

Rejuvenation of Human Life with Technology and Religions Faith in Neal Stephenson's "Seveneves"

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Abstract: In the modern competitive era, Science and Technology reached its zenith in terms of development. Among the literary world, countries across globe are producing highly innovative works to sustain in the stiff competition. In the fast pacing race, America is going far ahead than any other nation in the world in promoting many scientific researches and technological advancements in all the fields. Likewise, the author Neal Stephenson, being a scientist contributes his most imaginative work "Seveneves" to the field of literature. He presents this novel as a futuristic hope for the people to have awareness about the nature. Then he showed many unrealistic ideas that are presented in the novel, a new form of human race with super power was born as a decant of the human race. The main idea of the whole novel is that human being should protect the nature and environment otherwise they have to face natural disasters, like, unseasonal rain, hot weather, melting of ice glaciers, etc. The main theme in the novel is the major scientific development of genetic modifications. This novel gives idea to the people on how to survive in the celestial bodies after the destruction of the whole universe. This research paper concentrates on the trauma that happens during the moon blast and the effect of science and technology for the development of the human race.

Keywords: environment, Genetic Engineering, human race, imagination, moon blast, nature.

Abbreviation: SE= Seveneves

Introduction

As every human being has doubt that, what will happen to the people, when the Universe explodes. Stephenson gives an idea to build a living system in the space for humans. Neal Stephenson is born on October 31, 1959 in Fort Meade, Maryland. He is from a family of Engineer and Scientist. His father is a professor of Electrical Engineering and his mother works as a Biochemistry Professor. Major works of Stephenson are: *The Big U* (1984) *The Eco-Thriller* (1988), *Snow Crash* (1992), *The Diamond Age* (1995), *Cryptonomicon* (1999), *The Cobweb* (1996), *Quick Silver* (2003), *The Confusion* (2004), *The System of the World* (2004), *Anathem* (2008), *The Mongoliad* (2010), *Reamde* (2011) and *Seveneves* (2015). All his works dealt with scientific approaches. Some of his awards are Hugo Award for the book *The Diamond Age*, Locus Award for the book *Anathem*, Ignotus Award for the book *Snow Crash*, and Prometheus Award for the book *Seveneves*.

The book *Seveneves* has been divided into three parts. The first part is about the exploration of moon into seven parts. That is noticed by the scientist all over the world. The moon is changing its colour into red. The sky appears white and there forms a white sky, which causes white rain. In this novel Peter Starling explains about the white sky

We are going to witness an event that I am calling as white sky. It'll happen over hours or days. The system of discrete planetoids that we can see up there now is going to grind itself up into a vast number of much smaller fragments. They are

going to turn into a white cloud in the sky, and that cloud is going to spread out (SV 30)

Then the second part of the novel starts with the beginning of hard rain. The hard rain hits the earth for more than two thousand years. Many of the human beings lose their life in the world. Scientists made a precaution before the destruction of the earth; they collect the sample human sperm and safe guard it in the genetic laboratory of the space station. A huge group of people are assembled in place to carry them to the space station, because to protect them from the destruction. But due to the hard rain they lost their life. The second part concluded with the fact that everyone lost their life. The third part starts with a new utopian world after five thousand year from the destruction of the earth. A species of human being is currently the inhabitant of the space station. Thus, the novel ends with a positive note that human being are turned to their normal life after a severe calamity faced by them.

Major Themes in Science Fiction Novels

The genre of science fiction is enriched with the combo writers, H.G. Wells and Jules Verne. They conveyed their own social message to the world in 1800. Most of the science fiction novels are dealt with the utopian or dystopian society. The utopian society refers to a place with suitable amenities and people can spend their life pleasantly. The dystopian society is just opposite of the utopian society, which means a land that is not fit for human living. In the science fiction novels, the imaginative power of the writer reaches its zenith. Ursula K. LeGuin expresses her view about science fiction in her novel '*The Language of the Night*,' "The science fiction writer is supposed to take a trend or phenomenon of the here and now, purify and intensify it for dramatic effect, and extended it into the future" (62). Unpredictable incidence may happen such destruction of earth, alien invasion etc. The novel *Seveneves* contains both the themes of utopian and dystopian society. Neal Stephenson may also be considered as a foreteller as he clings a bell and alert the human race to preserve the nature, otherwise they will face their fate in the name of destruction.

Explicit Development of Science and Technology

Biblical allusion

A man with lot of religious beliefs will lead his life genuinely and peacefully. Likewise, the novel 'Seveneves' also dealt with the religious fact in the first part of the book. As a staunch believer in Christianity, he used a lot of allusions from the Bible. Many incidents from the novel can be correlated with the Bible. Scientists start to get ideas to build a cloud ark to safe guard some people from the destruction. Likewise, the Christ advises Noah to build an ark. He builds an ark to save everyone from the devastation. "God said to Noah: The end of all flesh is come before me, the earth is filled with iniquity through them, and I will destroy them with the earth" (13:6). The way in which, Christ guide Noah to build the ark,

Make thee an ark of timber planks: thou shalt make little rooms in the ark, and thou shalt pitch it within and without. (14:6). And thus, shalt thou make it. The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits: the breadth of it fifty cubits and the height of it thirty cubits. (15:6)

Thou shalt make a window in the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish the top of it: and the door of the ark thou shalt set in side: with lower, middle chambers and third stories shalt thou make it. (16:6)

People started to build the cloud ark which helps to carry human beings to the space. Before hard rain, the collected tissues and DNAs from the people are stored in the genetic laboratory in the space. It is a tradition among the Christianity to have the Old Testament and the New Testament of the Bible. There is a discussion between the scientist that, who are the persons to be sent to the space station. They started the process of casting of lots which, asking for gods wish. This incident also happens in the New Testament of the Bible in the book of Matthew "And after they had crucified him. They divide his garments, casting of lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet,

saying: they divided my garments among them; and upon my vesture they cast lots" (27: 35).

As a Christian, Stephenson believes in the religious truth. That is why the author correlates the incidents with that happens in the Bible. He imposes the religious beliefs into the minds of the readers. Then a positive hope in the novel sparks that god will help everyone in a right time. Only 11 females reach the space station to lend their life.

A New Generation begins with the Genetic Modification

Parthenogenesis: The third part starts after five thousand years after the destruction of the earth. The women Lusie, Dinah, Ivy, Aida, Tekla, Camila, Moria and Julia had their baby through Parthenogenesis process. These women are considered as "Seveneves" according to the title. Parthenogenesis is a Latin word which means virgin. In this process a woman can bear her child without the intercourse with man. This process will become success for certain person and it depends upon the physical and mental ability of the woman. The formation of new civilization through the process of epigenetic shift exposes the utilization of science at the hands of humans. Stephenson presents extra-ordinary power of human being when it mingles with science. Many samples of DNA are gathered from the earth and saved for this process. There are various steps taken to increase the population in that place. The DNA are implanted into their womb which results in the rise of population to a three million in five years in the terraform. Even though, human beings suffered a lot in destruction, they have lost several things.

Parthenogenesis is distinct from asexual reproduction since it involves in the production of egg cells, whereas in asexual reproduction new individuals are formed. Women gives birth to the human is considered as equal to mother Mary. The word parthenogenesis means virgin birth. In the new testament of Bible, the chapter of The Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ, according to St. Mathew: "Behold a virgin shall be with child, and bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (23:1).

Techno culture:

The major concept in the novel is Techno culture. Techno culture generally examines the growth of the technology in the present world and the issues that happened thorough the technology. The role of "Techno culture" in the postmodern society and its reflection occupies a prominent characteristic in this post-modern novel. The work depicts human life and its interaction between technology and culture. Techno culture of cyberspace is an emerging issue at present. According to Leila Green's book *Techno Culture: From Alphabet to Cyberpunk* she explains about techno culture as "one of the critical issues raised by Techno culture is that of community and what we mean by society and connectedness when we have choices which include the digital and the analogue, the virtual and the real" (26). This narrative technique is often used by the science fiction writers. Techno culture revolves around the circulation of culture through the tools of communication by using technologies such as computer, mobile phone and other electronic gadgets.

The novel opens with the destruction of moon. This shattering is identified by the scientists through the telescope and has been informed to everyone through the mobile phone. The news spread all over the world and every one urges to watch the information through television. Then scientists decide to build cloud ark to carry the people to the space. DNAs are kept safe in the space station. By using the technology, they promote the cultural aspects of the living place for the people who survive in the earth.

Name formation of the novel:

In every aspect of the novel we can feel the religious touch of Stephenson. Even the word "Seveneves" may be derived from the seven deadly sins of Christopher Marlowe's Dr. Faustus. These seven deadly sins are the inner thought of Faustus. Likewise, the Seveneves in this novel have a similar connection as well as contradictions with the seven sins. The main revolutionary person Julia is noted for her pride and

dictatorship. So, she is compared with the first deadly sin 'Pride' in Dr. Faustus. Here is the line said by pride

I am pride: I disdain to have any parents. I am like to Ovid's flea,
I can creep into every corner of a wench; sometimes like a periwig,
I sit upon her brow; or like fan or feathers, I kiss her lips, Indeed
I do- what do I not! (44)

The title of the novel portrays a biblical term "Seveneves." The word Eve is referred to Eve, the first woman created by god to be a companion in the paradise to Adam in the Bible. "And Adam called the name of his wife Eve: because she was the mother of all the living" (Mathew 20:3). Stephenson has retained only women as the sole survivors who rejuvenate the human population after the destruction. These seven eves too have been revolutionary in their thoughts of Eve. They are the reasons for the evolution of mankind after the terrible apocalypse, they are the reason for the retaining of the ancient tradition, culture, civilization as well as their qualities of patronizing diversities.

Conclusion:

A proverb that relates with the novel is man proposes God disposes. In this novel nature is considered as God. Many samples of plants and rare species of DNA are reproduced in the space terraform and they produce the eco-friendly surrounding in the space. Then the space is changed into a fertile land for the human civilization to lead their life peacefully. John Stuart Mill in his article "Nature" expresses his idea about nature:

The word 'nature' in one sense, it means all the powers existing in either the outer or the inner world and everything which takes place by means of those powers. In another sense, it means, not everything which happens, but only what takes place without agency, or without the voluntary and intentional agency, of man. This distinction is far from exhausting the ambiguities of the word; but it is key to most of those on which important consequences depend. (21)

In spite of being a science fiction, there are resemblances to the extracts from the images of the Bible and Christianity. The incidents like the casting of lots, building of cloud ark in the space, the name Seveneves (presented itself in the title), and the virgin gave birth to the seven women. To sum up, the novel balances the idea of religious beliefs and the immense growth of the science and technology.

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