

BlindSight: Novel Review

Andrew Nassif

Introduction: The book starts out with a kid who got half of his brain removed due to his epilepsies. At the time he was 8, an accident happened in which he severely injured other kids who was bullying his friend on the playground. One of the kids said he is, "A Fucking Zombie, dead", and his own friend told him he is not the same anymore. It took the author 3 decades to know what that means. Throughout the book the author shows little to know empathy, hence the term blindsight.

Genre: The year is 2085: Intergalactic portals, transhumanism, demonology, vampires, AI systems, Zero Gravity Quantum Acceleration, and traveling light years are all considered normal at the time. They seem to be living in some dark utopia and the character's father seems to have more empathy, and sympathy than his son, even considering his misfortuned life. The book is fairly speculative to say the least and has many philosophical and scientific reference throughout the book in a science fiction and dark humor sort of way.

Creatures and Mythological References: It mentions aliens and a species called fireflies. The book talks about probes. It has reference to some higher intelligence that is controlling them. The book in itself even compares that to the moves of politicians. The way society looks at the time is as if you were walking in a terrifying, dark sci-fi fantasy in which you can't escape.

Occult References: Higher Alien lifeforms, intergalactic beings, transformational vampires, demon genealogy, and transhumanism are all found in the book. These themes are usually something you would expect to find by a scientist. You can compare Theseus and Quantanitical AI as to that of an Alien mothership.

The little Empathy: When the narrator of the book sees: dead bodies, human experimentation, and even a murderous robot, he has no empathy to the world around him or to his surroundings, even towards his, "Dead mother", who he sees as a psychological manipulator who doesn't care about him as a son. The narrator is basically like that of an outcast.

Vampires: A type of human species accidentally discovered from the genes of a severely autistic child. They are virtually identical to modern humans but different in terms of biochemical, neurochemical, and muscular tissue. Little other than their genealogy is known about them, and they predated humans in terms of extinctions. They are what Darwin would have called a type of Sub-Human species.

The References and Notes in the Book: Due to the confusing philosophical, scientific, humanistic, and technical terminology of the book; The author literally tells you some of the symbology or references in the book in the mission to convince you, “He isn’t crazy”. He of course confuses us even more, while at the same time gives a good laugh.

Sleight of Mind Reference: The author talks about human sensory being, “easy to hack”, stating that we simply ignore things that don’t reflect our worldview. We can easily have different actions, motives, and beliefs based on where we are and our own environmental conditions. We can even have a different perception of reality than others (or at least be convinced that way). This reference is shown multiple times in the book from the prologue to experiences of Electromagnetic Stimulation.

Are we there yet?: The book references teleportation and hibernation to the studies of Relativistic fields, magnetic fields, and interdimensional parallel universe shown by researchers at MIT. This furthermore gives out scientific and confusing technical references. The author however, does though through an odd, yet hilarious way.

The Game Board: This is another scientific reference to infrared emitters found by Yumiko Oasa who from the references we can tell is an Astrophysics Researcher. Some are very skeptical to the existence of this scientific reportings, but the authors seems to be in great amazement of it.

Humanoid Aliens, Wiring, Consciousness: This is a reference to the transhumanism movement and the further development of AI in our society. The author has a profound statement that if transhumanism becomes a reality, then are we really conscious or is the conscious fake? He doesn’t answer this question but provides insight through a philosophical view, thus saying his mother Helen is “dead in reality”.

The chapter Rorschach: The narrator viewing everything through complex algorithms and at different levels has different interpretations of his surroundings is in itself another scientific reference. I think it was even called Rorschach in reference to the Rorschach test which is that black ink psychological test on how you interpret those annoying blobs. Lots of humans would interpret it in different ways, thus a different perception of reality.

The Charybdis Chapter: This is actually an allegorical mythological reference. Charybdis in greek mythology was thought to be the daughter of Poseidon who caused wormholes and ships to sink. Science tells us that it is just a large rock next to a sink hole. I believe the author called the chapter Charybdis in order to compare the myth to that of intergalactic space wholes.

Characters:

1. First there is the narrator who is Siri Keeton (The guy with little empathy), though he may not have so much empathy, he is actually a leading hero and protagonist of the story who leads his crew in star-trek like missions.
2. Amanda Bates: Contract specialist who controls an army of robots that seem to be that of cyborgs or android like creatures
3. Isaac Szpindel: A medical doctor who is in love with Michelle
 - a. They are involved in some romantic relationship which is the reason why she may seem shy throughout the novel
 - i. (Romeo and Juliet meets Sci-Fi ;)
4. Jukka Sarasti: A vampire with high intelligence, a freighting personality (but not a villain), he is basically the guy who's just there to be a badass in this Sci-Fi Novel Fantasy
5. The gang (Apparently four different personalities through a single woman's perception):
 - a. Includes Michelle (Shy girl and love interest for Szpindel), Susan James (seems like a motherly personality), Sascha (A hostile nagging lady towards Siri), and Cruncher (A man whose basically an IT Guy)
6. People on earth/family:
 - a. Robert Paglino- Childhood best friend who was mentioned in the prologue
 - b. Chelsea- Siri's ex who Siri still seems somewhat attached to, in fact he says in page 294, "I really wanted to talk to her, I just couldn't find an algorithm that fits".

It is like when a guy is basically mentally unprepared to continue talking to a girl and awkwardly feels like walking away.

- c. Helen and Jim- Siri's parents. Helen seems like she isn't that much in love or really cares about Jim. Jim seems to deal with it, acknowledging that she is his wife. Besides that Jim is an intergalactic colonel.

Themes of Transhumanism:

1. A type of virtual reality or uploading of the brain to the internet
2. Partially human cyborgs (Basically humanoid robots)
3. AI characters and database labs
4. The conscious of a transhumanist creature

Themes of Scientology:

1. The vampire energy, evolved human species, social darwinism
2. Higher Alien beings, lifeforms, and greater species
3. A Utopian society

Themes of Futurism and Sci-Fi:

1. Intergalactic Portals
2. Parallel Universes
3. Zero Gravity and Antigravity Propulsion
4. Space exploration that basically defies the laws of physics

Themes of Philosophy or Psychology:

1. Where are we?
 - a. Our subconscious and our interpretation of our surroundings
2. What is our place in the universe?
 - a. Social Contract Theory
3. Intelligence, emotion, empathy, and our own psychology that defines us as humans

Conclusion: First off, I wanted to say I bought this book off of Amazon. Can't believe it was available online for free after I read it. Secondly, as confusing as this book may seem, the author does have some profound thoughts and questions. He asks us to look how we view science and the reality we live in. He also fantasizes about the dark implications of technology

and the evolution of us as humans. Overall you can see him use some fancy works here and there such as Zero-G, Quantum Teleportation, State of Being, etc. but the book isn't designed to be confusing. It isn't designed to be hilarious. It is designed to make you think of different perceptions of reality, the way science is heading, as well as how we can interpret things differently in the society we live in. Overall though, it was entertaining. Would I read it again? Probably not, it gave me such a headache, but still a profound read.

Sources:

1. *Book Being Referenced*: Watts, Peter. *Blindsight*. New York: Tor, 2006. Print.
2. Other sources:
 - a. Istvan, Zoltan. *The Transhumanist Wager*. S.I.: Futurity Imagine Media LLC, 2013. Print.
 - b. Hubbard, L. Ron. *Scientology: Dianetics the Evolution of a Science*. East Grinstead, Sussex, England: Hubbard College of Scientology, 1966. Print.
 - c. Homer, and W. Lucas Tr. Collins. *The Iliad - the Odessy, By W. Lucas Collins*. Edinburgh, Blackwood: n.p., 1870. Print.
 - d. Dice, Mark. *The Resistance Manifesto*. San Diego, CA: Resistance, 2008. Print.