Journal of Posthuman Studies, accepted March 2026

The penalty of Adams: On false symmetry between transhumanism and antihumanism

Milan M. Ćirković
Astronomical Observatory of Belgrade, Volgina 7,
11000 Belgrade, Serbia
e-mail: mcirkovic@aob.rs

More Everything Forever: AI Overlords, Space Empires, and Silicon Valley's Crusade to Control the Fate of Humanity by Adam Becker
Published: April 2025
Publisher: Basic Books, New York
ISBN-13: 9781541619593
URL: https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/adam-becker/more-everything-forever/9781541619593/

The Revolt Against Humanity: Imagining a Future Without Us by Adam Kirsch
Published: January 2023
Publisher: Columbia Global Reports, New York
ISBN: 9781735913766
URL: https://globalreports.columbia.edu/books/the-revolt-against-humanity/

> Here feel we not the penalty of Adam,
> The seasons' difference...
>
> *As You Like It*, Act **2**, scene 1

1. Introduction: two Adams and the cultural malaise

When William Shakespeare wrote *As You Like It* some time about 1599 CE, in the midst of what came to be known as the Little Ice Age in Europe, it sounded like pure fantasy to have clement

weather all year long; which gives the Arcadian forest of Arden, where the exiled Duke Senior spends his days, such a fairy-tale quality. Sharp and for our ancestors often deadly seasonal breaks were – according to the tradition poignantly described in Milton's Paradise Lost – thus ascribed to the original sin, "the penalty of Adam". The utopian motive of having Earth's climate control such as to provide South Californian weather from pole to pole has appeared quite early in the history of ideas, as Thomas Moynihan masterfully shows in his historical study of existential risks. Such varying personalities like Mary Shelley, Benoit de Maillet, Erasmus Darwin and Charles Fourier speculated about geoengineering feats which would, for instance, reduce or eliminate Earth's rotational axis tilt, so causing a (nearly) seasonless weather all over the globe. Why would one consider this outcome desirable in the first place? Well, at least it would make climate more equitable, ironically enough, and some locales would get a paradise-like weather forever.

This is indicative in light of the present-day debates on topics such as "environmental justice": the very same people who allege their love of and respect for nature not only fail to understand – and often denigrate – the STEM fields like planetary science and evolutionary theory which explain relevant natural processes, but also fail to understand that their very sentiments are artifacts of an Enlightenment-based civilization. To give a stock example, a typical English rural landscape, so beloved by the likes of Wordsworth or Tolkien is, in fact, entirely an artifact, created out of sickly bogs and swamps by human technological ingenuity a long time ago. And there's more: as noticed as early as 1848 by the great liberal historian Thomas Babington Macaulay, the very notion of enjoying nature is itself an artifact:

> *It was not till roads had been cut out of the rocks, till bridges had been flung over the courses of the rivulets, till inns had succeeded to dens of robbers, till there was as little danger of being slain or plundered in the wildest defile of Badenoch or Lochaber as in Cornhill, that strangers could be enchanted by the blue dimples of the lakes and by the rainbows which overhung the waterfalls, and could derive a solemn pleasure even from the clouds and tempests which lowered on the mountain tops.*

As Macaulay understood, enjoying nature – and even being *enchanted* by it – is a function of the historical process, unfolding in both physical and social time. A rainbow above the waterfall might be there for a million years (or some other incomprehensible interval of *deep time*), but only a much smaller subset of that interval corresponds to coexistence of the rainbow and potential observers and *yet smaller* subset of *that* corresponds to human conscious appreciation of the rainbow's beauty. To reach that last item, it is necessary to have technology, in broad sense of the word, and social order ("little danger of being slain") hence it is necessary to have a material culture and build a civilization.

Climate in both of its cultural modes – *climate change* and *climate control* – does feature prominently in what is perhaps the deepest dichotomy of contemporary culture: the rift

between, *very* broadly speaking, antihumanism and transhumanism.[1] It is finely encapsulated in distinct viewpoints of two interesting recent books written, coincidentally but not irrelevantly, by two Californians named Adam: *The Revolt Against Humanity: Imagining a Future Without Us* by the poet and cultural critic Adam Kirsch (2023) and *More Everything Forever: AI Overlords, Space Empires, and Silicon Valley's Crusade to Control the Fate of Humanity* by science journalist with physics background Adam Becker (2025).[2]

Although dealing with the same underlying themes, the books are very different in approach, style, tone and, ultimately, cultural relevance. Kirsch's book is a thin but complex study of the two related intellectual movements (characterizing them as schools of thought would be inadequately narrow, since to a large degree both have quite *practical* aspects to them) which he dubs the Anthropocene antihumanism on one side and transhumanism on the other. His symmetry hypothesis – and some of its bizarre practical consequences – is nevertheless misguided, as I shall try to show in the rest of this essay; but his errors are errors of a sincere investigator and a seeker for deeper truth.

In contrast, Becker's offering is a highly polemical, in many places hostile and strongly ideologically charged pamphlet directed at multiple future-oriented targets, most of which are rather comfortably embedded in a wider transhumanist framework. Some of the items Becker subjects to "a ruthless criticism of everything existing" (which is an unsubtle hint as to his ideological standpoint) are rather marginal in this context, like cryptocurrencies or hair-splitting differences between various consequentialist factions in moral philosophy. The strongest criticism is directed at the three pillars of future-oriented thinking: (1) existential risk studies, (2) the role of technology in any sociocultural environment, and (3) human space settlement. While the latter two could, in a cartoonish simplification, be regarded as somewhat optional, this emphatically does not apply to the existential risk studies. On a purely logical level, no future whatsoever, bright or grim, desirable or not from either Becker's or Kirsch's or Ćirković's or anybody else's viewpoints, is possible without successful management of X-risks. This trivial insight does not derail Becker from savagely attacking the existential risk studies. As we shall see, this ideological charge transforms into a strange anti-anti-extinction position rooted in much of the leftist Western academia, thus offering a bizarre, crypto-Hegelian synthesis to Kirsch's thesis and antithesis.

Still, both books share the key property which has, unfortunately, been little noted so far *within* transhumanist and future-positive circles: in specific detail and in the general spirit, these books demonstrate that the days of old, bioconservative resistance exemplified by thinkers such as Leon Kass or Francis Fukuyama are mostly over, and that the new wave of cultural enmity toward transhumanist ideas is grounded in a wholly different worldview. Not

[1] In the course of this essay, I shall use the term "transhumanism" in its maximally inclusive meaning: as any form of thought or action which assumes that the human condition is not final and fixed, but can be rationally improved through knowledge-based problem solving.

[2] Californians by birth (Kirsch) or residence/ideological vocation (Becker).

that they are necessarily *better* grounded than their ideological predecessors; if anything, this new kind of rearguard is more logically and epistemologically confused, as well as more prone to media manipulations and political abuse. This does not make it less dangerous. On the contrary, the fact that its rise follows on the wave of renewed social-constructivist ("DEI") attacks on science still rolling through the Western academia and in particular its social science and humanities departments, makes academic and cultural acceptance of transhumanist ideas and ethos more fraught with danger than at any previous time.[3] I shall return to this crucial lesson in the concluding section.

2. Kirsch: Conflict of visions and instability of the "third way"

The structure of *The Revolt Against Humanity* is deceptively simple: first three chapters are devoted to one movement (which the author calls the Anthropocene antihumanism), subsequent two chapters to the other (transhumanism), with the final sixth chapter tries to synthesize the discussion and find his own, "third" way between Scylla and Charybdis of our future challenges. According to Kirsch, a poet and literary critic, the continued existence of human species is threatened by the two contemporary strands of thought. The "Anthropocene crowd" gave birth to a particularly radical wing which views human dominance over and exploitation of nature as an existential catastrophe in the making. For them, climate change requires the removal of humans through, for example, policies that drastically shrink human settlements to leave most of the Earth devoid of human habitation or that reduce the birth rates to zero. Kirsch correctly notices how this apparently bizarre worldview has employed cultural anxieties to further amplify those same anxieties in a kind of positive feedback loop:[4]

> *The idea that we will destroy ourselves by despoiling the planet is… radically unsettling It means that humanity is endangered not only by our acknowledged vices, such as hatred and violence, but by pursuing aims that we ordinarily consider good and natural: prosperity, comfort, increase of our kind… If being fruitful and multiplying starts to be seen as itself a form of killing, since it deprives future generations and other species of irreplaceable resources, then the flourishing of humanity can no longer be seen as simply good.*

On the opposite side we encounter, of course, a brand of transhumanism wedded to digital technologies able to generate "new forms of intelligent life," thereby freeing post-humans of their material needs. Both strands allegedly assert that "the only way to restore the sovereignty of nature is for human civilization to collapse." In essence, these thinkers "attack the very achievements that humanists cherish," and their goal is "a world without us." Near the end of the book, Kirsch warns that these two groups, although having such disparate and opposing aims, could indeed join forces in opposing the humanist centre and contribute to the collapse of civilization and possible extinction. Alarming stuff, indeed.

---

[3] For a small selection of recent studies critical to the postmodernist paradigm, see Shackel (2005); Zubrin (2012); Rauch (2013); Rectenwald (2018); Pluckrose and Lindsay (2020); Abbot et al. (2023).
[4] Kirsch (2023), p. 15.

Or is it in fact just alarm*ist*?

There are objections to Kirsch's treatment to be raised from both sides. While most of his analysis of ecological extremism of today seems to me right on target – he correctly identifies some of the usual suspects, like Naomi Klein, Bill McKibben, Greta Thunberg or Timothy Morton – eco-ideologues could retort that he just focused on the narrow but loud "tail of the distribution" of those accepting the Anthropocene argument. They could point out that most ecologically-minded thinkers today are way less extreme, do not call for extinction of *Homo sapiens*, but for better humanity and are more aligned with thinking of James Lovelock than with the one of Unabomber or David Benatar; while we may squabble about the exact content of "better", we may agree that it assumes humanity which *continues to exist*. Kirsch could, in turn, argue that it is not some abstract mean or median value which determines the historical impact of a bunch of ideas, but it is exactly the extremes. The Tychonic "compromise" system of the world (in which other planets move around the Sun, which in turn moves around the fixed Earth) was promoted by many "moderates" during the Copernican Revolution as a remedy to the revolutionary zeal of Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo; it didn't turn out very well for the moderates. The examples of political revolutions which were usurped by the tiny aggressive minorities abound as well.

In any case, from the point of view of this essay, this half of the debate is less important than the other half. Kirsch's parallel between Anthropocene antihumanists and transhumanists is a powerful rhetorical weapon; it is easy to see how it could be appealing to many on a superficial level. Consequently, his own "third way" or what could be called *mere humanism* may garner some points with those already suspicious of transhumanism-smelling ideas and/or willing to accept a cartoonish image of the process of evolutionary change. The major underlying fallacy of Kirsch's narrative is the lack of a key evolutionary insight (which he, sadly enough, does share with some transhumanist-friendly thinkers), namely that evolutionary progress does *not* imply extinction of prior forms; it especially does not *necessitate* their extinction. Once this fallacy is dispelled, the symmetry case against transhumanism is undermined and mostly reduced to clumsy rhetoric of the type: author X stated that all our works could be taken by robots and author Y then speculated that robots will find us useless and then Z concluded that it will be for the best, as is everything else.

The fallacy is a major problem indeed, especially in media and cultural sphere, although biological science and the biospheric historical record are very clear on this point. The emergence of aerobic microorganisms did not cause the extinction of anaerobic ones; the appearance of eukaryotes did not spell doom for prokaryotes – on the contrary, prokaryotes found *more* ecological niches to fill than were hitherto available; the invention of sexual reproduction did not mean that species which reproduce in less efficient ways like parthenogenesis had to go extinct; the advance of mammals in the Cenozoic era did not mean that lizards or amphibians or birds vanished from the scene. It is a particular feature of misrepresentation of biology normative to many circles, especially in the humanities, to

confuse the food chain with the "chain of being": as your cat can amply testify, the fact that some mammals are above (some) birds and (some) lizards in today's food chain is a far cry from the idea that mammals are therefore "superior" and that they are causing extinction of birds and lizards. The actual history of the Cenozoic testifies to the contrary: while mammals expanded and diversified and (with a few exceptions) increased in size and ascented up the food chains, the birds ("living dinosaurs") for example diversified and prospered as well, often in the very same ecosystems.[5] And there are literally thousands of similar examples all over the existing biosphere and the fossil record.

This simple evolutionary truth is, unfortunately, neglected not only by opponents of transhumanism – or observers attempting to sit on the fence like Kirsch; it has been ignored or pushed under the rug by a significant segment of transhumanist and futurist thinkers as well. Hence much unnecessary doomsterism often bordering on hysteria regarding AI: to many people, saying that AI (in some sufficiently advanced form, including but not necessitating superintelligence) is a next step in evolution is tantamount to saying that AI will exterminate us.[6] This is unsupported nonsense and potentially very dangerous crying wolf. As Robin Hanson poignantly noticed in a text appropriately entitled "AIs Will Be Our Mind Children":[7]

> *[F]uture human-level AIs are not co-existing competing aliens; they are instead literally our descendants. So if your evolved instincts tell you to fight your descendants due to their strangeness, that is a huge evolutionary mistake. Natural selection just does not approve of your favoring your generation over future generations. Natural selection in general favors instincts that tell you to favor your descendants, even those who differ greatly from you.*

A large chunk of the fashionable doomsterism is dispelled upon proper understanding of this simple point.

On other topics, Kirsch exhibits a rather restrictive view of future possibilities: "An organic life form, even an enhanced one, will never be durable enough to survive interstellar travel" (p. 61). One would expect that he came to this conclusion after deep and careful study of the existing literature on the subject, ranging at least from *The Starflight Handbook* published in 1989 all the way to 2023 monograph *Interstellar Travel: Purpose and Motivations*.[8] Observe that these are not obscure samizdats published by Joe N. T. Husiast Press of Black Gorge, Montana, but prestigious editions from catalogs of the best *scientific* publishers on the planet like Springer Science, Elsevier or John Wiley & Sons. And yet they are completely absent from Kirsch's bibliography – and equally absent is any supporting argument for his sweeping statement. Not to mention that it directly contradicts a revival of interest in instellar panspermia, something which intrinsically contradicts his thesis.[9] This is mentioned just as a clear-cut example of

[5] The exception needs to be made
[6] Yudkowsky and Soares (2025).
[7] Hanson (2023); see also Hanson (2016).
[8] Mallove and Matloff (1989); Gilster (2004); Long (2012); Johnson and Roy (2023). These are just the tip of the iceberg of relevant literature.
[9] E.g., Gobat et al. (2021); Vukotić, Seckbach and Gordon (2021); Adams and Napier (2022).

narrow-mindedness about the future which generates some of the anti-transhumanist sentiment.

So, in a sense Kirsch's subtitle is signally deceptive *twice*: (1) "the world without us" need not be the world *really* without us – in the sense of being devoid of beings with our physical, biological and cultural make-up even if it contains many other posthuman entities – if we take the transhumanist path at this fork in the road and, (2) even if it does eventually result in the world without us in strict morphological sense, it needs by no means be the world without *our values*. Of course, none of the outcomes will ensue with a metaphysical necessity; it is our decisions – and perhaps some of blind probability ruling the world at the fundamental level according to our best knowledge – that will entail one pathway or another. And in contrast to Kirsch's repeated assertions, most of the actual, living transhumanists do *not* see the extinction of mere humanity as either necessary, unavoidable or desirable.

However, and it is crucial to notice, these alternatives *will stay with us* independently of whether we take the path of transhumanism or Kirsch's third-way mere humanism. (They will obviously not be with us if we follow the Anthropocene antihumanists and go extinct, so the symmetry is broken at this point as well. Extinction possesses the nasty property that it prevents any and all further choices to be made.) This is because the third way is an unstable pathway; just as in many other contexts, the third way tends to collapse into one or the other extreme. Here, we are entitled to ask what would happen if tomorrow all relevant societal and cultural forces decided to follow Kirsch to a letter. Would such a decision really stop further biological and cultural evolution? Would it require ban on, say, advanced AI research or space colonization? On the other side, would it require some kind of re-education of eco-radicals and eco-fascists who desire collapse of technological civilization or human extinction? Could mere humanism manage risks associated with, for instance, climate change? And, perhaps the most important question of all: What would happen when liberal humanist society cherishing noble ideas of privacy and personal autonomy encounters a sufficiently fanatical terrorist, morally *non*-enhanced and armed with some of the already existing (no need for invoking advanced science of the future!) weapons of mass destruction?

Would it turn out that the mere humanism is, in words bioethicists Ingmar Persson and Julian Savulescu put as the title of their disturbing 2012 book, *unfit for the future*?[10]

Kirsch thus cannot escape what could be called "Rubin's fallacy" in relation to transhumanism, which was succinctly formulated as: "The party of post-humanity gives up on mankind, which it barely understands." (Rubin 2006) This fallacy – or prejudice – is so widely spread all over the cultural and political spectrum, that it has become a commonplace, and yet, both parts of the statement are at least unsupported. As mentioned above, "gives up" is ambiguous and antievolutionary; the biosphere did not "give up" on procaryotes when eukaryotes evolved,

[10] That Persson's and Savulescu's book is not listed by Kirsch in the "Further Reading" section is disturbing as well, since it tackles some of his central concerns head on.

between approximately 1.8 and 2.7 billion years ago (Vosseberg et al. 2024). And what does constitute "bare understanding" in this context? Transhumanists read less Shakespeare or Dostoyevsky or T. S. Eliot than conservatives or mere humanists? They go less often to the theater or leave less money in the museums? Conversely, who exactly *does* understand humanity more? Who is *invited* to speak on behalf of humanity in the context of addressing the terrestrial future(s)? Rubin would perhaps answer cultural conservatives like him, but that seems awfully parochial outside the narrow American (and even Western) context. As such, Rubin can hardly avoid sliding into the same kind of narrow-minded ducking behind the disciplinary fences which characterized F. R. Leavis's intemperate reply to C. P. Snow's famous "Two Cultures" thesis back in 1960s.[11] Rubin does understand the Second Law of thermodynamics, and in contrast to Leavis does not exhibit any "natural Luddism" of the kind Snow – in retrospect correctly and even prophetically – charged the traditional humanistic culture with.[12] However, that circumstance makes his position regarding transhumanism even more untenable: he understands that humanity cannot be understood independently of the universe ("the world") and he understands that the world evolves *and* that it often does so in a non-ergodic, catastrophic and unpredictable manner. He might quibble a bit about teleology of it all, or about the need for a convenient metaphysical embedding – but those are abstract theeoretical issues if we are after the explanatory pathways and the ethical framework upon which the futures studies and future human flourishing could be built.

Kirsch at moments seems to be avoiding the Rubin's fallacy, only to fall in it straight ahead near the end of the book. Third-positioning mere humanity leads straight into reification of the present-day humanity (plus conveniently cherry-picked pieces of the past culture, like Shakespeare and Dostoyevsky) – and yet, the future is potentially so big, many orders of magnitude bigger than the past and the present, and it has no say whatsoever in mere humanity. Future people have no voice here. To understand humanity as a completely stable category, as Kirsch wishes, we need to understand the needs and dreams and visions of the future, much more than those of the past; and that, obviously, requires *rejecting future's autonomy*.[13] The latter cannot but lead us into *anti*humanism. So, Rubin's and Kirsch's protests notwithstanding, mere humanity is not a viable recipe for navigating the ever-changing and often-catastrophic world. The only true (though broad) alternatives are antihumanism and transhumanism.

The irony is that Kirsch likely understands all this. In fact, downsizing of the ambition of his book, visible in his last chapter and noticed in Rubin's review,[14] demonstrates the relative impotence of third-positionism. It may be the centrist and majority position *now* and when observed through a low-resolution lense. If the *process* of evolution were to be centered in the discussion, we would have soon realized that evolution would continue irrespectively of our

[11] Snow (1963).
[12] In Rubin's case, his scientific knowledge is rather obvious from works such as Rubin (2014, 2021).
[13] Cf. Slaughter (1995) for the foundational role of the respect for autonomy in futures studies.
[14] Rubin (2023).

predilections and wishes. The present is just a snapshot. In such a situation, is it truly worse to try to take control of the process itself and steer it away from the abyss, instead of sitting in a corner, reading Shakespeare, Dostoyevsky or Eliot, while hoping and praying that the random walk will, by pure luck, avoid the extinction?

3. Becker: How not to write a book about the future

Adam Becker is a Californian physicist by education who opted for science journalism which is, unfortunately, a kind of demotion these days. With his book *More Everything Forever: AI Overlords, Space Empire, and Silicon Valley's Crusade to Control the Fate of Humanity*, he staked a serious claim in the anti-transhumanist as well as space-skeptical circles. Much longer than *The Revolt Against Humanity*, most of Becker's book is devoted to criticizing various transhumanist movements and ideas, existential risk studies, AI risk studies, various tangentially related topics like effective altruism or cryptocurrencies or author's preferred literary science fiction, but above all else, it is devoted to obsessing about the "Silicon Valley agenda", and naughty billionaires The tone is often conspiratorial, at points verging on the paranoid in Hofstadter's sense.

Consider Becker's title: *More Everything Forever*. The contents show that this title is intended in negative, critical or at best sarcastic sense: to ask/promote/work for/think about more everything forever is, in author's opinion, bad and likely a Silicon Valley plot. Now, what's better: to desire more everything forever or to desire *less* everything forever? Oh, but somebody would say, this is not a proper antonym; how about more everything *sometimes*? More everything *transiently*? More everything *for a little while*? More *something* forever? More *nothing* forever? *Less nothing* never? Those complicated titles offer so many options for interpretations, both affirmative and negative. Which begs the question: what exactly is the author trying to say here? Or is it like one of those abstract paintings which could be hung upside down without losing any aesthetic appeal?

Likely unintentionally but not less significantly, Becker's title alludes to *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More* – Alexei Yurchak's poignant analysis of the culture and mores of the last generation of youth grown in the late Soviet Union.[15] Both titles contain what came to be called the *utopian potential* – but how different their ramifications are! Yurchak points out how senseless was the promise of collectivist utopia of the "real socialism" and the lengths people went to escape, at least in terms of art and aesthetic, its oppressive – even if trembling – fist. Becker, bizarrely and paradoxically, in a fit of "peculiar blindness to history"[16] he projects onto his opponents, seems to be nostalgic toward all attempts to bring uniformity and "equity" by governmental force, be it 90%+ taxation rates, seizing private property of space entrepreneurs

[15] Yurchak (2005).
[16] Becker (2025), p. 246.

or even darker paths. Yurchak's title is obviously ironic – his book demonstrates exactly that we need *not* invoke distant posthuman future to judge and condemn naive collectivist utopianism. Becker, on the other hand, seems afraid that we shall abandon the faux-progressivist utopianism for more science- and technology-supported melioration projects emanating from the Evil Silicon Valley – or an Oxford-based philosophical institute (must be evil as well).

Along that dreary road, Becker is in constant tension with logic; which is expected since his main thesis is that people who work to understand and mitigate existential dangers are themselves existentially dangerous. Now, every risk analyst knows that impossibility squares badly with fear-mongering. Vampires, witches and black magic would be very dangerous phenomena, worthy of buying insurance policy against – if only they existed. Sun collapsing spontaneously into a black hole would be an unprecedented cataclysm for Earth and would certainly cause the extinction of humanity – if only it were possible under the laws of physics. Consequently, I lose exactly 0% sleep over such things, which cannot be said for realistic existential risks, like supervolcanism, synthetic biology causing deadly pandemics or runaway climate change.

In contrast, Becker would like to have it both ways – which is just one out of many issues on which his book falls short of logic and reason. Since the time of Aristotle, we know that it is futile to try to "prove" the principle of non-contradiction in classical logic; moreover, Aristotle went an amusing further step to call out those insisting on such "proof" as (philosophically) uneducated, since it is indeed a hallmark of education to know which proposition does and which does not require proof. Becker epitomizes such confusion. One cannot, on pain of contradiction, state that superintelligent AI is an impossible nerd fantasy and simultaneously claim that we need massive precautionary regulation to prevent the Silicon Valley corporations from developing superintelligent AI. One cannot, on pain of contradiction, decisively state that "We are not leaving Earth" and warn the readers that human spaceflight and space settlement will drain resources away from allegedly "worthier" pursuits. It is easy to see that such contradictions may be ideologically acceptable, as long as statements are not to be understood as honest analytical steps in search for the truth, but rather as performative utterances aimed at signalling some ideologically desirable virtue or luxury belief.

Becker's public may be somewhat – but not entirely – mollified by his proclamation of the impossibility of superintelligent AI, but this ultimately empirical claim (superintelligent AI is either possible or impossible and one day we shall know for sure, unless we go extinct sooner) does not offer any tangible political or cultural benefits right now. Therefore, someone wishing to push a particular ideology (of radical socialist variety in this case) needs something more, specifically directed at the designated "enemies of the people", in this case the hated Silicon Valley billionaires. Hence Becker's call for heavy-handed regulation – and 1950s-style taxation – as essentially an ideological prescription, not something motivated by empirical reality.

An extreme social-constructivist ally, Joe P. L. Davidson, sociologist associated since 2022 with the University of Warwick (one of the few bulwarks of the Continental philosophical thought in

the Anglosphere), may have offered some succour to Becker's bizarre rejection of existential risk studies. Consider this concluding passage of a 2023 paper of his:[17]

> *To use an old Althusserian term, science fiction encourages a symptomatic reading of existential risk studies; the former draws out that which is, by necessity, hidden by the latter. Or, alternatively put, science fiction fosters politics of anti-anti-extinction, where the task is to disarticulate the logics of extinctionpolitics with the view of restating the dilemmas of the current conjuncture.*

Huh? Davidson, who according to his own webpage teaches a module on "Decolonising Ecology: Race, Coloniality and the Climate Crisis,"[18] is obviously not a fan of George Orwell's advice that good prose should be like a window-pane, transparent to the reader and reflecting meaning without the smears of poor construction or the cloudiness of jargon (Orwell 1946). In any case, what Davidson is striving to say here insofar as it can be deciphered, is that the "socially constructed" reality or probability of existential risk and future extinction of humanity is unimportant; what is really important is the biopolitical power struggle at present in which Davidson and Becker find themselves on the opposite side from some of leading researchers of existential risk. Hence, Davidson cherry-picks some of the second-rate SF visions of the future in order to "unmask" and "uncover" the "hidden" politics of their (real or perceived) opponents and Becker practices some "research journalism" in order to debunk the connections to the Evil Billionaires and Evil Silicon Valley.

This is not only unscientific attitude but also smells of the totalitarian inquisitorial practices: "anti-extinction" in the crooked mirror of Davidson, Becker and company is not the necessary X-risk analysis and mitigation or even a basic biological impulse for survival; instead, it is a sinister conspiracy of "the leaders of Silicon Valley and their kept futurists."[19] Therefore, in their parallel universe, to be anti-that evil conspiracy is not to endorse extinction (not even in the consistent and intellectually honest manner of David Benatar), but instead it becomes a heroic gesture of "resistance" or "rebelion".

Now, as Kirsch pointed out in the first half of *The Revolt Against Humanity*, the Anthropocene antihumanist gang abounds in nihilist philosophers, disappointed activists and open eco-fascists desiring – not so secretly any more – to Make Extinction Great Again. That list seemingly was not *inclusive* enough, since Becker sneaks from the midfield, David Beckham-style, and scores big for the *Merchants-of-Despair* team:[20]

---

[17] Davidson (2023), pp. 64-5.

[18] Ironically, "deconstructing" and "critiquing" just this ridiculous title would require an essay in itself. Here, I just notice that "decolonized ecology" makes as little sense and is in all respects as ridiculous as "feminist glaciology", which was rightly mocked by the "Sokal Squared" hoax (see e.g., Pluckrose and Lindsay 2020): putting a scientific discipline like ecology or glaciology behind an ideological adjective demeans the science and deranges its methodology without any cognitive benefit whatsoever.

[19] Becker (2025), p. 286. A shameful quote by someone who, in fact, is kept by the billionaire's foundation grant, by his own admission just a few pages later (pp. 291-2).

[20] *Ibid*., p. 241. Cf. Zubrin (2012).

> *If you knew, right now, that another asteroid was bearing down on Earth like the one that hit sixty-six million years ago, and if you were offered the choice of staying here or going to a base on Mars like the one Musk wants to build, staying here would be far better bet. Everyone here would probably die, but without supply missions from Earth, everyone on Mars would definitely die.*

Goooooooooal! Except that, after some consultations and watching a replay, the referee judges the offside offence. Because, you see, mixing present tense ("the one Musk wants to build") with the future conditional ("would definitely die") is a kind of epistemological analog of an illegal offside position in soccer/association football. You cannot be closer to the opponents' goalline than *both* the ball *and* the second-last opponent (the last opponent usually being the goalkeeper); also, you cannot have both the current-day *necessarily* imprecise plans for space settlement and act/criticize them from the point of view of a future contingency as if they were carved in stone for all eternity.

Imagine a Sumerian engineer-priest in Uruk of 3100 BC reflecting upon what can be done and where with that strange, newfangled invention, the wheel. Since the oldest wheels were made of stone, the engineer could be excused if he were, Becker-like, to think that it would be impossible to make wheels and hence construct wheelcarts or chariots in lands lacking the particular kind of stone. Therefore, he would have been entitled to conclude that all wheels in those areas would have to be imported, at extreme cost in time and material resources; if he were lacking in imagination and capacity for innovation, that is.

Notice that this does not mean that our imagined Sumerian was irrational or stupid: within his conceptual pocket universe, he was perfectly reasonable. The problem is that people tend to find all kinds of reasons *not* to leave their cozy and safe and limited conceptual pocket universes. In Becker's case, he intentionally chooses to ignore the obvious fact that *the first* phase of history of any space settlement is almost certain to depend on supplies from Earth, but at some point the Martian colonists will again almost certainly be able to achieve resource independence.[21] We need not enter into the discussion of how long such period needs be – there are perfectly sound discussions of that to be found in Zubrin's work, among others – to reach the *logically necessary* conclusion that *the sooner the first phase begins, the sooner it will be over*. Please square that with the often hysterical insistence of many space skeptics that We Must Refrain From Even the First Step or, even bizarre, that we already know that We Can Not Make Even the First Step.

The second problem with Becker's offside goal (besides assuming that the referee is looking the other way or is shortsighted or perhaps was even paid – by an Evil Billionaire's humanitarian foundation – to not notice!) is that it suddenly uses what "Musk wants to build" as a gospel. Obviously, it's a rhetorical trick, since Becker does not really regard Elon Musk – or indeed anyone else, with the possible exception of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation – as a sacred

[21] Have you noticed a *wild coincidence* (not really): every one of us had the period in our lives of being dependent, resource-wise on our mothers and, in most cases, both parents or foster parents later? What a strange and unexpected thing (not really)!

cow or an infallible oracle. However, as the focus of the contemporary Two Minutes Hate, Musk's is a convenient name for this piece of demagoguery. Obviously, there are engineers and space scientists today (perhaps employed by *SpaceX*, perhaps by other firms, including NASA, ESA or Chinese space agencies) which have multiple visions of a Mars base; only future research, modeling and scientific scrutiny will tell us which kind will turn out to be the least fragile and the most likely to survive.

Finally, the third problem with Becker's scenario is its shocking immorality. Just as the player who scores the goal illegally and does not manifest fair play in being the first to admit that he did something wrong (like Diego Maradona's 1986 goal by hand) is indeed ethically challenged, so is invoking a horrible mass extinction episode to score essentially political points against the hated billionaires an ethically challenged move. This is a kind of rhetorical overkill or the familiar *reductio ad Hitlerum* of various media and social-media mud-slinging circuses so common today, especially on the extreme political and cultural left. This rhetorical trick is commonly used to conceal the lack of relevant knowledge and it is exactly in this capacity it works in Becker's narrative: he pretends to know much about both the distant past (ecological consequences of the Chicxulub impact) and the medium-term future (ecological possibilities offered by the permanent Mars base), while in reality he knows very little about both *at best*.

But hey, who reminded us that it was great physicist Wolfgang Pauli who said that "Only those who wager can win"?

Surprisingly enough, it was a guy named Adam Becker. Some 7 years before his book-length anti-future rant in an otherwise superb article in *Aeon* he wrote:[22]

> *Some of the most interesting scientific work gets done when scientists develop bizarre theories in the face of something new or unexplained. Madcap ideas must find a way of relating to the world – but demanding falsifiability or observability, without any sort of subtlety, will hold science back. It's impossible to develop successful new theories under such rigid restrictions. As Pauli said when he first came up with the neutrino, despite his own misgivings: 'Only those who wager can win.'*

Commendable and absolutely right on target. Both Pauli and, by extension, Becker are correct here: only those who wager can win, indeed. How, pray tell, the same does not apply to risks of human spaceflight and Mars colonization/settlement? But no, all we read in 2025 are the same old canards: radiation bad, too cold, low gravity bad, yadda yadda yadda. The contrast between the 2018 article and the 2025 book is, in fact, so extreme that one can hardly conclude anything other that Becker in meantime has become, *in his own words*, "bound to an ideology that blinds him to the world around him."[23] The iron law of projection manifests itself here in full glory.

---

[22] Becker (2018); emphasis added.

[23] Becker (2025), p. 286. Just as in the case of some other space skeptics it seems that something – perhaps the rise of the NewSpace? – so thoroughly terrified Becker at some point, that he simply shed all the trappings of rational scientific discussion and started to spew propaganda in a kind of "anti-Kronstadt moment" (cf. Crossman 1949).

Now, let me mention an issue that is implicit in Kirsch's analysis (and he obviously chooses to refrain from explicating it, for good reason), but in Becker it becomes a screaming display of conceptual confusion. Practically the last quarter of *More Everything Forever* strongly and repeatedly focuses on the distinction of what the author calls "technological" and "social" problems humanity is facing. For example, we read:[24]

> *Most of the greatest problems facing humanity right now… are not driven by resource scarcity or a lack of technology. They're social problems, requiring social solutions. Increased energy usage, increased technological prowess, or even an increase in the amount of "intelligence" brought to bear on these problems (whatever that might mean) isn't likely to solve them… Technology can't heal the world. We have to do that ourselves.*

Now, I am prepared to give Becker the benefit of doubt regarding his list of "the greatest problems". However, there is *no doubt* that his understanding of technology is too narrow for a meaningful discussion. Many people, from Ibn Khaldun to Durkheim to Sid Meier (has Becker ever played any of the *Civilization* games? I doubt it, since too strong obsession with "social justice" must make developing slaveholding or feudal societies a pretty non-enjoyable, if not traumatic, experience), have argued that what Becker dubs "social solutions" are *also* part of the technological discourse.

The most beautiful presentation of this position was given, however, by Ursula Le Guin in a brief blog post responding to an Argentinian reviewer of her *Changing Planes*, who stated that technology is absent from her book. Since her book *does* speak about intentional solving problems (in a very Popperian meaning, by the way), the Argentinian has presumably implied the distinction between "technological" and "social" problems just like Becker.

Le Guin would have none of it. She is, like always, crystal-clear:[25]

> *How can genuine science fiction of any kind lack technological content? Even if its principal interest isn't in engineering or how machines work — if like most of mine, it's more interested in how minds, societies, and cultures work — still, how can anybody make a story about a future or an alien culture without describing, implicitly or explicitly, its technology?*
>
> *Nobody can. I can't imagine why they'd want to… Technology is the active human interface with the material world.*

Note that Le Guin dubs her piece "A Rant about 'Technology'" and rarely ever have quotation marks been easier misunderstood! It is not "A Rant about Technology" – as Becker's book and many writings of the Anthropocene antihumanists actually are – it is a rant about something superficial and shallow thinkers like to *call* "technology". The true technology, Le Guin gently

---

[24] Becker (2025), pp. 285-6. Notice, amusingly enough, that Becker here against uses "we" and "ourselves" as denoting the whole of humanity, although elsewhere he – together with Mary-Jane Rubinstein, Linda Billings, John Traphagan, James Johnson-Schwartz, Sarah McFarland Taylor and the rest of the space-skeptical crew – hypocritically perorates against such a usage in books and speeches of the opposing side. See Rubinstein (2022), p. ….

[25] Le Guin (2005); see also Le Guin (2016). Ironically, Becker extolls her writings elsewhere, while obviously not reading very carefully.

teaches us, is *more inclusive* than what her Argentinian critic and Becker and most other people assume, not less. Henceforth, technology in its true meaning is more encompassing and more important and, if one wishes to risk oversimplification, *better for humanity* than it is usually assumed. And this may as well be read as a transhumanist position.

It is particularly amusing that Becker fails to understand this point when his book is filled with repeated and consistent attempts (taking at least 15% of his word count[26]) to force square peg into a round hole regarding history and trends of science fiction. Most of his interpretations are idiosyncratic and not really scholarly. For instance, he mocks Peter Thiel for an oblique reference to Frank Herbert's *Dune* novels as telling the story of the "development of the deserts" (pp. 261-2). Thiel, however, understands *Dune* better than Becker does: the ecological transformation of Arrakis is one of the three major themes of the entire saga, and it was intentional by Herbert from the beginning.[27] The restoration of Arrakis enabled the Fremen population to live much better and richer lives than in their previous history – and they adopted the new lifestyle with enthusiasm. It is entirely appropriate to speak of that process of ecological *and* social transformation of the desert planet as *development*. Has Becker even reached the *dedication page* of the first *Dune* novel? The disparaging treatment of the Museum Fremen – a minority of Arrakis "natives" which rejected the "consumerist" changes and sticked to the desert traditions – in the later volumes of Herbert's saga confirms that the ecological interpretation is correct. Notice also that in general the range of Becker's relevant SF reading/watching is rather narrow: you won't find references to Stanisław Lem or Cixin Liu or Walter Miller or Greg Egan or the Strugatsky brothers or Justina Robson or Alastair Reynolds or *Interstellar* or *Blade Runner* or *Forbidden Planet* or even *For All Mankind* – and many, many other authors and works which are arguably *as significant* for the imagining of future space settlement as those commonplace/populist cliché references to *Star Trek* or *Foundation* or *Childhood End* he dwells so much upon. There are 9 mentions of *banks* in Becker's book, but not a single one of *Banks* (as in Iain M.) – isn't that telling? He mentions the New Wave and cyberpunk, but his history stops there; he signally fails to mention the *New Space Opera*, arguably the most important literary SF movement since the turn of the century. Which is especially irritating when it comes from an author who is fond of calling out his opponents for "peculiar blindness to history" (p. 246) or an "outdated vision" (p. 284): just another lack of a mirror and another double standard on the pile.

All in all, Becker's book is useful in revealing the *epicyclic* nature of the postmodernist rejection of the future: like the ancient pre-Copernican geocentric universe, the skeptical discourse these days requires more and more arbitrary detours and digressions to maintain even a modicum of viability. The facts that Becker has to recourse to moves such as stoking jealousy toward the successes of the Silicon Valley, or that he felt ideological pressure to self-identify

[26] E.g., Becker (2025), pp. 50-5, 127-9, 253-6, 261-6, 278-84 and elsewhere.
[27] As testified *inter alia* by his son and biographer Brian in *Dreamer of Dune*, Herbert [2003], pp. 196-200.

("I'm a white guy with a scientific background" – p. 284) although nobody asks him, nobody is interested, nor is it related to any meaningful content, testify how weak his case actually is.

A very appropriate denouement of Becker's book arrives when after expending all ideological ammunition, he tries to face the real issue. "There is a final question to consider, one that I've been dreading: If not an immortal future in space, then what? I don't know." (p. 284) I'm afraid that points for honesty do not apply at this juncture. We're not in high school any more, Adam; not even in worthless high schools teaching DEI instead of math and logic, prevalent today in places like California. Becker's book is a manifest of both intellectual and moral bankruptcy. Which is pity, since he had – obviously, from the list of interviewees attached, somewhat boastfully, at the end of the book – the opportunity to learn from some of the brightest and most original minds of today.

4. Discussion: the postbiological realm and cultural instability

For all their differences, both Kirsch's and Becker's book purport to give critical accounts of transhumanist thought appropriate for 2020s. Becker places transhumanism in the context of various emerging views such as longtermism or effective altruism, but his Californian ideological blinders prevent him from perceiving it as much wider, intercultural phenomenon. He also signally fails to see that existential risk studies are foundations of *any* future-related discourse.

In contrast, Kirsch's strategy is a more subtle one: by positing the false commonality between antihumanism and transhumanism, he aspires to frighten his readers into imagining a kind of dystopian cultural conflict between these two movements on one side and various conservative movements and forces on the other. However, his scarecrow strategy fails for a very simple reason: there is no real unity, neither pragmatic nor foundational, between antihumanism and transhumanism. This is an alliance that cannot be, pure and simple. Indirectly and ironically, Kirsch notices that himself, adopting a rough, intuitive version of longtermism:[28] "If we knew that in, say, fifty years our entire species would disappear, all the projects that give our lives meaning would become absurd." True enough. And Charles Rubin reasonably comments:[29]

> *How much more absurd if we make human extinction a programmatic goal, even if the expiration date is extended. A global decision in favor of renunciation would take place in a world where there is still work to be done to keep the wheels turning until the happy day of our disappearance, unless a horrific mass suicide is the plan. Would not all such work seem absurd?*

At least as long as we reject sharp practice regarding the meaning of "disappear": it should mean vanish without trace, not being transformed into something different and better, like a

[28] Kirsch (2023), p.40.
[29] Rubin (2023).

posthuman form which will retain all human values, knowledge, creativity, etc. *and then add more to them*. "Disappear" here is used to mean destroyed in a natural or anthropogenic catastrophe.[30] How then, one wonders, are we to take seriously those who *advocate* for such disappearance? The distance, I submit, between Kirsch's mere humanism and transhumanism is much smaller than the distance between either of these sets of ideas and the Anthropocene antihumanism. It is an isosceles triangle with two sides much longer than the third, not the equilateral.[31]

The idea that antihumanism in the form of neo-Luddite, neoprimitivist, Unabomber-style eco-fanatism will globally prevail is ludicrous. It may win a few battles here and there, but the societies and communities which would dare accept it large-scale will collapse first – and hence be a clear warning to others. Fortunately enough, the heterogeneity still persisting on this planet will act to limit the damage. The world is much bigger and more diverse than either California or New York City. However, here lies the danger for longer-term future. As several thinkers have noticed, in the long run and barring some cataclysmic collapse, Earth will be characterized by decreasing diversity in cultural terms. For example, Robert Zubrin writes:[32]

> *In the twenty-first century without the space frontier, there is no question that human cultural diversity will decline severely. Already in the late twentieth century, advanced communication and transportation technologies have eroded the healthy diversity of human cultures on Earth. As technology allows us to come closer together, so we come to be more alike… The tendency toward cultural homogenization on Earth can only accelerate in the twenty-first century.*

It is this loss of cultural diversity which may eventually offer a chance for globally destructive ideology similar to the Anthropocene antihumanism (and Zubrin is correct that opening the space frontier will enormously help in this regard – which is exactly why authors like Becker are so hellbent on sabotaging it). And it is the lesson transhumanists should take to heart. In the world in which it becomes likelier by the day that eventually some kind of geoengineering will have to be deployed in order to mitigate the worst consequences of anthropogenic climate change and in the world which looks more and more like the Easter Island, with its monumental idols, parochial ideologies and cults, as well as general unwillingness to interact with the wider world/universe, to approach these issues with the equilibristics of Kirsch or narrow-minded political partisanship of Becker is, in the final analysis, deeply regressive and irresponsible. A kind of anti-Copernican revolution unfolds right now in some cultural circles, bizarelly motivated by the same kind of opportunistic eco-extremism.[33] The idea that the Copernican Revolution is at the root of our ecological and climate troubles would be

---

[30] Strangely enough, even if a natural or anthropogenic catastrophe does cause the extinction of humanity in fifty years, there already are artefacts of human culture – notably the *Pioneer* and *Voyager* space probes – which will last in an essentially unchanged form for millions and perhaps even billions of years.

[31] Again, Kirsch wilfully ignores this only by features of rhetorical legerdemain: he even quotes the famous "and we shall be changed" passage from 1 Corinthians (p. 76), but puts it *only* in the context of the traditional eschatology and *not* cultural roots of transhumanism, which is clearly misleading.

[32] Zubrin (2019), p. 276.

[33] Kauth (2023).

recognized as ridiculous nonsense it really is at any other epoch and in any other cultural constellation.

Transhumanists – understood most generally and inclusively –should again take these developments very seriously. The challenge to transhumanism from bioconservatives at the turn of the century has been strong enough to create a hostile cultural and media atmosphere toward many important future technologies and it arguably continues to slow down their development.[34] The new wave of hostility, based on different concerns and the false antihumanism ↔ transhumanism symmetry, may easily be even more powerful and socially and politically detrimental. We need stronger consolidation of future-positive cultural forces – and around the issues such as rejection of antihumanist doomsterism, liberatory potential of human bioenhancement as well as space colonization and settlement. The lack of such consolidation is a reason for concern to anyone thinking openly and frankly about the future and the survival of our descendants.

References

Abbot, D. et al. 2023, "In defense of merit in science," *Journal of Controversial Ideas* **3**, 1 (26pp).

Adams, F. C. and Napier, K. J. 2022, "Transfer of rocks between planetary systems: Panspermia revisited," *Astrobiology* **22**, 1429-1442.

Becker, A. 2018, "What is good science?" *Aeon*, available at https://aeon.co/essays/a-fetish-for-falsification-and-observation-holds-back-science (last accessed May 18, 2025).

Becker, A. 2025, *More Everything Forever: AI Overlords, Space Empire, and Silicon Valley's Crusade to Control the Fate of Humanity* (Basic Books, New York).

Crossman, R. (ed.) 1949, *The God that Failed* (Harper & Brothers, New York).

Davidson, J. P. L. 2023, "Extinctiopolitics: Existential Risk Studies, the Extinctiopolitical Unconscious, and the Billionaires' Exodus From Earth," *New Formations* **107**, 48-65.

Gilster, P. 2004, *Centauri Dreams: Imagining and Planning Interstellar Exploration* (Copernicus Books, New York).

Gobat, R., Hong, S. E., Snaith, O. and Hong, S. 2021, "Panspermia in a Milky Way–like Galaxy," *The Astrophysical Journal* **921**, 157 (16pp).

[34] This includes, as Kirsch himself notices, gene editing to make humans AIDS-resistant or geoengineering to counter global warming.

Hanson, R. 2016, *The Age of Em: Work, love, and life when robots rule the earth*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Hanson, R. 2023, "AIs Will Be Our Mind Children," *Quillette*, August 6, available at https://quillette.com/2023/08/06/ais-will-be-our-mind-children/, last accessed March 15, 2025.

Henderson, R. 2024, *Troubled: A Memoir of Foster Care, Family, and Social Class* (Gallery Books, New York).

Herbert, B. 2003, *Dreamer of Dune: The Biography of Frank Herbert* (Tor, New York).

Hofstadter, R. 1965, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics, and Other Essays* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York).

Johnson, L. and Roy, K. 2023, *Interstellar Travel: Purpose and Motivations* (Elsevier, Amsterdam).

Joshi, S. T. 2004, *H. P. Lovecraft: A Life* (Necronomicon Press, Warwick).

Joshi S. T. and Schultz, D. E. 2001, *An H. P. Lovecraft Encyclopedia* (Hippocampus, New York).

Kauth, J.-M. 2023, *Environmental Legacies of the Copernican Universe* (Lexington Books, Lanham, MD).

Kirsch, A. 2023, *The Revolt Against Humanity: Imagining a Future Without Us* (Columbia Global Reports, New York).

Le Guin, U. K. 2005, "A Rant About 'Technology'," blog post available at https://www.ursulakleguin.com/a-rant-about-technology (last accessed May 1, 2025).

Le Guin, U. K. 2016, *Words are my matter: Writings about life and books, 2000–2016 with a journal of a writer's week* (Small Beer Press, Easthampton, MA).

Long, K. F. 2012, *Deep Space Propulsion: A Roadmap to Interstellar Flight* (Springer Science, Cham).

Macaulay, T. B. [1848] 1968, *The History of England from the Accession of James the Second* (Penguin, London).

Mallove, E. F. and Matloff, G. L. 1989, *The Starflight Handbook: A Pioneer's Guide to Interstellar Travel* (John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken).

Miller, G. 2019, *Virtue Signaling: Essays on Darwinian Politics & Free Speech* (Lightning Source, La Vergne, Tennessee).

Mitchell A., and Chaudhury A. 2020, "Worlding beyond 'the' 'end' of 'the world': White apocalyptic visions and BIPOC futurisms," *International Relations* **34**, 309-332.

Moynihan, T. 2020, *X-risk: How humanity discovered its own extinction* (MIT Press, Cambridge).

Orwell, G. 1946, 'Politics and the English Language', in Davison, P. (ed.) (2017), *George Orwell: The Collected Non-Fiction*. London: Penguin.

Persson, I. and Savulescu, J. 2012, *Unfit for the Future: The Need for Moral Enhancement* (Oxford Univerity Press, Oxford).

Pluckrose, H. and Lindsay, J. 2020, *Cynical Theories: How Universities Made Everything about Race, Gender, and Identity – and Why This Harms Everybody* (Swift Press, London).

Rauch, J. 2013, *Kindly Inquisitors: The New Attacks on Free Thought* (expanded edition; The University of Chicago Press, Chicago).

Rectenwald, M. 2018, *Springtime for Snowflakes: 'Social Justice' and Its Postmodern Parentage* (New English Review Press, Nashville).

Rubin, C. T. 2006, "The Rhetoric of Extinction," *The New Atlantis* **11**, 64-73.

Rubin, C. T. 2014, *Eclipse of Man: Human Extinction and the Meaning of Progress* (Encounter Books, New York).

Rubin, C. T. 2021, "The Case Against the Case Against Space," *The New Atlantis* **64**, 90–98.

Rubin, C. T. 2023, "Humanity Does Not Strike Back," *The New Atlantis* **73**, 150–160.

Scharmen, F. 2021, *Space Forces: A Critical History of Life in Outer Space* (Verso, New York).

Shackel, N. 2005, "The vacuity of postmodernist methodology," *Metaphilosophy* **36**, 295-320.

Shellenberger, M. 2020, *Apocalypse Never: Why Environmental Alarmism Hurts Us All* (HarperCollins, New York).

Shellenberger, M. and Nordhaus, T. (eds.) 2011, *Love Your Monsters: Postenvironmentalism and the Anthropocene* (Breakthrough Institute, Berkeley).

Slaughter, R. 1995, *The Foresight Principle: Cultural Recovery in the 21st Century* (Praeger, New York).

Snow, C. P. 1963, *The Two Cultures: And a Second Look* (The New American Library, New York).

Vosseberg, J., van Hooff, J. J. E., Köstlbacher, S., Panagiotou, K., Tamarit, D. and Ettema, T. J. G. 2024, " The emerging view on the origin and early evolution of eukaryotic cells," *Nature* **633**, 295–305.

Vukotić, B., Seckbach, J. and Gordon, R. (eds.) 2021, *Planet Formation and Panspermia: New Prospects for the Movement of Life Through Space* (John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ).

Yudkowsky, E. and Soares, N. 2025, *If Anyone Builds It, Everyone Dies* (Hachette Book Group, New York).

Yurchak, A. 2005, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton University Press, Princeton).

Zubrin, R. 2012, *Merchants of despair: Radical environmentalists, criminal pseudo-scientists, and the fatal cult of antihumanism* (Encounter Books, New York).

Zubrin, R. 2019, *The Case for Space: How the Revolution in Spaceflight Opens Up a Future of Limitless Possibility* (Prometheus Books, Amherst).

Abstract. On the example of two recent books ostensibly dealing with the future of humanity, I highlight several actual cultural dilemmas. In particular, I analyze the destructive nature of opportunistic anti-future ideation exhibited by critical constructionist attempts to bring down the three pillars of future-oriented thinking: (1) existential risk studies, (2) the role of technology in any sociocultural environment, and (3) human space activities and settlement. Somewhat subtler conflation of transhumanist thought with what Adam Kirsch justifiably calls the Anthropocene antihumanism is unwarranted as well; future-positive thinkers in general and transhumanists in particular should do well to pay more attention to these developments.

Keywords: transhumanism; posthumanism; futures studies; existential risk; human extinction; human space settlement