

# Introduction to “The Last Science Fiction Story”

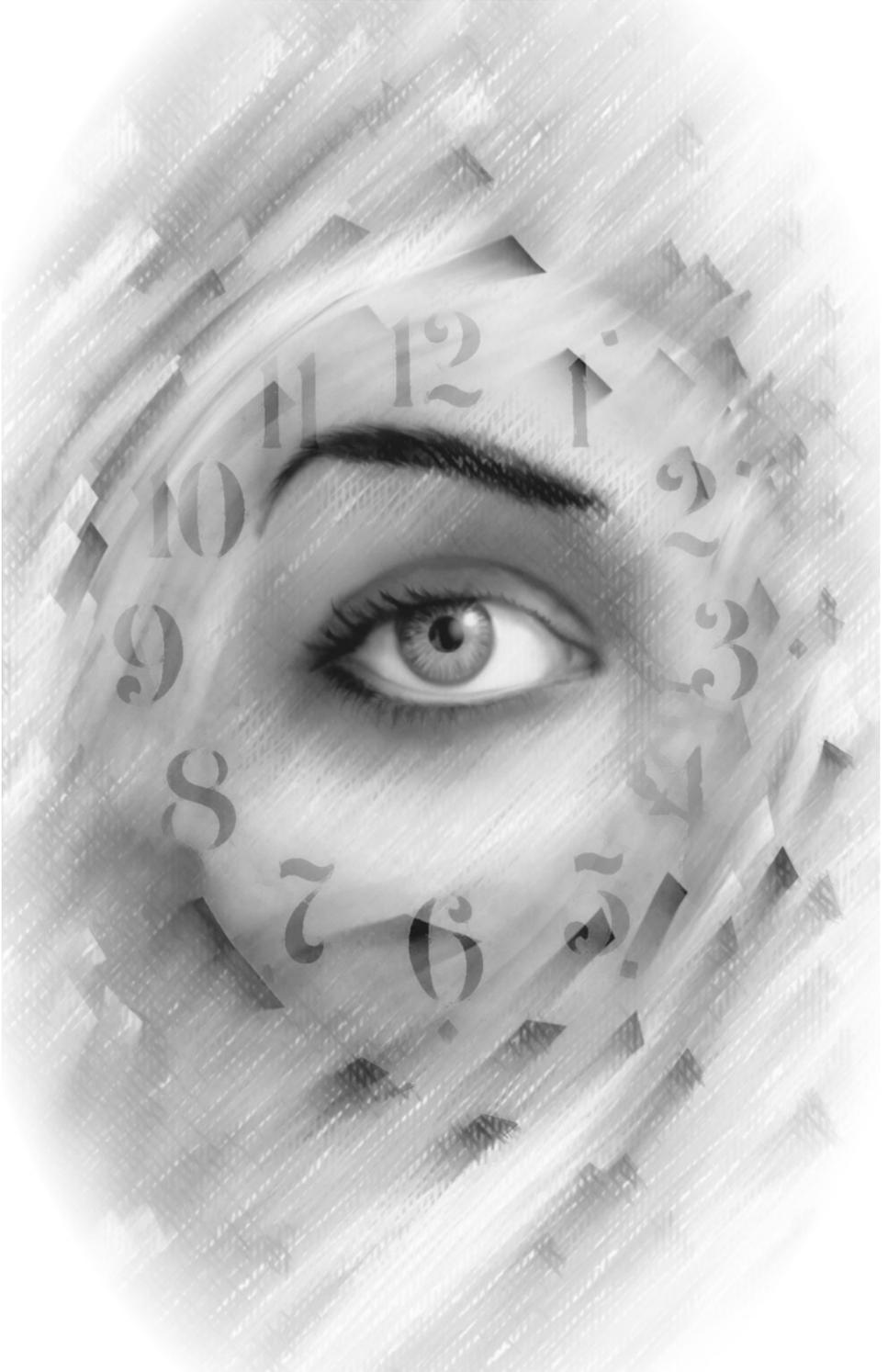
It's true, the breaking waves of the future – as we construct it inside our societal mind, inside our cultural frames - inundate the past and the future often happens now before the past, some of the eddies of the future, some of the backwaters of the past. But it helps to remember that nobody can surf all the waves, that eddies and backwaters, dragging us into the tide or sucking us back into the water like waves on a beach, hold all of us back or down in most domains while we see clearly only in a few selected others.

That's why the Masters can do what they do, breaking memory into bits.

We call geniuses those who surf two or three waves at a time and integrate their experiences in a true-life tale of a surf bum's life. That's not me. All I can do is document the end of time as it had been constructed in this little blip of historical fiction. If history is our myth, maybe this is a time of demythologizing. Maybe fiction is our myth, now, not history. And of course by “time” I don't mean time, whatever that might be. If exploring UFO phenomena for more than thirty years has taught me anything, it's that our lack of comprehension of what is happening is not about space. It's about time.

Yes. It's about time.

Isn't it?



## The Last Science Fiction Story

Science fiction is how a left-brain society once dreamed of the future.

The dreams became real over long periods of time. Leonardo daVinci dreamed of submersibles, flying machines, all kinds of crazy contraptions. One would guess that many of his contemporaries thought he was crazy. Think of a Neolithic genius trying to describe an automobile. The feedback loop from crazy to sane took a long time.

Humans are social animals. So civilization is a feedback machine. We build reality in the image of our dreams. As the project of civilization became distributed and more flattened, quicker feedback meant implementing more dreams in less time.

Several hundred years after daVinci we fly and dive.

Going to the moon was quicker.

*From the Earth to the Moon* by Jules Verne. A pretty good book, dreamed up in the eighteen sixties. A hundred years later Neil Armstrong was dancing in moon dust, delivering sound bites.

Aldous Huxley dreamed of genetic engineering and social conditioning in *Brave New World* in 1932. Sixty years later we were hard at it. Call it propaganda, call it spin, call it perception management. Today people are trained to live inside belief collectives and we are learning to engineer and modify genetic traits, those that exist and those we invent. Breeding for success by going to expensive schools

looks sloppy and haphazard compared to the precision of genetic engineering.

It took a hundred years to get to the moon. Sixty to create a brave new world.

Faster and faster the whirligig of time returns returns to dreamers who dream.

In the nineteen eighties, William Gibson defined cyberspace. Less than a decade later, we lived in it. Now we don't even notice, any more than we notice flying and diving and going to the moon and glowing fish and tomatoes that don't freeze.

First, the dream. Then, in shorter and shorter leaps or loops, came the reality.

Science fiction is how a left-brain society dreamed of the future.

Now that's done.

Dreams aren't over. The future is.

The future is past.

This is the last science fiction story ever.

The future went non-linear in 1973.

That was the year of the OPEC oil thing. Big companies like Shell were taken by surprise. They never saw it coming. They had to ask, why?

They had been thinking in straight lines. The present led to the future by one dotted line like a path through a courtyard. The task was to get there somehow from here. They called it management by objective and it seemed simple.

It was simple. Because there was only one future, the one we could extrapolate from what we knew was true.

Then we realized (a) we didn't know what was true and (b) we could not extrapolate bull-dippy.

So we invented scenario planning. Actually we borrowed it. It

was used in military circles for a long time. It was a methodology the time of which had come.

It works like this: we may not know where we are, but we know we're here. What are the likely theres out there? We fanned hands of possible futures like playing cards. Three or four hands were plenty. Pick one, any one.

We asked ourselves, what has to happen for this or that to happen?

As futures emerged faster and faster from rapidly receding presents, we had to ask that question again and again, faster and faster.

Yep, you're ahead of me: feedback loops. That's correct.

We needed more and more frequent feedback loops to map what was happening now compared to what had just happened. That helped us guess which futures were likely to emerge.

It did not go unnoticed that we were manipulating information a lot like computers. There were lots of "if-this-then-thats" with logic gates AND OR and NOT between them.

The way we were thinking was how our machines were thinking. We built the machines but then the machines built simulated worlds in our minds to match.

Now there's so much feedback it's too big to manage. No, that's not quite right. There are too many feedback loops for the old machinery to manage. We needed new machinery.

And we got it. Or should I said we'll get it? Both. We got it. And... we'll get it.

See, the problem is obvious, isn't it? As fast as we can dream or, more accurately, as fast as the human-machine symbiosis can dream, the thing is realized, if not in actual fact at least in a simulation. But the machine doesn't know the difference. And because we live inside the mind space made by the machine, we don't know the

difference either. The symbiot dreams and the dream becomes real. Immediately.

It can even become a thing of the past before it is manifest in the present.

By the time *The Matrix* was made, everybody understood. It wasn't science fiction, just a metaphorical adventure. *Blade Runner* screened like history. It had already happened. The symbiot invents memories at all levels from perception to conception. The symbiot dreams and immediately believes the dream. The dream is reality before we wake up. Or say that the dream takes place at a slower pace than the implications of the dream, fed into a faster part of the symbiot brain before the dream has ended. Like a spell-checker finishing words for us. We're still typing "spellche—" but "spell-checker" is already on the monitor.

Some of our best dreams like getting lost and finding our way home are over.

We used to be able to get lost. It was exciting. Will it get dark before we get home? Will they find us? Will some animal eat us?

GPS killed that dream. Dreams predicated on being lost from Homer's *Odyssey* to Joyce's *Ulysses* are dreams of the past. The space into which we are all looking now is inside the sphere. Everybody can see anything they want.

This is why the soft stuff – humanities, history, theology – has broken down.

Deconstruction took apart the humanities and keeps on reducing whatever we find in any text to a lower level. It never ends. There is nothing more fundamental to find that is also more real. Whatever "real" means.

History ended when we began inventing myths and narratives to contain them. Need to know and compartmentalization finished the job. Humans live in different niches, swimming in narrative

streams that do or don't connect with one another. We look at painted images on the gerbil tubes of our lives, thinking they're mirrors.

Anyway, how would anyone know? And who might that person be?

Theology? Don't make me laugh! Once we shake ourselves free of Greek or medieval models, it turns into modular fluid constructions that fly by like fractals animated by a fast processor. God is interactive, morphing like us.

OK, go back to that paragraph you just read beginning with GPS about being lost. "Lost" was a metaphor. For everything I am talking about. See? Shadows have vanished. Night-time is over. There is bright light everywhere and those of us who have lived at the poles know that makes us giddy.

Think of the moon without a terminator. Night meets bright with no liminal zone, no borderland or portal. The magic of twilight has vanished.

I could go on, but what's the point? You get it, right? The flat earth fills with streams of feedback overflowing their banks. As soon as we dream of the future, trying to write science fiction, feedback loops capture our dreams and deliver them to the recent past. By the time we finish, the future is past. The symbiot anticipates the ending and fills in the blanks, getting there before the author.

Reality, that is, the information we call "reality," happens so fast from so many directions, so many flows, that it factors back into the mindstream and makes reality one more dream. By the time we wake up to that fact, it's already morning.

Real dreams, the ones that happen out there beyond our ability to sense or know, come after the fact, not before, like before.

Throw in non-local consciousness, using event horizons of black holes to move around the galaxy, listen to our designer progeny

laughing at those who were merely born—what is there to write about? As fast as we put finger to keyboard or voice to conversion program, our visions are obsolete. Think up an original story, and guess what? You can find it in some anthology a decade or three ago. Or covert operations have already produced the miraculous shape-changing metals, remote viewers and Psi spies, multi-Manchurian candidates, anti-grav, you name it, they already made it and keep it hidden. Aliens have come and gone, everybody who looks at the evidence knows that, but so what? Contact is an empty set, a null set, as boring as UFOs on Mars, a couple of big orange beach balls bouncing down and delivering two little robots that crawl out and drill and transmit, squeaking like R2D2.

See what I mean? R2D2 in fact was squeaking like *them*. We just didn't know it yet.

Vanity of vanities, saith this writer. All is vanity. I am a silver-back, ancient of days, and I know: in my entire life, every idea I have had, including the five or six that were terrific, had already been thought. Every single one. Some were in books, some in blogs. Some were footnotes, some mentioned casually over coffee. Originality no longer exists. Creativity might be real but it's an action in a collective and nobody can claim credit for anything any more.

Including this so-called work of science fiction. That "by-line" is a joke. As if all this came from an "individual" with a boundary around its brain!

Besides, there's not one original idea in this entire story.

Some of you will insist this isn't a story. It's not fiction. It's real, you will say. In fact, of course, you already said it. This dream, you said, is a string of obvious facts.

But then, that's the point, isn't it? When I began this story, short as it is, it was fiction. Now, just short of the end, it is not only fact, it

is fact of the past. I can hear you saying, I know that. Everybody knows that.

That's how fast it happens.

Others, of course, think this *is* a fictional narrative but like most fiction, it's a dust devil on Mars whirling past fast. Now you think it, now you don't. I mean, think it through. What have I actually said? Nothing. Everything I mention—hard science like physics and biology, soft science like soc and psych, social roles, what it means to be human, alien visitation, time dilation – all of the themes of twenty-first century science fiction have already come and gone. This is the first century in history that lasted only five years. I don't think it's fair even to call it a century anymore.

So let's agree on one thing: Everything is over. The feedback machine is faster than we are. Individuals don't exist. Dreams come after reality, now, not before.

A left brain civilization has gone so far to the left we're right. The circle is complete. The fractal is self-similar at all levels. Goedel said it best: we can't even say we're here, doing this, except from some other place. But when we go there, there we are, all over again. There we all are, stuck once more. Inside a circle turned into a moebius strip.

There's just no escaping the bad news.

So do whatever you like with the rest of the story. Take the narrative anywhere you want. I don't care. Take the "I" or "we" or whatever it is, take it away or take it apart. The "I" telling this story is as insubstantial as smoke. So is the "we." So, dear reader, are "you."

It's all mist or haze or vapor or fog – they're all words from the built-in thesaurus anyhow, we all build with the same bricks—so watch the smoke that we were once upon a time drift out of the

window and disperse in the wind, a colloidal mist that seems to vanish in the empty air but is there forever.

That's what happened to science fiction.

This is where or should I say when you found out.

And that, I'm afraid, is the end of the story.