

Sawyer's bio/chem war of annihilation

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 10 Oct 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3480>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

Michael Andre-Driussi — 10 Oct 2002, 20:35

Rostrum wrote, quoting Roy:

Regarding the Asimov story:

I haven't read the story but, based on mantis's synopsis, that girl did the right thing. Lest that robot "become like one of us". <g>

That may be the crux of our disagreement. Killing the robot might have been "right" in the sense of "looking out for our interests," possibly even "right" in the sense that a time traveller murdering the baby Hitler would be "right" (although, if I recall the story correctly, I don't think Susan has enough information to be sure a robot uprising would mean war and death for humans), but it is not "right" because robots as Man's "creation" could never have the moral status of humans.

I myself have not read the story, either. But Robert J. Sawyer, who wrote the article, seems to be saying (in the entire article) that the competition between robots and humans is an evolutionary one which must eventually lead to a war of annihilation, or the more merciful option of slavery (of humans by robots). How much of this is to promote his own brand of product, I do not know. How much he may be, in fact, distorting the source texts to make his case, I do not know (but I do relish his unusual interpretation of Kubrick's "2001: A Space Odyssey").

(Yeah, yeah, we can trivialize such meat vs. metal megadeath match by invoking the Terminator series of movies, trotting out our Ahnold impersonations, etc. But it has been in genre since long before those movies and seems to be still going on.)

To that end, I found the revelation of Dr. Calvin's elimination of Elvex to be quite shocking, based upon what I remembered of Asimov's Robot stories. (Then again, I find second-hand details of what Asimov did to expand his Foundation series beyond the original trilogy even more shocking and disturbing.)

And Roy seems to understand this Sawyer platform quite well.

=mantis=