

MENDING BEFORE ENDING: DYSTOPIAN NATURE CRIES INTO FUTURE

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Abstract

Brin feels that as human beings it is the paramount duty to preserve human life, to ensure the continuity of the human race. A nuclear holocaust does appear imminent. War is still a recognised social institution, and every war carries with it the potential of escalation with fatal consequences for the species. . Brin anticipates a posthuman race and projects a utopia of no war and perfect greenery. Science fiction and fantasy writers face a common challenge. He tries to present worlds that are radically and intriguingly different from today's world.

The writers of science fiction stories taken up for study imagine an alternate world which is an extrapolation of the past and the present to create a new world, as in the story “Reality Check” by Brin. Evolution has gone on and man too has evolved and is at the end of his race:

The last of their race died in the year 2174, with the failed last rejuvenation of Robin Chen. After that, no one born in the Twentieth Century remained alive on Reality Level Prime. Only we, their children, linger to endure the world they left us. A lush, green, placid world we call The Wasteland.(37)

Human extinction is the end of the human species. Various scenarios have been discussed in science and popular culture, projecting an alternate world. Humans are very widespread on the Earth, and live in communities which are capable of some kind of basic survival in isolation. Brin feels that as technology develops, there is a possibility that humans may be deliberately destroyed and hence warns to balance the possibility of technological advancement to resolve and thereby prevent potential extinction scenarios. The same scenario is observed by H.G.Wells in the Time Machine when the time traveler goes on time travel in far future. The Time Traveler flies into the future with a greater velocity than before. Although he is travelling thousands of years per second, he begins to notice day and night again. The sun grows larger and redder. Finally, it seems that the earth has stopped rotating, and is circling the dying sun as the moon used to circle the earth.

When he brings the machine to a stop, he finds himself on a sloping beach. Vegetation covers every surface facing the unmoving sun; the air is very thin. Behind him he sees a huge white butterfly in the distance, and slowly a red rock begins to move toward him. It turns out to be a giant crab. While he is staring at it, he feels something brush his neck. It is the antenna of a second giant crab, right next to him. He hurriedly skips a month into the future to escape, but

finds the beach covered with more crabs. He goes on, stopping every hundred years or so, watching the "old earth ebb away." Finally, thirty million years into the future, he comes to a stop. The air is bitter cold, and the only sign of life is lichen on the beach. Small flakes of snow float in the air. A large disc begins to eclipse the sun; the Time Traveler suspects that some inner planet, perhaps Mercury, which is now much closer to Earth, is passing in front of the sun. An incredible darkness and blackness follows. On the verge of fainting, he climbs back on the machine, and as he does he notices a black blob with tentacles flop over in the distance. It is the only evidence of animal life.

Brin, on the contrary, imagines a future where mankind as it is known is practically dead. Only on human, Robin Chen is alive, but is slowly sinking:

Do you remember now? The irony of Robin's last words before she died, bragging over the perfect ecosystem and decent society -- free of all disease and poverty -- that her kind created? How she called us "gods," jealous of our immortality, our instant access to all knowledge, our ability to cast thoughts far across the cosmos – our access to eternity? Oh, spare us the envy of ... a legacy of ennui, with nothing, nothing at all to do. (38)

Brin feels that as human beings it is the paramount duty to preserve human life, to ensure the continuity of the human race. A nuclear holocaust does appear imminent. War is still a recognised social institution, and every war carries with it the potential of escalation with fatal consequences for the species. In a world armed with weapons of mass destruction, the use of which might bring the whole of civilisation to an end, one cannot afford a polarised community, with its inherent threat of military confrontations. In this scientific era, a global equitable community, to which one belong as world citizens and only this must become a vital necessity. Robin wants a perfect ecosystem or a biological environment consisting of all the organisms living in a particular area where the physical components of the environment interact. She dreams of a perfect biological community and a soothing physical environment.

Perhaps others will find a factor absent from our extrapolations, letting them move on to new adventures -- but it won't be us. The Filter has us snared in its web of deification.(38)

Brin feels that there would still be a posthuman human who is roughly synonymous with the "cyborg" projected in her famous "A Cyborg Manifesto" by Donna Haraway. Her conception of the cyborg is an ironic take on traditional conceptions of the cyborg that inverts the traditional trope of the cyborg whose presence questions the salient line between humans and robots. Technology thus makes it clear that the humanist epistemological and ontological certainties that humans have always used to denote the difference between themselves as autonomous human subjects (agents) and the surrounding epiphenomena of objects (the sensory perceptions of our material surroundings) have gone into disarray due to the increased ambivalence of human existence under the influence of technology. As the landscape becomes re-defined through technology, and the cybernetic organism becomes an embodiment of technology, claiming human origins becomes a superfluous matter. The human body thus becomes susceptible to the structural impositions of a technology that re-arranges it by genetic enhancements, prosthetics, and neural interface. Brin anticipates a posthuman race and projects a utopia of no war and perfect greenery. Yet, the descendants of Robin characterize this new world as The Wasteland. Brin like all science fiction and fantasy writers faces a common challenge. He tries to present worlds that are radically and intriguingly different from today's world. Understanding the source

of inspiration of a creative writer or any artist has been one of the primary goals of literary critics, psychologists, and philosophers alike.

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