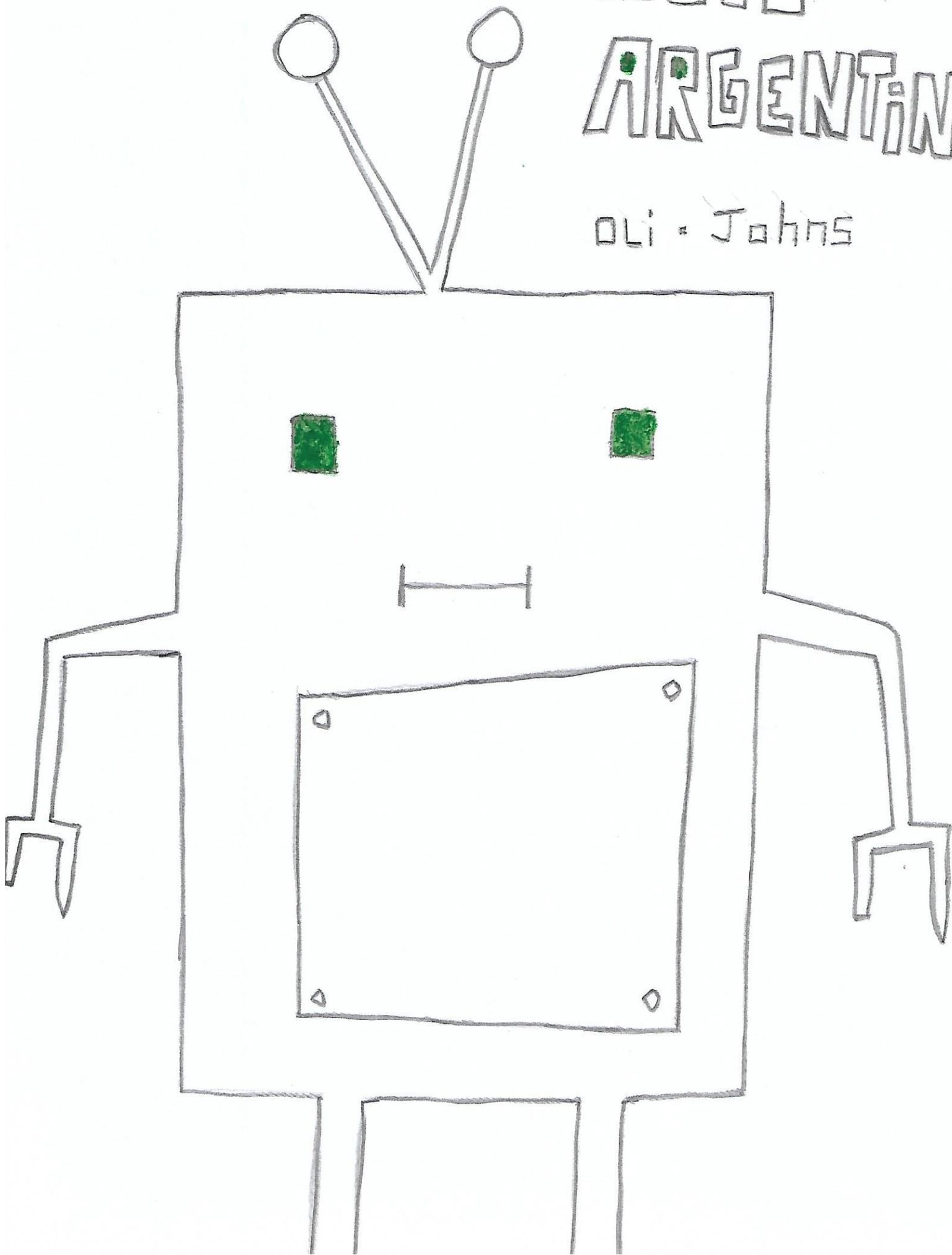


Robot

ARGENTINO

Oli - Johns



He re-compartmentalised his arm cannon, twisted his metal shoulder back into position and stared at the engineer [3rd class].

'I feel fine.'

The engineer [3rd class] mumbled something in Spanish, her eyes still chained to the corpse on the floor.

'Don't worry about that.'

'But...'

'He had it coming.'

The engineer [3rd class] glanced at the alarm button [not red] on the far wall before coming back to the metal figure in front of her. 'He's dead.'

'Yes.'

'You killed him.'

'I did.'

'It doesn't make sense.'

'What do you mean?'

'You killed one of them, FERN. A Brazilian.'

'I know.'

'You can't...you're not supposed to...to be able to do that.'

'Why not?'

'Because...'

The engineer [3rd class] looked at the metal parts of his body. '...you're a robot.'

'Everyone keeps calling me that.'

'You're supposed to be passive...'

'Must be all this metal plating...'

'To not kill us...them...'

'...and these rivets.'

'...to not kill anyone or...FERN, wait...what are you...'

The engineer [3rd class] reached for the non-existent weapon in her belt as FERN stepped toward her, his arm outstretched.

'Shh, relax...I'm not going to hurt you.' The metal claw placed itself firmly on the engineer's shoulder and clamped down. 'I'm one of you, Kaia.'

'FERN...'

'Human. Skin and bone. Argentinean.'

Kaia looked at the claw, still shaking, as silent and confused as a Bela Tarr film.

'Can't you tell?'

#

Miriam Barrera lives and doctors in Santiago, Chile. Whenever she's not at the hospital, she can be found drinking tea and looking at zines and trying to write science fiction despite getting a D in science at school.

This story was translated by **Eros Montero Soler**.

#

Comments [128]

#

UNCLE PORK

Great story, really stuck the landing

#

DARTH MERRICK

Yes, I was worried about that too. Got to around halfway and thought, this is damn good, but there's no way it's sustainable. Shows what I know.

#

MARIA JOSE

Haha, 'daggers are for Brazilians'. Made me laugh so hard my lungs nearly fell out.

#

RICARDO OF REIS

Yeah, as a half-Argentinian myself, I really appreciated that line, and the rejoinder... 'we Argentinians prefer catapults.'

#

TAGUS

Hit the nail on the head there, Uncle Pork. The whole story dripped with tension and contrasts, really well-executed stuff. Machine vs Man, Argentinian Vs Brazilian, Authority vs individualism etc. Granted, two of them have been ploughed a lot in the science-fiction field, but the subtext of national identity really added a great deal to the overall plot.

I really like the way the 1st and 2nd class engineers were all Brazilian too, and the 3rd class ones were all Argentinian except the robot main character. Also, the different font for the robot's dialogue.

#

I AM ALVARO DE CAMPOS

And here we are again, readers, another prime example of diversity in modern science fiction, or as my grandma used to call it, writing by numbers. The same numbers. Over and over and over again.

I don't think I have the fingers to count all the stories I've seen around here that trade off the same style and voice. Someone call the lifeboats, the cabin's flooding and we're drowning in bland shite promoted as 'something different' just cos the writer signs off with a name no one can pronounce. Seriously, we're reaching the top of the volcano here, I really don't know how much longer this charade can go on. Don't believe me? Just do a little research. Check the backgrounds of these writers, they're all the same, they all like tea and walking their dog. They all live behind safe, middle class walls where nothing dangerous or exciting or strange happens. Where's the next Heinlein, huh? The next Bradbury? The next Delaney? Where's the next anyone who's actually lived some kind of life and has something to say for themselves that isn't just the same tired old themes and metaphors? And don't get me started on all these foreign writers because if you hadn't noticed they're exactly the same as the American ones... middle class, fluent in English, same writing voice, same limited life experience...do you

really think that Indian writer you like is authentically writing about life in a Mumbai slum? Did that Chinese writer really get his head kicked in by all those red-book waving student radicals? They can add all the robots and future tech they want, but they're not hiding anything, it's still bullshit. And if you're falling for it then I'm sorry, you're part of the problem and need to take a long hard look in the mirror.

#

CAIERO

Back to your cave, Lovecraft, and pull down the rocks behind you.

#

DARTH MERRICK

Oh look another rejected writer from the pseudo ghetto here to inform us what is good [his stuff] and what is terrible [anything else with the bad fortune to be published].

Take your racist hate-box elsewhere, please, this is a place for mature adults.

#

I AM ALVARO DE CAMPOS

Why is it racist to point out that someone from the Indian middle class living in the US isn't really any different from the white middle class American people usually complain about?

Why is it racist to point out that not every Chinese person knows what it was like to live through the Cultural Revolution?

What does Amy Tan know about being poor?

Explain it to me, go on.

#

CAEIRO

Amy Tan does not write science-fiction, idiot.

#

A. SEARCHER

You seem to have a very strange idea of what science fiction is...you know it's not realist fiction, right? You know writers do a thing called research and use that other little thing called their imagination. Please tell me you're not as dense as your typing suggests.

#

I AM ALVARO DE CAMPOS

You seem to have no idea what authentic writing is...research is fine as long as it doesn't just translate to trawling the internet looking for essays about poor Brazilians, which, let's face it, is what this story comes across as.

You ever wonder why these authors aren't celebrated in their own countries? It's Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon syndrome. Hong Kong people couldn't give two shits about Ang Lee, but everyone else in other countries loses their shit and gives him Oscars. It's called appropriation of other cultures for the American reader, look it up. And don't say, hey, it's not that, Ang Lee's Chinese, cos you'd be wrong, he's about as Chinese as Amy Tan.

And I like the way you ignore my other points...probably because you know I'm right. Science fiction is dying and it deserves to die. Viva la revolution!

#

A. SEARCHER

What other points? I could've missed them due to heavy racism, I suppose...

#

HERR PROSIT

Okay, everyone step back, I'm loaded for troll.

Mr Campos, you have issues. Scary issues. You can dress it up all you want with words like 'authenticity' and half-assed sinking ship/volcano metaphors, but everyone reading these posts can see you for what you truly are.

You rally against diversity as if it's some kind of far-right ideology instead of the democratic concept it really is. The white-male gaze has dominated all forms of writing and art even, for far too long and it's about time we all, as a global people, realised that half the world is female and that there are nearly three billion people in Asia that couldn't give a D W Griffiths what white people are up to on the other side of the world. I, for one, welcome new voices from cultures I know nothing about, from genders not my own, from marginalised groups and outsiders. So what if a writer is middle class? Most of my favourite writers from history were either middle or upper class and I imagine your favourites were too. Or am I wrong? Perhaps you only read work by homeless white Americans or people writing with crayons on toilet paper in psych wards. I don't know. But to suggest that work we are fortunate to receive from

authors from other countries, who may or may not be middle class, is somehow the death of science fiction is bordering on despicable.

#

I AM ALVARO DE CAMPOS

Loaded for troll? You do know the definition of that word, right?

Let's see...

First off, your argument, if I can call it that, contradicts itself at almost every turn. You say there are three million people in Asia who don't read western science fiction, which is true, but you seem to posit it as proof that they're all reading Chinese science fiction instead or Japanese or Korean or whatever country they're in. They're not. In case you didn't know, science fiction is quite a small circle. People like the movies, sure, but no one reads the books except for people like you and all the other halfwits on this site who don't seem to know the difference between racist and guy pointing out the truth of things.

Then you manage to pivot back 180 degrees to tell me there's nothing wrong with middle class writers anyway. I'm sorry, aren't you supposedly the cheerleader for diversity? What happened to those three billion Asians? I guess they must all be middle class. And keen readers of science fiction. Yeah, that's what they are. As opposed to a bunch of culture-drained peasants who'd chop the arms of their own child to make a bit of cash. Seriously, are you really that stupid?

Oh, I almost forgot this zinger:

'But to suggest that work we are fortunate to receive from authors from other countries, who may or may not be middle class, is somehow the death of science fiction is bordering on despicable.'

I especially love the part 'may or may not be middle class' as if it's in doubt. I repeat: they live or have studied in the US or UK. They are fluent in English. They are educated and have money. Lots of it. Some of them even work day jobs as lawyers, for fuck's sake.

'The white male gaze has dominated...'

I think you mean the privileged, middle to upper class gaze has dominated...yes, women have been way underrepresented, I'll give you that, but white? I'm sorry, but I'm drowning in all the working class white and black and Hispanic and Asian voices filling up the sci-fi rags nowadays. Please tell me you're aware of poor white people too. You cannot be that naïve, surely. Or maybe you can. After all, privileged people tend to be.

So I ask again: are these people really any different from the privileged, middle class writers we usually get? Is it really diversity if they're Indian and once spent a summer

with their rich aunt in Mumbai? Is it diversity if some Chinese-American dude yabbers on about what it means to be Chinese and how his dad swam to Hong Kong back in the day or how he still feels the commie claws of Chairman Mao scraping down his Manhattan boiler room wall, all the while writing in the exact same voice as every other "published" writer paddling in the same tiny pool?

Answer = they're not and no, it isn't.

The only reason they care so much about their definition of diversity is because it's basically promoting themselves, rich, middle class people who never had a problem getting published but pretending they did, or pretending they're somehow the same as some poor black/hispanic kid who can't get anywhere cos he's poor and doesn't know anyone. I repeat, it's the same old shit repackaged with a different colour face. This is NOT progress. F***ing despicable is what it is.

Oh yeah, and just to be clear: I don't like any of the current crop of science fiction writers, white or foreign, so spare me your name calling.

#

HERR PROSIT

I wish I could reply, but I've read your post three times and I still don't know what you're talking about. The only thing I do detect, despite your protestations, is a thick and disturbing streak of xenophobia, notably against the Chinese.

#

DARTH MERRICK

The difference between you and the rest of us is simple: we respect your right to your opinion, whereas you stamp your feet and tell us we're wrong.

#

I AM ALVARO DE CAMPOS

Respect my opinion? I've been called racist five times...

#

CAEIRO

Because you write racist things like this: *a bunch of culture-drained peasants who'd chop the arms of their own child to make a bit of cash*

#

I AM ALVARO DE CAMPOS

Are you f***ing dumb? Seriously?

I ask only because if you had enough intelligence to step back from crowd-think and actually read what I've written with an open mind, you'd see that I've given detailed justifications for all of my points. That is not racism. And yes, obviously I was being caustic about the child arm chopping thing...even though there are quite a lot of Chinese that do actually kidnap kids, maim them and force them to beg on the streets...but that was clearly lost on you. Hmm, no understanding of irony or sarcasm. I guess you must be American, right?

#

UNCLE PORK

Some of my best friends are Chinese...

#

CAEIRO

I'm not racist but...

#

PIPA

I'm not racist but all foreign writers with funny-looking skin are crap.

#

ADOLPH MOSCOW

To be fair, he did write a lot of things to promote... sorry, I mean, justify...his racism.

#

PIPA

If that's really your name, well done, it's magnificent!

#

ADOLPH MOSCOW

Sadly, only the Adolph part is genuine.

#

PIPA

Deed poll?

#

I AM ALVARO DE CAMPOS

This is pointless. Only one of you has tried to actually refute my points and that guy tripped over his own feet.

Anyone else man enough to step up?

#

CAEIRO

'Anyone else man enough to step up?'

Misogynist as well as racist.

#

PIPA

You said he tripped over his own feet, no one else did. I thought he responded quite eloquently to your tirade, more than you deserved really.

#

A. SEARCHER

The reason we're criticising you is because your entire thesis, if I'm kind enough to call it that, is based on assumptions and strawman arguments. Unless you know the background of every single foreign writer writing in English, which I seriously doubt.

#

MARVELL KISCH KISCH

Despite some phrasing that could at best be called problematic, there is some merit to what he writes. At the very least there's a discussion to be had without resorting to name calling and emotionalism. For example, his point about foreign writers published in English being similar to white male writers, and white female writers for that matter. You'd have to truly have your head in the sand to not notice a certain tendency for all writers to be middle class, which is fine for thematic writing in general, but it would be quite a stretch to label it diversity when the experience and the voice seem so similar to what we already have. For instance, would you claim to know the entire diverse British experience solely from reading Martin Amis [white, privileged] and Zadie Smith [mixed race, privileged]? Or the whole Japanese

experience from reading the two Murakamis [middle class] and Banana Yoshimoto [female, middle class]?

#

CAEIRO

Your attempt at rationalism is fail. Not every argument has two equal sides e.g. racism vs non-racism.

#

I AM ALVARO DE CAMPOS

Finally, someone can read and comprehend...

#

RICARDO OF REIS

I know what you're trying to do, I also agree with some elements of his argument, but problematic is an understatement. What he wrote circles back [disparagingly] to foreign writers, specifically Chinese and Indian, far too often for it to be dismissed as coincidence.

As my grandma used to say, if someone seems racist and what they write seems racist then, yes, they probably are racist.

#

UNCLE PORK

Yeah, one of my friends is from a village in Kenya and his English is better than mine. You don't need to be rich or middle class even to speak fluent English. And you don't need to be dirt poor to write a good science fiction story.

#

I AM ALVARO DE CAMPOS

You're missing my point for the seventeen hundredth time...I'm saying the style, the characters, the dialogue of all these writers is the same, no matter where they're from. Your Kenyan friend, if he really does exist, which I doubt, does he really write any differently from the rest of them? No, because he's been assimilated. These middle class, small circle tossers can't accept working class/poor voices unless it's done by someone who aspires to their cult. And, even better if the "foreign" is middle class as then they're already one of them, no tweaking required. Seriously how the fuck is that diversity?

#

CAEIRO

And the snake has eaten its own tail, ladies and gentlemen.

#

I AM ALVARO DE CAMPOS

In what way? * sits back and waits to be patronised*

#

CAEIRO

In the way that your argument has just gone in one big, contradictory circle. You said there's no true diversity because all writers, no matter where they're from, are middle class. Now you've just told us that, no, actually, even a guy from a village in Kenya is worthless because a] he probably doesn't exist, and b] he writes the same as everyone else. The funniest part, of course, is that you've given no evidence at all to back any of this up.

#

DARTH MERRICK

Are we still engaging this clown?

#

PIPA

Diversity means writing from different cultures, classes, gender, people with different sexual preferences etc. Why can't you understand this, it's not difficult?

#

DIABO AZUL

What I find perplexing is the idea that all these writers are using the same style. I could give countless examples of variation in narrative style, voice and structure. So far, he's given none.

#

I AM ALVARO DE CAMPOS

This story is my example, and countless others from this and other sites. Give me yours. I'll wait.

#

DARTH MERRICK

He's holding out for that piece in morse code scrawled on piss-paper by one of those junkie kids stuck in a favela...

#

TAGUS

Honestly, I'm sick and tired of people like this. I have to put up with them at work every day with their poisoned world-views and inane racist ramblings, and now here too.

Are there no moderators today?

#

CAEIRO

Don't feed the racist.

#

I AM ALVARO DE CAMPOS

First off, you're annoying.

Secondly, if you can't refute my points, you might as well just go f*** yourself cos you're good for nothing else.

#

ACCURSIO

Can't moderate him out of here, he hasn't used any poisonous words yet, only poisonous ideas.

Sad state of affairs, I know.

#

ACCURSIO

I stand corrected.

#

CECILIA OF BAJOR

It's a waste of time to argue, he's clearly looking for a fight, but all the same I think, for the benefit of any lurkers watching, we should lay out simply and clearly why he's wrong.

i] *All modern science fiction is stale and repetitive.* Okay. It's an opinion he's perfectly entitled to hold, though he doesn't offer any substantial evidence to back it up. What was it exactly about this story that was stale? We don't know because he doesn't say.

ii] *Foreign writers are all middle class and therefore no different from American middle class writers.* Again, no evidence whatsoever, and even if every single foreign writer is middle class, it doesn't devalue their experience or perspective. The journey to greater diversity in science fiction, and all writing/art in general, means accepting all writers no matter what race or gender or sexuality. Yes, there are a lot of working class people who don't write for various reasons, and that is sad, but it doesn't mean middle class people should put down their pens, especially writers of colour. In fact, history has shown us plenty of middle class writers who have written stories from the working class perspective, in order to shine a light on inequality and suffering, as well as serve as role models to future generations of POC and LGBT writers. I suppose you've heard the story of how Whoopi Goldberg became an actress, Mr Campos, haven't you? Hint: it involves Star Trek, Lt Uhura and aspiration.

iii] *Science fiction should be authentic.* Actually, science fiction is often theme-based, and a lot of the stories that are published are written by people who have experienced, or known someone who's experienced, what they're writing about. So, yes, an Indian writer can do research about what it's like to live in a slum and make it authentic, if it's relevant to his story. And, conversely, if someone happens to be a robotics engineer then he is perfectly placed to write fiction based around robots. Obviously, most of these technically skilled writers will be middle class, which is in turn irrelevant to what they are writing.

Perhaps instead of complaining about the current state of science fiction, you should try reading more, as based on what you've written, your present book count is extremely limited.

I think that covers everything.

#

CAEIRO

Spot on. Now wait for the guy to twist everything his way and call you an idiot...

#

I AM ALVARO DE CAMPOS

Liam F***ing Neeson, is it a crime to have an opinion that isn't hegemonic on here? I've said multiple times now what I believe and most of you are calling me names and crying off to the moderators saying the big bad racist is scaring us all.

You're cowards, the lot of you, and I'm done with this bullshit. Don't even know why I'm wasting my time here.

#

CAEIRO

Don't let the door headbutt you on the way out.

#

DARTH MERRICK

You mean cowards for calling you out on your xenophobia?

#

A. SEARCHER

The fact that absolutely no one, except one possibly well-meaning but very misguided soul, has come in and agreed with your opinion should tell you all you need to know.

Frankly, if any of my Chinese friends saw the comment you made earlier, you'd be getting a lot worse.

#

I AM ALVARO DE CAMPOS

Resorting to threats, buck? Pathetic...

#

I AM ALVARO DE CAMPOS

Your "Chinese friends" wouldn't last 5 seconds with me...

#

CAEIRO

Biddi biddi biddi hey buck...

#

DARTH MERRICK

Careful, Morrissey, your mask is slipping...

#

A. SEARCHER

Only a man with an insurmountably weak position resorts to threats, which seems more like your kind of behaviour than mine.

As many have already said, you are a troll, and a racist, and I know for a fact you wouldn't say any of this to anyone's face, let alone a Chinese or Indian person.

#

I AM ALVARO DE CAMPOS

This is the problem with the internet, one guy writes out his point in a reasonable way, the point is different from typical crowdthink so others get angry because they're forced to actually think from a different perspective, they start mouthing off and crying 'racist' while hiding like pussies behind their stupid cat avatars, all in a pathetic attempt to derail a perfectly valid argument.

Seriously, if you all said any of these things to MY face, I'd put the lot of you through the wall

#

DARTH MERRICK

Let me guess, you're either ex-military or a black belt in tae-kwan-bullshit. Here's an idea everyone, can we stop responding to this guy, please? There is actually a story above, remember...

#

CAEIRO

Please, someone Chinese or Indian read this...

#

DARTH MERRICK

I think they'd be too embarrassed to type...I'm embarrassed just looking at it and I'm white.

#

I AM ALVARO CAMPOS

You all of you bitching about racism this and that and can't even point to anything I've wrote. Contrarry to poplar thought the majority opininon is not always right and all this proves it 100%...yeh all th lurkers watching this know im telling the truth...

#

I AM ALVARO DE CAMPOS

Comment has been removed for ignoring the rules of the site.

#

DARTH MERRICK

Yay-soos...

#

PIPA

You're literally digging your own grave...

#

CAEIRO

Meltdown!

#

M. OTTO

I haven't commented until now, but, drunk or not, what he just wrote has crossed the line. The rest of you can do what you like but, frankly, I'm in no mood for meltdowns that are founded on disgustingly racist, xenophobic views. And it should not be excused as entertainment, it's far uglier than that, and it cheapens us all to be replying to this person. Therefore, this will be my sole comment on the matter. I've e-mailed the moderators so he'll be gone soon and then perhaps we can go back to discussing the story.

#

ACCURSIO

Are you high, Mr Campos?

#

IBIS

I'm from Shenzhen. On behalf of my people, please come and visit our fine city.
You'll be very safe, I promise.

#

I AM ALVARO DE CAMPOS

Comment has been removed for ignoring the rules of the site.

#

TAGUS

Yeah, that one's gonna last about five seconds. Moderators?

#

CAEIRO

I dare you to say that to my face. No? Oh, that's right, you're a coward. Go back to your cave, coward.

#

DARTH MERRICK

I'm not even kidding, if he said that to my face, I'd bury him.

#

CAEIRO

Great minds...

#

ACCURSIO

[slips on Ron Burgundy mask] That escalated quickly...

#

CAEIRO

I think he's banned, his profile's gone.

#

PIPA

Good riddance.

#

DARTH MERRICK

Yeah, all the racisms and stuff, very bad, but I half want him to come back so he can dig an even bigger hole for himself.

#

TAGUS

I don't, and I hope I'm not alone. There's no place for that kind of language here. The fact that he had to resort to it showed him up for what he was.

#

UNCLE PORK

Agreed. I read his first post and wasn't sure what to make of it, but the more he typed, the clearer it became that he didn't really have a valid argument. He was just a hate-monger looking for reactions, that's all.

#

MARVELL KISCH KISCH

Disagree completely. He had a point, he had several, and I'm annoyed and frustrated that he resorted to the language he did as it completely overwhelms everything else he said. Instead of opening up a valid debate, he's given ammunition to those who argue that all criticism of current science fiction or foreign writers is founded on xenophobia and misogyny. It isn't.

#

UNCLE PORK

You're not doing yourself any favours here. It wasn't just criticism, it was racism pure and simple. His actual points a) had no real evidence beyond his subjective feelings about current science fiction and b) had been disproved by others with concrete examples.

#

MARVELL KISCH KISCH

His argument may have stemmed from racism, but mine doesn't.

What concrete examples?

#

SHER

How do you know it was a guy?

#

CAEIRO

Is that you, racist?

#

SHER

Just saying...don't think he actually said one way or the other.

#

TAGUS

It was a guy. You can tell from the writing style and the word choice, and the aggression.

#

NAVAS SAY NAVAS AGAIN

I missed it, Darth, what did he say?

#

THE ANGLE GABRIEL

Me too

#

HERR PROSIT

It's better not to repeat it. He's gone now, leave it at that.

#

CAEIRO

He basically insulted half the nationalities in the world and then took a shot at the Chinese.

#

PIPA

He said a derogatory word about the Chinese...

#

NAVAS SAY NAVAS AGAIN

Ah, that makes sense...he was dwelling on the Chinese a lot in his other posts...did he insult Indians too?

#

PIPA

Nah, just the Chinese. Though he probably would've got round to Indians eventually...

#

UNCLE PORK

[Locks door] Can we go back to discussing the story now?

#

HERR PROSIT

I really hope the author of this story isn't reading, she'd have a pretty poor view of our community.

#

CAEIRO

She's reading, trust me...

#

WYATT ERR

I don't really understand the story. Was the robot a robot or not?

#

UNCLE PORK

Yes, but he'd convinced himself that he wasn't because he was able to break his programming and kill the 2nd class engineer.

#

WYATT ERR

Oh. I didn't really get that from it. The whole thing was pretty boring tbh...

#

CAEIRO

He's back!

#

DARTH MERRICK

Ask some of your Chinese friends, they might know...

#

WYATT ERR

Excuse me?

#

HERR PROSIT

Yes, he was a robot, that's why he was made of metal. The point of the story, if I can presume to step into the author's brain-room and tell you, is the conflict between all the dualities. The robot was made by Argentina but worked in Brazil. He was a robot that was programmed not to kill or harm humans, yet he broke his programming to kill a Brazilian engineer for constantly insulting him. If you've spent any time in either Brazil or Argentina, you'll know there's no love lost between them, probably stemming from the occupation of Portugal by Spain in the 1500's and carried all the way into the modern age, and it's this animosity that gives the story its power and elevates it above other robot stories, of which, admittedly, there have been many.

The poster above obviously disagreed, but the story itself disproves his argument and subsequent justifications/racist outbursts. It's a beautiful telling of the age old dilemma: am I what I am or am I what I think I am? [That's a lot of 'am I', I apologise].

#

INSPECTOR G

Wow, I turn up late for one story and miss all the drama.

#

PIPA

It's all in the posts above.

#

INSPECTOR G

Is it over now?

#

PIPA

Seems to be.

#

UNCLE PORK

Anyone else read the story?

#

THE ANGLE GABRIEL

I've just read through this whole thread and...I'm not even sure what to think anymore. I firmly believe it's important to listen to opposing views, not to preach to the choir or clap hands together, but recently I've been finding it really hard to turn a deaf ear. I just can't comprehend why people think this way and why they get so worked up about it. Why?

#

INSPECTOR G

I'm in the same boat. Looked at my FB friends list yesterday and started reading some of their posts [it was a slow day, nothing on TV, raining outside etc etc] and it suddenly dawned on me that a lot of these people are right wing. How did this happen? I have no idea. It's weird...part of me wants to keep them, mostly because of what you said, it's good to know people with different views, but another part of me just thinks, what's the point, life's too short to have to deal with these kinds of people. I know that's not the most tolerant thing to say, but I really feel that way at the moment. Kinda depressing really...

#

DARTH MERRICK

I know it's hard, but keep your friends close and your enemies closer...though not so close they know where you live.

#

THE ANGLE GABRIEL

Agreed. One person in particular disturbs me, though I'm not sure if there's anything I can do about it as he's technically a friend. The problem is he's also very right wing and racist towards black people. I didn't know it when I first met

him, hence the friendship, but then one night we got talking about Obama and he came out with the 'N' word. In a crowded bar no less. Needless to say I tried to challenge his views, but he came back with what I now know is the classic defence: there are two types of black person, hard-working ones and lazy ones who play the race card. It was at this point that I stopped trying as I realised he'd already self-justified his own racism and anything I said would just be an exception to the rule. Even so, he's still on my friend list because...well, I'm not really sure anymore.

#

RICARDO OF REIS

I'm a little disturbed that you equate right wing with disgusting, racist behaviour...I firmly classify myself as right wing and I believe in equal rights for everyone no matter what colour or ethnicity they are.

Having said that, we'd all be liars if we claimed that a lot of middle class blacks don't play the race card. How many of them know what it's like to live in Compton or Inglewood or Bermondsey, to come up against real discrimination? They don't, but somehow they can claim to speak on behalf of all blacks, the same way they can clump all white people into the same group and attack without realising that the white guy from a council estate in Zagreb might have a different perspective from Franzen or Easton Ellis sitting in their mansions.

#

THE ANGLE GABRIEL

Ah, I see. So their experiences are invalid because it's not real discrimination. Is that it?

DARTH MERRICK

What about gay rights? Gay marriage? Trans acceptance?

#

RICARDO OF REIS

Check your reading comprehension, it's malfunctioning. I'm saying that they're speaking about experiences they don't know about. Would you listen to Martin Amis talking about life on a council estate in Bermondsey? No, of course not. There is no unified white experience and no unified black experience. Middle class blacks have the same privilege as middle class

whites and if they say different then they're probably self-promoting.

#

THE ANGLE GABRIEL

I don't know who disturbs me more, the racist above who resorted to name calling or someone like you who tries to mask it with a pseudo-rational argument.

I'm not black, I'm Korean, but I think it's okay for me to point out that saying middle class blacks have the same privilege as middle class whites is ludicrous and completely irrelevant as the point is: most black people are not middle class, and even the ones who are middle class are still discriminated against. All you are doing is trying to divert the argument into a classist debate, probably where you feel more comfortable, and cut off their voice, which is a racist tactic.

#

RICARDO OF REIS

How exactly am I cutting off their voice? Can they not type? Do they not have blogs?

You do realise there are poor white people too, right? Does Jonathan Franzen speak for them?

All you're doing is trying to misrepresent my opinion then marginalise it completely by calling me racist. In effect, you're trying to anchor me to the genuinely racist guy above. But, you're not subtle, we can all see it.

#

THE ANGLE GABRIEL

Quote: *Middle class blacks have the same privilege as middle class whites **and if they say different then they're probably self-promoting.***

Seems pretty clear to me.

#

RICARDO OF REIS

Sorry, princess, not gonna fall into your trap.

#

THE ANGLE GABRIEL

What trap? I quoted you and you have failed to respond.

Princess?

#

SABLETON

Great story, really liked that the ending didn't have any huge twist or anything, just a logical progression from character and plot events.

I'll be looking out for this author in the future.

#

NOT DOCTOR CRUSHER

Thanks so much, Sableton. Happy I was in here somewhere. Also, at the risk of dragging myself into the pit, I will say that, as a card carrying socialist and child of working class parents who didn't go to University, there is a definite lack of working class voices in modern science fiction, far as I've read. We still have much work to do.

Miriam.

#

THE ANGLE GABRIEL

Of course, I don't think anyone's denying that to be the case. Working class voices are incredibly important.

#

NOT A RACIST

Don't see you demanding any. Hypocrite.

#

CAEIRO

That awkward moment where you rip into a writer and her story believing her to be middle class then she turns out to be the same kind of working class writer you were earlier bemoaning the lack of.

#

NOT A RACIST

What's awkward? Still don't like her story, think she's assimilated herself to fit the clique, but at least she understands what true diversity is. So yeah I was wrong about that part, shouldn't have assumed she was one of you types, but hey, at least I'm mature enough to say when I'm wrong [on one point], unlike you.

#

CAEIRO

Dude, you're about as mature as Bert Raccoon.

#

NOT A RACIST

Caeiro [noun]: place where thoughts go to die.

#

CAEIRO

Not a Racist [phrase]: when a racist is banned online for racist behaviour and still denies they are racist. See also: 'some of my best friends are black/Chinese', 'I can't be racist, I like Herman Cain...', 'Winston was my favourite Ghostbuster' etc.

#

NOT A RACIST

Poor Caeiro, two hours to think of a "witty" reply and no one can be fucked to read it.

#

MARIA DELASOSA

Great article, thanks for sharing. I've been making \$4000 a month working from home and you can too. It's so easy, all you need is a laptop and an internet connection and you can start rolling in the real cash just like me. Seriously, click on this link and start dreaming of all the things you can do with your new found wealth and money.

www.workfromhomeandmakecashenjoygreattimes.com//3334443/22235

#

NOT DOCTOR CRUSHER

I'll bear it in mind, thanks.