nunca es completa) Y SU CAMINO Y TEMPO IDEAL PARA LLEVARLO A CABO:

‘La gente es libre....a costa de la libertad individual de cada uno de vosotros [...]’

‘Significa dedicarse tanto a la libertad que se debe estar dispuesto a dar la propia..o

Así pues ‘Ciudadano de la galaxia’ ES UNA GRAN FÁBULA ACERCA DE LA ESCLAVITUD INHERENTE EN TODAS LAS SOCIEDADES, LLENAS DE PROTOCOLOS, NECESARIAS PERO DOGMÁTICAS COSTUMBRES DEL HOMBRE, SUS VERICUETOS LEGALES, PODER Y AMBICIÓN, OSTRACISMOS, ANCLAJES Y, PRINCIPALMENTE, SOBRE LA LIBERTAD DEL INDIVIDUO, CON UN MENSAJE IMPERECEDERO: Labrar tu propio yo, buscar tu sitio y destino en la galaxia, sin intromisión en demasía de terceros, mediante tu juicio vital.

DEMASIADO DENSO PARA UN ADOLESCENTE, CREO QUE ENCAJA MEJOR EN UN LIBRO ADULTO DEL GÉNERO.

¿ACASO NO TODOS ANSIAMOS ESO, EN EL FONDO? PERO...¿ES TOTALMENTE POSIBLE?

‘Ya hace unos cuantos años que soy libre y te anticipo que te sentirás más suelto pero no siempre más cómodo’.

Mike says

Citizen of the Galaxy is a throw back to the days when a complete story could be told in 250 pages or less. A nice 3 Star diversion to a simpler time in SciFi, when "atomics" were all the rage and everyone had them, strictly for defense you know. Heinlein tells a tale of a young lad, sold as a slave to an old beggar--who is not what he seems. The boy grows and has adventures as he goes on a mission for the old beggar that will

journey through several different cultures. Heinlein paints 3 different cultures in full enough detail in just a few pages. Very enjoyable. Well worth a couple of hours -- that is all it will take.

Katharine says

Some of my all-time favorite sci-fi novels were written by Robert Heinlein. Some of the worst, stupidest, most incoherent, hipper-than-thou sci-fi novels were also written by Robert Heinlein. So every time I check out a Heinlein from the library, it is with great trepidation.

I am happy to say that *Citizen of the Galaxy* is one of the first category – a good Heinlein. It is creative, likeable, possibly even inspiring. The hero, Thorby, is one of his better characters. A lot of things happen to him, but he manages to walk the fine line between comic book superhero and passive victim, while escaping the kind of brash obnoxiousness that sometimes afflicts Heinlein heroes. The minor characters are fairly well done too.

When Heinlein really gets it right, he is one of the best writers I know at creating fascinating settings, cultures, and societies. This is true in *Citizen of the Galaxy*. Like many of his novels, there's a political bent to the ending of the book, but he doesn't draw it out too much, and ends the book quickly but satisfyingly. I have no idea how he does it, but he even manages to make stock transactions fairly interesting.

The plot is pretty coherent with a nice arc to it. It does get a little uneven in places, devoting too much time to details and skipping too quickly over large sections of events the author is less interested in, but which could have been instrumental in really capturing the reader. Again, rambling plots and unevenness of pacing are some of Heinlein's biggest flaws when he's at his worst, but he manages to hold it together here.

I wouldn't rate this as high as my all-time fav Heinlein, *The Door into Summer*, but it's pretty near my second, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*. I recommend it, even for non-Heinlein-fans.

Mike (the Paladin) says

Somehow I had managed (over the decades) to miss this Heinlein novel. It like so many others is in many ways a masterpiece. We begin with a young boy who's a slave. His memories of who or what he was before his slavery are essentially nil. On the block he still shows some spirit, enough to get him cuffed.

But he doesn't sell. Being young, small and scrawny no one seems willing to put in the time and money it would take to train him up into a useful slave... No one buys him that is until a local beggar buys him.

We will follow this "person" through the years and as we do we'll find an interesting story concerning the Galaxy and the humans therein.

This is considered (by most anyway) to be one of Heinlein's youth or teen books. However the subject matter and the story telling are on an adult level and I don't think any science fiction fan who tries this one will be disappointed.

So, I've said what I have to say. I like it, I recommend it, enjoy.

César Bustíos says

"No puedes ver un pensamiento, no puedes medirlo, ni pesarlo, ni saborearlo... pero los pensamientos son las cosas más reales en la galaxia"

Esta es la segunda novela juvenil que leo de Heinlein después de El granjero de las estrellas. En conclusión, no me parece que es lo mejor que he leído del autor pero llega a ser entretenida al fin y al cabo. Es difícil superar la valla después de la obra maestra La luna es una cruel amante, de Estrella doble o Starship Troopers.

El tema principal en "Ciudadano de la galaxia" es la esclavitud y, como es de su estilo, no se queda corto en plasmar sus ideas sobre el tema a través de sus personajes.

A seguir con Heinlein. ¡Todavía queda mucho!

Beleth says

Aunque disfruté muchísimo con el primer tercio de la novela, el segundo se me hizo algo más pesado y el finalme ha dejado un sabor un tanto agri dulce porque me hubiera gustado saber alguna cosa más. En cualquier caso, he disfrutado mucho con la novela y entiendo porqué tiene el éxito que tiene :) lectura más que recomendable si os gusta la ciencia ficción y además con una cubierta impresionante ♥

3.5/5

Ann says

I've read a LOT of Heinlein, and this book doesn't read as much like a "typical" Heinlein book as others I've read. The main character is very serious --yes, he was a slave, but usually Heinlein books involve a certain witty dialogue that this character lacked.

That said, it was still an amazing book. We meet Thorby as he's being unloaded from a slave ship, and follow him through his life from there on. He's adopted by a begger/slave trade fighter in disguise, Baslim, who he calls Pop. From there, Thorby goes on to be adopted into the complicated "family" of a Free Trade ship, who's captain is fulfilling an oath to Baslim by adopting Thorby. We learn all about the Free Traders through an anthropologist on the ship who is studying them, and I found this break down of their culture very interesting. Thorby is then transferred into the hands of the military, as part of the Captain's oath to Baslim-- find out who Thorby really is.

Begin Thorby's stint serving in the military, gaining status because of his arms defense knowledge learned from the traders. Eventually we find out who he really is, and who Baslim really was. The rest of the book is

finished on Earth, where Thorby finally fulfills his destiny, and his legacy to Pop.

As this book was ending, I kept looking at the remaining pages and thinking "no WAY this is going to resolve itself in 10, 5, 2 pages!!". And I was right, it didn't. The end of the book left me wanting more, as I don't feel it fully wrapped up the story. Aside from this, Citizen Of The Galaxy was a great read!

Lyn says

Citizen of the Galaxy by Robert A. Heinlein was first published in 1957 and is generally considered one of his juvenile novels as Scribner's published it.

An astute reader of Heinlein, though, may consider that this was published just a year before Have Space Suit—Will Travel, the last of the Scribner's juveniles, in the same year as The Door Into Summer and only four years before Stranger in a Strange Land, so his transition from the more typical pure science bildungsroman of his earlier works and a more mature, serious work of the sixties had begun.

Without a doubt, Heinlein reached his zenith in the sixties with The Moon is a Harsh Mistress, Stranger in a Strange Land and Starship Troopers (actually published in 1959). Citizen of the Galaxy could be seen as an early embarkation towards these classics.

Telling the tale of Thorby and his journeys as a slave, a beggar, a trader, a soldier and finally as a tycoon, Heinlein uses the tale as a vehicle to explore many futuristic ideas still grounded in everyday life. Heinlein succeeds as he has in so many of his works, by creating an entertaining story while at the same time using the science fiction as an allegory to describe his libertarian ideals about a great many subjects such as family relationships and dynamics, freedom, work ethics, and loyalty.

Slavery is a central subject of the novel and Heinlein spends his time well with some provocative dialogue. At the end of the day, Heinlein is a great writer simply because he tells a good story. Give him that he provokes thought from his reader and that the story works well on more than one level, and Heinlein has once again delivered a good read.

Tina Willis says

It's a short read but the plot moves along very quickly with LOTS happening to the main character. I really liked this author's style of writing although a few short parts got a lil' high and mighty with the physics and engineering jargon. Maybe it made sense maybe it didn't. I wouldn't know. I liked the characters and couldn't stand the protagonist in a way that real people like him makes my stomach turn. It was a decent climax and the ending was fulfilling. It's the first time I have read this author and will be looking for other of his works.

Simon Mcleish says

Originally published on my blog here in August 1999.

At one stage of his career, Heinlein wrote a series of novels aimed at what is now termed the "young adult" market; *Citizen of the Galaxy* is one of the best of these. This is partly because it has something of a message yet is still entertaining escapism.

The moral is hardly a revolutionary one; it has been pretty generally accepted throughout the twentieth century. It can be summed up as "slavery is evil", and though mainly concerned with slavery as traditionally practised, it contains rather subtler references to extend the idea of slavery to cover any life determined by involuntary rules imposed from outside. The central character, Thorby, basically passes through several different sorts of 'slavery' - ownership by another, membership of a ritually constrained culture, the discipline imposed by the armed forces. (I am not sure that Heinlein would have considered this a form of slavery when enlistment is voluntary.)

The plot of the novel is fairly implausible. Thorby, a slave for as long as he can remember, is sold at the market on the planet Sargon VIII, part of a group of planets (the Imperium) where slavery is an important social institution. He is bought - at a knock down price - by an old beggar, Baslim, and adopted as his son. Baslim is not what he appears to be; he turns out to be a spy dedicated to eradicating slavery. When suspected by the Imperium he kills himself when capture is inevitable; but Thorby escapes with the help of the Free Traders Baslim had used as couriers for his messages.

The Free Traders are basically spacegoing merchant princes, who have subordinated their entire lives to ritual designed to maximise profit and make it possible for a large community to live in the restricted environment of a spaceship. When Thorby finds this new slavery constricting, he is able to join the armed forces of the Terran Hegemony, in which Baslim had been an important officer. The identity check performed on new recruits then causes the most implausible twist in the book: Thorby is actually Thor Rudbek, heir to one of Earth's biggest corporate fortunes, presumed dead after his parents' space yacht went missing when he was a baby.

The implausibility is hidden by skilful writing; the characters are believable' and this makes it one of Heinlein's best books.

Francis says

It just took me fifty years to finish this book.

Yes, it's true, I started this when I was about nine or ten. I had checked it out from the library and I was immediately immersed in the story of the young slave bought by a crippled beggar. But, the life of a ten year old got in the way. And, I had to play baseball, and I had to learn commerce, which I did by trading, marbles, baseball cards, stamps and comics and learned the painful but necessary lessons of childhood like never trade a puree for less than five cat-eyes, and never, ever trust a sixth grader.

My time ran out and I had to return the book or otherwise face the wrath of my father who would not tolerate money spent on expired library books, no matter how reasonable the fines. My family had a lot of pride and

paying fines was considered shameful.

Anyway I remembered the title and the author, but sadly the book was always checked out, whenever I returned to the library.

But then many years later (like now) in a nostalgic mood I found an e-book version and decided to finally finish what I had set out to do as a child.

Well, I still enjoyed the part about the young slave and the crippled beggar. But, when it got around to the end with Heinlein trying to explain corporate behavior to young juveniles while sermonizing on freedom and personal responsibility?

It got me to thinking that as a child I was lucky to have left off with only a memory of a young slave adopted by a wise and kindly beggar.

It was like having the good Heinlein without the bizarre parts.

Julie Davis says

My favorite Heinlein - listened to Grover Gardner's excellent narration. Having read and discussed Kim by Rudyard Kipling on SFFaudio I was expecting echoes of Kim to be in this book ... and they were. In a most creative way. It is Heinlein, after all.

Hannah says

This book was incredibly jarring. I felt like Robert Heinlein had a good idea...then he had another one...then he had another one. And since he liked all three of them, he decided "What the Hell!" and combined them. The book features a boy named Thorby. At the beginning of the book, he is sold as a slave to a beggar man. The beggar man (surprise) turns out to be more than he appears. He trains up Thorby and turns him into a super smart and clever beggar.

Then he is murdered. We don't know why. I'm serious. I finished the book and I don't know why he died. During the book they make it sound like it was part of a conspiracy, but then they just never get around to explaining what that is. Doesn't matter, Thorby stows away on a ship and part 2 of the book has begun!

Now he becomes one of the "People". Yes, that is their name. They are so busy being superior to everyone that no one ever realizes that they aren't very creative. They're amazed that Thorby is so smart and now he quickly moves up the ranks. However, the captain of the vessel feels guilty because Thorby is obviously destined for greatness. So he turns him over to the inter-galactic army. They discover that Thorby is a long lost heir from Earth and off we go to part 3!

After a lot of conspiracy and complicated jargon, Thorby discovers that part of his new empire is...wait for it...seriously...running the slave trade! How ironic. Thorby vows to clean it up and the book ends.

When I finished the last page, I literally checked to make sure that some of the book hadn't accidentally

gotten cut out. I couldn't believe it was such a weird ending.

Also, Thorby had no sexual interest in women. People kept trying to match make him up to girls and he kept getting uncomfortable. Not because he was gay, but because he kept acting like he was six. I just thought that was an odd trait. You'd think he'd at least have been interested in sex, but nothing.

However, it was an easy read and everyone ended up happy, except the bad guys, but they're not supposed to. So I guess I'll give it two stars.

Jim says

A rags to riches story that takes us across a good fraction of the universe & into several cultures. It's full of adventure & interesting characters. I really liked the description of the life of The People, 'free' spacers who travel the universe trading & willingly give up their individual freedom in a totalitarian society far more stringent than anything save perhaps Orwell's world of 1984 yet they're seemingly happy & well adjusted. It's one of RAH's juveniles, one of the best of a good bunch. Highly recommended in any format.

Dan says

The story of a slave boy who becomes free and grows up, making his way through the Galaxy.

This is a thoroughly enjoyable science fiction book.

There isn't much character development, which is a little lame, because it is a story of a young man growing up.

However, the Heinlein's galaxy provides an interesting allegory for many human institutions such as government, free trade, education, and slavery.

The anti-slavery argument presented in this novel is more than just a condemnation of slavery as "racist." Slavery in the galaxy is not racially based. Rather, the anti-slavery philosophy presented argues from an individualistic point of view; it argues that slavery is wrong because it is a violation of personal rights by the government and economic concerns.

Shawn Thrasher says

I liked this book less and less, the more I listened to it (be warned: the narrator's accents are occasionally awful) and after I finished it, the more I thought and read about it. There is a dusting of libertarian thought, not a philosophy I personally find very attractive - an anthropologist with a hideous southern accent - remember, I was listening to this - spouts some libertarian thought about mid-way through that made me scratch my head. There are some antiquated views on women (the spaceship captains were all men, the secretaries were all women - but this WAS 1957; that said, there were a couple of strong female characters, feisty old grandmother in particular (but aren't all old grandmothers in books feisty and "in charge" - that's

hardly a progressive idea). The book is also dusted with some military glorification; the ideal job seems to be the military, certainly not trading or business. Maybe if I'd read this when I was twelve, I would have enjoyed it more; at 46, I couldn't wait for it to end.

Stephen says

4.0 to 4.5 stars. My second favorite Heinlein novel after *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*. Good writing, excellent characters and an interesting plot. Recommended!!

Daniel Fox says

This is the first of Heinlein's books I've come across. An intriguing set up, but with far too little focus applied to the last 7 chapters. I felt as though I had an in depth experience with the first portion of the book, and suddenly was reading the sparknotes for the later half of the novel. The book was a jarring mass of implied plot lines and then unaddressed instances. At the end of the book the only conclusions I came away with were strictly based on my own guesses and speculation at how things 'might' have panned out. It drives me crazy when writers do this. I had the distinct impression that the end was a set up for further explication (it wouldn't have taken much to wrap stuff up). I was left thinking that the writer was out of things to say. Wouldn't recommend this book, though the characters are memorable and charming in a hazy, inconclusive sort of way.

Dirk Grobbelaar says

Highly regarded as one of the best of Heinlein's juveniles, *Citizen of the Galaxy* is indeed, for the most part, worthy of the praise that has been heaped upon it. I do have one qualm with this novel; it seems to lack a nemesis, or antagonist. There is quite a bit that happens – but to what end? There are no “bad guys” so it's a bit bland at times. The slavers, and slavery, are the closest the novel ever comes to real conflict, but that is handled in such a peripheral fashion that there is never any real sense of threat. In the end, the novel turns into a courtroom and boardroom drama. This is connected to the overlying plot, but the coincidences involved are a bit hard to swallow.

On the other hand, this novel succeeds fairly well as a bildungsroman and as a science fiction novel aimed at younger readers. There is almost no violence and the scientific expositions are fairly straightforward and interesting. There is a lot of allegory and Heinlein gets positively preachy about the importance of family and owning up to responsibility.

So where does that leave me? It isn't a *bad* novel by **any** definition, but it did leave me feeling a bit unsatisfied. Perhaps I've just become desensitized...

Angela Blount says

"Freedom is a hard habit to break."

Geared more toward a YA audience (before there was such a distinct genre categorizing of said audience), *Citizen of the Galaxy* centers around the theme of slavery, cultural development, and the meaning of freedom.

It follows a young boy named Thorby—an unbroken slave being sold on a distant planet—as he is purchased by an old beggar. This beggar is far more than he seems, and recognizes in Thorby not only his future potential, but the possibility that he's come from a free world and may still have family left alive somewhere.

Heinlein's prose is enthralling. It's clear he's exploring some deep and difficult topics, but he doesn't postulate any easy answers—which makes the premise all the more believable. The characterization comes through deft and strong, even in minor side characters. And Thorby himself, for all his training and cleverness, remains endearingly innocent to the point of obtuse. Readers can't help but want to see his story have a good ending. Or at least, a conclusive one.

The pacing is a bit sluggish at times, but the cultural nuances and politics that occupy much of these periods of slow-down are often intriguing enough to make up for it. And the worldbuilding is impressively rich, without being overwhelming.

Really good overall, but the ending was pretty loose and anti-climactic. I guess I was hoping for more of a showdown, and less of an acquiescence to a backseat role in humanity's speculatively never-ending struggle with human trafficking.
