

**THE LAST BASTION
OF CIVILIZATION
JAPAN 2041**



A SCENARIO ANALYSIS

ANDREW BLENCOWE

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This book is a work of speculative fiction. As such, the events that occur are hypothetical in nature and are a result of the author's own speculations.

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PREFACE

THIS IS A WORK OF FICTION. However, all statistics quoted before 2016 are true and accurate. All characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to organizations or real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.



Change seems to move glacially when observed one day to the next. The opposite is actually the case: the Internet's ubiquitousness: 10 years; making the world's navies obsolete: two days by the *Monitor* and the *Virginia*; the rise of the U.S. car industry from a dream to the largest component of the U.S. GDP: 30 years; the creation of modern Japan in the Early Meiji period: nine years.

The gist of this novel is the inevitable rise of Japan to become the world's sole superpower in the next 25 years. That this idea is considered risible by all—especially by the Japanese—only lends credence to the notion. What will happen in the next 25 years is anyone's guess, but one thing that is sure: it will be very

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different from what is predicted by current conventional wisdom.

The cornerstone of this proposition is that Western society is heading in the wrong direction, especially regarding the traditional, normal family. In addition to ridiculing the virtues of the traditional family, the West has embraced what is now called “multiculturalism”—a bastard idea if ever there was one. In contrast, Japanese society is beautifully homogenous and pure.

A central difference between the current sole superpower and the superpower predicted here is that for Americans the three most important words are “Me, me, me,” whereas for the Japanese the three most important words are—and always have been—“Us, us, us.” The Japanese call this the “Power of Harmony.”

Another way to view this is to consider this: one American engineer, one Korean engineer and one Japanese engineer are about the same. But ten Japanese engineers in a team always—always—outperform ten American or ten Korean engineers. Why? The Power of Harmony.

Andrew Blencowe
Roppongi Hills, Tokyo
Wednesday, 4 Feb 2015

INTRODUCTION: THE 500-YEAR RULE

PEOPLE FLATTER THEMSELVES BY THINKING they are enlightened, intelligent and unbiased. Truth be told, the opposite is the case.

And this applies to historians as much—or more—than to others. The very act of being a professor lethally limits the ability to dissent and to disagree; today there are so many dogmas that must be accepted in the long, painful, and torturous path to tenure. Even then the slightest slip by making a mild conjecture—women possibly not being naturally inclined to science or that John Keynes being a pedophile affected his thinking—and the massive wrath of the angry priesthood instantly appears like an avenging fiend. The Age of Enlightenment is being extinguished in western universities in precisely the same way the first Dark Ages started—dogma trumping honesty.

It is therefore not surprising that most provocative and challenging books on history are from journalists and other outsiders who do not suffer these suffocating prejudices such as the unequal ratio of female to

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male angels on the head of a pin as reported in tones of righteous indignation on the front page of the *New York Times*.

And like any dogma, subsequent generations of historians must, *ipso facto*, accept these rules if they hope for a job, just as all economists must accept the Efficient Market Theory regardless of the actual truth.



An excellent example of this dogma is the myth of the Good War, which is popular in America and taken as a basis of all history in England. To even discuss the notion that England (in the disguise of “Britain”) and America fought on the wrong side in the Second World War is simply heresy. And it is heresy for a simple reason—it destroys all Western historiography since 1945. (The same applies to “the War to End Wars”—just don’t mention Belgium’s massive and horrific slave empire in Africa—the largest and most brutal in the world; “poor little Belgium” evaporates.)



Some people believe that there is too much emphasis on the Holocaust. A recent survey mandated that anyone who agreed with this idea was *ex vi termini* anti-Semitic. Obviously, Israel has very effectively used the

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Holocaust as a stick to whip the West, as it has done so since the word “holocaust” started in the early 1970s to mean exclusively the slaughter of Jews. However, there is a far darker side to this conjecture. The Holocaust is used to reinforce the fantasy of the Good War.

The sad truth is that Stalin was by far the greatest mass murderer in European history. While comparing the relative slaughters of millions of innocents is somewhat like mathematicians discussing an infinities of Infinity, Stalin undeniably was far worse than the bitter, hateful Austrian and his cohorts. Thus, England and America fought on the wrong side. This is the reason that America and especially England start and end all discussions of the Second World War with the Holocaust: they must.



Just as happened with First World War, the Second started by accident. Then Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain made the horrific mistake of offering an unsupportable guarantee to Poland in the House of Commons at 2:52 p.m. on Friday, 31 March 1939:

As the House is aware, certain consultations are now proceeding with other Governments. In order to make perfectly clear the position of His Majesty's Government in

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the meantime before those consultations are concluded, I now have to inform the House that during that period, in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence, and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power. They have given the Polish Government an assurance to this effect.

I may add that the French Government have authorised me to make it plain that they stand in the same position in this matter as do His Majesty's Government.

Few people realize that Chamberlain was as egotistical and as bombastic as his successor. The above astonishing declaration was made without consulting his cabinet colleagues, as was Chamberlain's practice. The French were horrified they had been lassoed into this madness. (Indeed, when Chamberlain's reedy voice announced that he had started the Second World War on the first Sunday in September 1939, the French were in a panic—in no way did the French want to fight the Germans in 1939, or for that matter at any time.)

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The sole reason for one of the most massive political blunders of the 20th Century was the bitterness Chamberlain felt at having been outmaneuvered and made to look a fool after the Munich Conference in September 1938.

When Germany did move against Poland, Britain started the Second World War by declaring war on the specious grounds that Poland's "integrity" had been violated. Britain dragged an extremely reluctant France, kicking and screaming, into the madness. Needless to say, two weeks later when the Russians themselves moved against Poland to take the remaining half not occupied by the Germans, nothing was done. Why? Germany was the enemy—never let the facts destroy a good theory.



Closely related to the idea of the "Good War" is the notion of war crimes. War crimes are actually very easy to define: a war crime is a crime against civilians and unarmed soldiers *by the losing side*. Thus Katyn, the huge American death camp at Vosges, the holocausts of Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki are all ignored as war crimes for the simple reason that these atrocities were committed by the victors—victors: good; losers: evil.

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To paraphrase Clausewitz: *history is the continuation of politics by other means*—history is used to reinforce prejudices and falsehoods to make a nation's actions acceptable. The most important part of this idea is the notion of Good and Evil, or more parochially, of good people and bad people.

Thus the Allies of England, America and Russia were the good people and the Germans and Japanese were the bad people. This is not based on any fair and objective analysis but solely on the fact that the Allies won—the winners write the history. (The same can be said for Roosevelt and the last Great Depression—as the statisticians now completely control the history, Roosevelt is seen as the savior from—rather than the creator of—the Great Depression.)



In the Twentieth Century there were four major events: the two wars, Stalin's murders, and the so-called Spanish Flu. (Spain was neutral in both wars and thus avoided the suffocating censorship of the belligerents; Spanish newspapers were the first to report the pandemic, especially as one of the early victims was the King of Spain; in reality the pandemic had nothing to do with Spain.)

In very broad terms the deaths from these two wars, Stalin, and the pandemic were 16, 60, 30, and 70

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million people, respectively. So the obvious question is why do the English churn out countless miniseries on the Second World War that are so eagerly consumed, not the least by American viewers? Where are all the miniseries about the pandemic? And why are there none? The answer is simple: there were no “good” and “bad” people—the pandemic was open-minded and completely objective—it killed regardless of country or ideology.

Winners and losers defining Good and Evil are not limited just to the bigoted and dogma-driven Anglophonic world—the first chairman of modern China slaughtered over 10 million, but it is the Japanese who are flagellated over the atrocity of Nanking, in spite of Mao killing a thousand times more people. Why? The Japanese lost the Second World War.



In the Soviet assault on Berlin, Russian soldiers raped up to two million German women. Some women were raped as many as 60 or 70 times. One British historian called it, “*the greatest phenomenon of mass rape in history*” and concluded that at least 1.4 million defenseless German women were raped in East Prussia, Pomerania and Silesia alone; female deaths due to rape by Russian soldiers was estimated at 240,000. But Stalin’s murderous

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rage must never become a miniseries because it would prove England and America fought the wrong enemy.



So what is the solution?

Actually it is very simple—ignore all history written about events that occurred in the past 500 years. Using this simple but effective approach, histories and analyses of the defeat of the Roman legions at the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest in 9 AD can be trusted; the causes of the First World War, just over 100 years ago cannot be. (There is an influential English school of history that is replete with examples of Kaiser Bill's wicked ways. Today—just 100 short years later—all English historians must swear allegiance to this dogma as part of their professional initiation.)

1

THE RISE OF THE JAPANESE SUPER STATE: 2010 TO 2040

By James Jesus Galbraith

Canadian Advanced Projects Research Agency—CAPRA

Wednesday, 16 January 2041

THE POMPOUS AND SMUG ADVICE given to Japan by self-proclaimed Western experts reached its apotheosis thirty years ago around the time of the first phase of what the newspapers of the time called “Abenomics.” A great deal has changed since that time—Japan has risen to become the sole superpower.

In the thirty years from 2010 to 2040 Japan’s GDP has risen an astounding average of 4.9% per year. The rise has been uneven—the minor recessions of 2021 and 2024 and the major recession of 2029 are three examples where growth all but stopped. Nevertheless, the 4.9% average yearly growth has been overshadowed by an even more surprising development—that the *rate*

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of growth has been increasing in these three decades: 1.9% in 2010 to 2019; 4.6% in 2020 to 2029; 5.9% in 2030 to 2039. And this growth in Japan has been against a backdrop of an anemic worldwide growth rate of 0.5%.

The now-mute Western “experts” have been at a loss to explain this. The quiet Japanese joke is that they have carefully studied the advice of these westerners until they perfectly and completely understood the advice, and then proceeded to do the opposite.

An excellent starting point to understand the incandescent Japan growth in the past thirty years is to look at education. While it is a tired old stereotype to describe the Japanese as hardworking, the stereotype is far too simplistic to even merit refuting. And it does not even start to address the real reason.



A far more basic—and accurate—cause is the family structure. Just 25 years ago, as recently as 2016, shrill Western commentators were urging the Japanese to have far more women in the work place—to destroy the Japanese woman’s traditional role as mother. Laughable as it seems now, these bizarre and pompous ideas were made to make Japan more “progressive”—just like the

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West; think of an alcoholic extolling the virtue of binge drinking.

In 2018, the overall illegitimacy in the United States exceeded 50% for the first time, and the illegitimacy rate among blacks exceeded 85%. At the same time, in Japan, the illegitimacy rate was 0.4%. The earlier and seminal Winegarden study was the first to uncover the poisonous relationship between welfare and illegitimacy—that illegitimacy was linked to welfare and welfare was linked to illegitimacy. Starting in the 1960s, the U.S. Federal government did a truly magnificent job of destroying the black family. Not content to stop there it decided that the American white family should be equally devastated.



Sociologists and economists have a unique naïveté when it comes to understanding people; for both groups elegant theory always trumps reality—people just get in the way. In contrast, real professions—especially law and medicine—take a far more jaundiced view. Sadly, this second view far more accurately reflects the true nature of the human condition.

So it came as a horrible shock to Western sociologists, safely ensconced in their ivory towers at universities and foundations, to discover that naked self-interest

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ruled welfare recipients. These people would exploit the ever-growing panoply of payments by having children for the sole purpose of milking the system. It became so severe in the UK that by 2019, over \$250 million was being siphoned from the system each day. (This was one of the leading causes of the UK default to the Japanese banks in 2022.)



Thirty years ago, one astute observer from the bulwark of the conventional establishment view—Harvard University—pointed out that the affluent American child received over 6,000 hours more “enrichment activity” than the illegitimate child. These so-called enrichment activities were such things as being taken to the park, or zoo, or being read to, or music classes; in essence extra-mural activities; in Japan it is 15,000 hours.

So while the hard-scrabble American single mother readily accepted the fantasies and dogmas of the doyennes of so-called “liberation,” the truth—proven by solid numbers—was that the Japanese traditional family was infinitely superior. The Japanese child-rearing by the child’s own mother proved to be one of the two driving factors in propelling Japan to being the largest economy in the world, accounting for 21% of the

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world's GDP in 2040 (the second largest was Germany at 15%.)

One simple example will suffice—Japanese mothers speak over ten million more words to their children before the child reaches the age of four than Western children. Western governments used to endlessly boast about the increases in the amount of money being paid to professional care-givers for young children. The Japanese were mute because it is anathema to Japanese to think of their children being “supervised” by paid help rather than nurtured and loved by their own mothers.

Professor James Murray, professor of child development at Cambridge University recently remarked about being shocked at the way mothers on their bicycles in Tokyo seemed to be always chatting to their children on the bicycles specially designed to carry their children, “it seemed like a private, never ending tutorial of what the young children were observing. The benefits of early cognitive development of this are huge.”



The second—and equally important—factor for the breathtaking rise of Japan in the years since 2010 is the nation's homogeneity. While it is true today—in 2040—that the average Japanese IQ is 112, this has not

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always been the case—as recently as 2015, the now-defunct World Bank rankings had the average Japanese IQ as 108. One of the major causes of this significant increase can be seen by noting that the rating of Japan’s cohorts have plummeted—the average British adult IQ is now at 94 points, while the average American adult IQ is at an amazing 89 points. (It should be pointed out that the current illegitimacy rates in Britain and America are 55% and 68% respectively; it is currently 0.9% in Japan.)

Of course, education is simply the starting point. The dividends resulting from the Japanese approach can easily be measured by a wide range of metrics, one of the better ones is Nobels—in the decade starting 2030, eight of the ten annual prizes for Physics were awarded to Japanese; another is software and robotics patents—worldwide, 68% were awarded to Japanese firms; nine of the top ten robotics companies are now Japanese.

And the benefits of the Japanese education system does not stop with these metrics; in a new book by Dr. Cameron Bell, *“Intelligence and Social Coherency,”* Bell proves the inverse relationship of national intelligence to the tendency to riot. And Bell goes further to show—using the U.S. as the example—that as a nation’s overall IQ declines, so does social coherency;

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Bell shows the relationship is more than just linear. As the U.S.'s national IQ dropped from 97 in 2016 to 89 today, the number of riots (defined as disturbances of a crowd of over 100 people) has skyrocketed 56-fold. In the same period, the number of riots in Japan stayed consistent at zero for both periods. Smart People Don't Riot, Stupid People Do Riot.



The Japanese authorities are quick to point out that the halving of the crime rate in Japan since 2036 can be largely attributed to the introduction in 2036 of the somewhat controversial Clean And Pure Skin immigration policy—foreigners with any tattoos were banned from entering Japan. There was initially an uproar in the old United Nations in New York over this policy, along with Japan not being granted a permanent seat on the Security Council that led to Japan leaving the UN, almost one hundred years to the day that it left the equally impotent League of Nations.

After the Clean And Pure Skin immigration policy was introduced the Japanese crime rate dropped to an astonishing annual rate of 0.8 crimes per 100,000 people from the previous 9.1 crimes per 100,000 people; the American rate for the same year was 4,512 crimes per 100,000 people.

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After the success of the Clean And Pure Skin immigration laws, the crackdown on the Nigerian touts that used to infect Roppongi began in earnest. One of the simplest techniques the police used was to record images of people using public telephones that were added around Roppongi Crossing in central Tokyo. (A prerequisite to buy a mobile phone in Japan is a photo id; illegal Nigerian immigrants could never comply.)

This simple expedient provided a raw database of images that were automatically mapped again the criminal record database. Using this approach, an average of a dozen Nigerian criminals were deported daily.



At the turn of this century, all Western pundits were universal in their dire predictions of the extinction of the Japanese race. While it is true that the Japanese population has declined from 126 million in 2010 to 96 million today, what these Cassandras all failed to foresee was the radical changes wrought by robotics and the more advanced roboticians. Thirty years ago there was talk of a massive influx of Filipino maids and so-called caregivers. Japan was expected to mimic Hong Kong, where every middle-class family had an amah. But, true to form, the Japanese once again confounded these self-professed Western experts by preferring the

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Japanese “roboto-frienda”—Hitachi’s advanced range of companions (q.v.); clean, perfect and best of all, speaking perfect Japanese.

Apart from Japan and Germany, wide-spread unemployment—especially for young people under 25—caused massive social unrest in this century. The French riots in 2021 in Lyon where over 900 rioters were killed, or the Detroit meltdown in June, July, August and September of 2025, when the entire center of the city was laid to waste by the 250,000-strong “ultra-gangs,” are just two of the more graphic examples of this.

2

R3: ROBOTS BUILDING ROBOTS BUILDING ROBOTS, A COLLOQUIAL HISTORY**

By Harold Faraday
Tokyo School of Economics
Monday, 4 February 2041

IT TOOK JUST SEVEN WEEKS—42 DAYS—from the discovery of ether as an anesthetic by Boston dentist William Morton to its near universal use in the United States and all the capitals of Europe. The first operation under ether was performed on the October 16 in Boston; by mid-December, the use of ether was ubiquitous. And in the year in question—1846—the fastest means of communications was a letter sent by a mail express train, about 30 miles per hour; six of the seven weeks for the European adoption was the time it took to sail across the Atlantic.

While the adoption of R3 has taken years, rather than weeks, its influence is in the same realm as that

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of anesthesia. And in both cases, ancient, hoary, and wrong assumptions needed to be revised, and in many cases reversed.

In the case of R3, there were a number of misunderstandings about what is now taught as Basic Robotic Principles.

One of these misunderstandings was the notion that robots were automating manual tasks previously done by people. This basic falsehood meant that so-called “robotic” factories mimicked human factories. As one of the earliest embracers of these primitive robotic environments were car factories, it was not unusual to see in the early robotic factories production lines identical to the first production lines of Henry Ford, the sole difference was the replacement of the human workers with robots.



While amusing today, this misunderstanding was completely understandable. Examine the engine of a 1903 Rolls Royce Ghost and the strongest impression conveyed is that of a marine engine—the only electricity used was the magneto to fire the spark plugs; all else was gravity feed and copper tubing; even the headlights were acetylene. Change takes time because old ideas that have no relevance to new concepts are bent and

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twisted in a failed attempt to make them work, as happened in the 1903 Ghost engine. The correct approach is to use a new model of thinking, not twisting the old copper tubing—an automobile engine is not a marine steam engine.

Another critical misunderstanding was at the other end of the “life” cycle—in the first fifty years of robotics, humans were used to build robots. As will be explained shortly, this—like the early primitive “robotic” factory designs—was a major reason for the slowness of adoption of true robots.

Another factor that limited the widespread use of robots was the mentality of both the engineers and of the general public—for a very long time robots were seen as clunky, awkward machines that lumbered around with stiff limbs like a Lon Chaney Frankenstein, slowly turning to view the speaker and themselves speaking with a metallic voice of a “man from Mars.” As with most of the advances in robotics, these misunderstandings were first corrected by the Japanese.

A major intellectual step forward was the understanding that robotics were as varied as fashion design—it was not the singular drab green of the Mao Dictatorship or the military hats of the old Soviet Union where all hats were the same size and soldiers were supposed to adapt their heads to fit the hats.

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It was the Japanese who first categorized robots into the now-standard Twenty-Four Automata Classes. And it was the Japanese who, in the early 2020s pioneered the also now-standard Twelve Tactile Features. These features evolved from earlier work done at Tokyo University about the functional specification of robotics for home assistance. These specifications were themselves based on the results of teams of post-graduate roboticists, who found that the elderly clients for whom many early robots were designed, complained most about the cold plastic that composed the outer layers of the robots.

Of course, as roboticists were initially trained as engineers 30 years ago, this was to be expected—engineers as a class loved the cold and perfect plastics made by the Japanese Itco Plastics And Engineering company, the leader in robotic plastics.

It was the invention and then the development of the robotic ‘skin’ of micro-veined tactile synthetic rubber, the so-called ‘hot skin’ that was the first and the most important breakthrough. The early second-generation housebots, were all covered in this remarkable material. However it did not take long for the clients to complain that the hot skin was too hard and tough—“like touching a warm brick” was a common refrain. So the designers reviewed the complaints lists and

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then reviewed—of all things—the hibernaculum of the peach-tree borer. It was this concept of suspending the outer hot skin on an underlay as if it were threads that solved the problem. Not unlike a thick foam-rubber underlay over a cold and uninviting concrete floor, the new threaded underlay mimicked actual human skin layers, with a firm outer layer with softer layers beneath. The mechanics of the actual hot skin were very simple—a micro-veined material through which purified water circulated. By matching the room temperature with the housebot's hot skin, the appeal of the housebot was greatly increased. Actually, matching gives the wrong impression; the reality was an inverse correlation was used—in summer the “hot” skin was deliciously cool, while in winter, the “hot” skin lived up to its name. Female clients especially were delighted with the soft, firm, yet gentle feel; many of the late second-generation housebots were optionally equipped with what was euphemistically called the “Dutch Wife” feature for some of the more frisky female clients. (Of course, for the female Japanese clients of these housebots, the anatomical details were the reverse of the traditional “Dutch Wife.”)

In retrospect, it is easy to see why the hot skin technology made all the difference—now the housebot *felt* like a real person, just one that did not argue or ever

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disagreed with the client, and one that spoke fluent Japanese. Interestingly, many clients would manually change the accent from one day to the next (there were 12 Japanese patois supplied). This led to the development of the different personalities of the housebots, so the client could “invite” different guests to be the client’s companion for the day. In addition, different levels of libido could be selected as well.

In addition, the gait algorithms developed by Yokohama University and commercialized by FACOM, enabled the housebots to move with the same varying gait of a human—light years from the stiff-legged Lon Chaney.

It was these natural physical aspects of the housebot that made them so popular.



One area of controversy was the software implementation used. In the first-generation and early second-generation housebots, the device was completely self-contained; once purchased and installed, the housebot simply required a regular electrical charge.

Even these early machines required powerful onboard computing. But the later second-generation devices turned the software approach on its head: rather than being freestanding, with powerful onboard

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computing, these devices were designed to be driven by the central All Nippon Housebot Control Facility—a mouthful for every Internet and Xnet presenter, even when the “ANHCF” abbreviation was used.

However, the benefits were manifest—rather than a free-standing glorified vacuum cleaner with legs, the later second-generation and third-generation housebots gained the intelligence of large databases and the concomitant computing power of a data center to create intelligent inferences over a cohort-set, almost in real-time.

The benefit of this approach was made clear in the case of the Shanghai Poisoner, Li Wu Dan. This gentleman—for reasons still unknown—laced over 1,000 bottles of Neuroseptic, the popular sleep aid, with strychnine. Li had followed Woodward’s original approach to synthesize rather than buy the poison; he was eventually captured because of his inability to refrain from boasting about it in the old-style online chat rooms.

Three elderly customers had bought bottles from the same store. And in each of the three cases when the victims started to convulse, the client’s housebot instantly alerted both the ANHCF central facility located in Hokkaido, and also the local Shanghai ambulance service. As the three cases all took place

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after 10 p.m., the local ambulance service refused to provide the gazetted service, unless an “Overtime Premium” was paid in cash. As the three convulsing victims were hardly in any position to agree, the central Japanese service broadcast a Shanghai-wide distress call. As it happens, all three elderly victims lived after being driven to hospital by a Dane, a German, and a Swede respectively.

But more important still were the messages sent to all 190 other housebots in Shanghai to warn their clients of the dangers of the drug. As it happens, two of the 190 clients were just about to take the poisoned medicine in question.

In some respects, the Shanghai poisoning case was a two-edged sword. Clients were delighted and sales of the housebots soared, not just in Shanghai, but throughout all of the South Confederation of Chinese States. But the Shanghai authorities rightly recognized that the dependency on a foreign power, and a foreign power that had almost taken over the entire country one hundred years earlier, may not be such a good idea.

But with the public acclaim of the Japanese housebots saving Chinese lives in Shanghai, there was little the Chinese authorities dared do. And the presence of a Japanese housebot quickly became the ultimate status

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symbol among the always-insecure Chinese and especially the status-conscious Shanghainese.

Needless to say, a number of Guangdong-based companies started knocking out fakes in less than a month. This situation also showed the power of central control—each week the Japanese manufacturer simply printed five questions in the local Shanghai newspapers to verbally ask the housebot; the Chinese fakes were dumb.

It was here that the wisdom of the ANHCF became apparent. Yes, the Chinese fakes were typically unreliable and they did break down frequently; but for a simple fashion show for gawking guests, a quick lap or two around the always pokey lounge room was more than sufficient.

But the real benefit of the housebot was not in its manual labor, but rather in its intelligence, an intelligence derived from the ANHCF and the power of the facilities to correlate a massive amount of apparently random data—the case of the Shanghai Poisoner was a simple but perfect example.



Also, the telemetry used by the Japanese housebots annoyed not only the Chinese but also the Americans. By using a private and proprietary microwave

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technology, and moreover, a technology that used 64K block encryption, the Chinese and even more the Americans were furious that they could not snoop. With no ability to spy on the communications, the Americans resorted to a prohibition on the importation and use of Japanese housebots for 13 years starting in 2020. But American households constantly railed against this restriction and finally in 2033 the U.S. government realized that the prohibition was futile.



Hot Skin was the second-most important development of the housebot. What trumped Hot Skin in importance was no surprise. It was the development of a completely functioning hand, or as roboticists call it the Hoshibot, named, as it was after Akira Hoshi, the leader of the Yokohama Technical University who spent 19 years developing this unique device.

Hoshi was originally a programmer seconded to this project. Son of a wealthy Tokyo real estate developer, Hoshi was spoiled as a child, and—not surprisingly—turned out to be a spoiled brat. However, a near fatal motorcycle accident changed that forever. On a hot Saturday night in July 2019, Hoshi was riding his beloved BSA 650 Lightning. At the main intersection at the bottom of Roppongi Hills, he ran a red light and

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was almost clipped by a taxi making a right turn. In his efforts to avoid the taxi, he was forced to lay down the BSA, which slid and skated across the bitumen into the crowd sitting outside the very large Starbucks.

All this happened in less than four-tenths of a second.

Hoshi tried to stand, but both legs had been shattered as he had hit the white guard rail post. Sadly, he had hit the last of the posts—with a little luck Hoshi would have gotten away with just a little road rash (as happened to his buxom pillion passenger).

As the fates would have it, it as the proverbial blessing...

Being stuck in traction for six weeks gave Hoshi time to reflect. His father added to Hoshi's deep philosophical thoughts by asking,

“What the fuck do you think you were doing, you total fucking moron?”

Hoshi said nothing.

Nevertheless, the profound wisdom of his father's musings did register.



Novelists tend to be a peripatetic lot. The reason is simple: new surroundings stimulates the novelist's imagination. David Cornwall, Gore Vidal, and most

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especially of all, Somerset Maugham; all three travelled incessantly. New restaurants, new sights, new smells, new women, all help the creative process. Scott Fitzgerald's *Gatsby* novel, written in room 254 of the Ritz Hotel in Paris, is just one more example.

So it was with Hoshi. Not so much the smell of antiseptic and the blandest possible hospital meals, but the quietude of the private hospital room. Laying alone with his thoughts. Assured that his beloved BSA had suffered no more than two bent inlet valves when the engine had over-revved, Hoshi could think. And think he did.



His first request was to the private nurse on duty. (Hoshi's father had personally selected the nurses based exclusively on their statuesque proportions—"It's two broken legs, not fucking cancer," his father had bel-lowed at the manager of the private nursing service.)

"Please bring me an unopened cup of instant noodles, an unopened packet of Norwegian sardines, and a can of Suntory Malts beer."

The buxom nurse was about to complain about the beer when Hoshi said,

"I will not be opening any of these items."

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The nurse, whose primary attributes were on her chest and not between her ears, thought it wiser to say nothing and simply to report this oddity to Hoshi's father, who she liked a great deal, not the least because of the father's munificent generosity; for an old fella, the father was surprisingly athletic, the nurse had found.



It was this odd series of events back in July 2019 that led—19 years later—to the device the world now calls the “Hoshibot.”

The dim-witted but generously proportioned nurse, along with the other two nurses assigned by Hoshi *père*, started to worry about the son. Their concerns evaporated when the father slapped the lead nurse's bottom and exclaimed,

“Fucking perfect. Fucking perfect.”

All four nurses politely smiled, even after the father left.

Only two years later did the four start to understand when the son sent them all New Years' cards, thanking them for, as he put it “putting up with what seemed at the time to be a crazy request, bordering on lunacy.”

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It was true that the four nurses had each—independently—observed the patient staring at the three items on his meal tray for hours at a time. Even when the nurses came in to freshen his room and change his bed linen, he said nothing, staring all the time at the unopened cup of instant noodles, at the can of sardines, and the can of Suntory beer.

“Is he somehow smuggling in drugs?” they asked themselves.

This was instantly dismissed as Hoshi had not gotten a visitor for over four weeks.



Once released from hospital, he took the three items to his professor of computer science at Yokohama University.

He carefully put the three items on the professor's desk. Hoshi then slumped into the chair, as his legs were both very painful and terribly weak after six weeks in bed.

“This is the problem for Japan to solve.”

Hoshi looked at his professor.

“Explain.” was the verbose reply.

“Well these three items represent, in microcosm, precisely what we need to help our friends at Tokyo University.

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The professor was well aware of Hoshi's interest in robotics, as it was called at the time.

"Professor, we have been looking through the wrong end of the telescope. Look, we can do the software easily—you yourself have taught me that."

At this the professor gave a wry smile, somewhat doubting the veracity of the assertion. However, he said nothing. Hoshi continued,

"The software is simple to do, but we are missing the bigger picture. What we are failing to see is the nature of the problem. We are analyzing the problem in the wrong way; we are thinking simply in terms of code. What we need to do is to take an extremely high speed film of a human hand opening a can of sardines, and then take it frame by frame. We need to use the ideas of Newton's calculus to slice the action into infinitesimal steps. Then we need to take the same human hand, inject it with local anesthesia, and repeat the process. We compare the two films side-by-side in a split screen, and we have the answer."

The professor said nothing.

Hoshi was about to speak.

The professor waved him to keep mute.

"I hope the government places a plaque at the site of your motorcycle accident in Roppongi Hills."

Hoshi frowned.

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“Your concept is bold and imaginative... Wait.”

With this command, the professor lifted the telephone handset. In spite—perhaps because—of being one of the computer science professors ranked in the top ten in Japan, the professor was extremely dubious of any form of technology. His dictum was: “*The more enamored with technology a person was, the less they understood technology.*” The height of the truth of this was sales people who insisted on having the very latest toy—like an ageing vampire sucking a young virgin’s blood—to mask their complete ignorance: “but this one goes to 11,” as the old saying had it.

“Professor Subari, hello, I want to establish a joint project with your people. When? Why, today, of course. I am sending over the team leader I have selected. It is young Hoshi.”

There was a pause of implicit disagreement.

“Yes, that’s right, his father created the endowment that pays your salary.”

The professor’s time at Harvard and his learning of the brutal ways of American academia showed in this last statement—no ordinary Japanese professor would ever be so forward, so bold, so crude. But Hoshi secretly thanked his professor for his approach.

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So started in the most modest and innocuous of ways what was to become Japan's most important invention, protected as it was by 527 separate patents; the machines that built the device were covered by an additional 249 patents.

The Hoshibot became Japan's largest single generator of overseas revenues starting in 2038. Its use was initially limited to housebots, but within two years its use had been extended to over 100 industrial applications. No licenses were granted for local manufacturing, as the manufacturing process was itself proprietary. All countries accepted this, apart from the New China Confederacy. There the various members took their lead from Beijing, which still retained some influence—many would suggest too much influence—because it was the old head of the defunct communist party.

After less than a year, the various members of the “New China” surreptitiously started to import the Japanese-made Hoshibot through the standard ruses of “Foreign Importers.” It was like the 55 days in 1900 all over again, just no flying Boxers.



The secret of the Hoshibot was the point raised by Hoshi to his professor—instant feedback was as important as the software. With this idea, the first nine years of the project was dedicated to nanosensors, sensors one-tenth the size of the head of a pin, that fed their information back to the central computers. Needless to say with over ten thousand nanosensors each returning data points at the rate of ten every millisecond, considerable bandwidth was needed.

The first algorithms were extremely crude, even by the programming standards of the day. One of the first breakthroughs on the software side was to change the focus from raw data points to changes in data points. Obvious as it is now, it was the change—the delta—that was needed. If no change occurred in that 100 microsecond data point, the data point could be effectively ignored; instant, implicit data compression.

After 19 years the device was put into production by the three firms of Hitachi, Nippon Electrics And Electronics, and FACOM. A series of impressive public relations events were performed. Amazingly the most powerful of these and the most watched on Xnet was the unofficial one where a blindfolded and naked girl had to tell the difference between three paramours; she

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had been told two were real men, and one was the newest housebot. Of course, this was false --- all three were housebots, one from each of the three firms.

After an exhausting two hours, with sheets sodden with the girl's perspiration, she ruefully admitted she could not tell the difference. After her blindfolds were removed, she gasped when she recognized, after a few seconds in the darkened room, that all three of her *innamorati* were housebots.

The presidents of the three companies had been watching the experiment live and had a wager that was rather risqué in nature. All three presidents were quietly pleased that they would not have to embarrass themselves.

The three men knew they had struck a new gold when the girl volunteered that she had "never felt such soft hands on my body," and then without prompting asked "Can I do this again tomorrow?"



Which brings us to the current state of the art.

It's easy to see how far R3 has progressed from these early days, days when sovereign countries actually thought they could ban housebots, and that such a ban made sense. This lack of vision has often been used as an explanation of the catastrophic decline some

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countries—in particular the Greater United States—have suffered in the past 25 years.

As touched on above, a major mental obstruction that needed to be overcome was the notion of humans building robots. There is actually a precedent to this and that is in the area of software development. In the early days of software development, programmers would hand-code their programs, first on punch cards, then later from a screen and keyboard. Then some bright spark came up with the idea of having a program to create other programs. In reality, this was a simple and a logical development. In contrast to ether as an anesthetic, this idea took years to become accepted.

A wide range of ever more crazy abbreviations described this type of software technology. One of the better known of these bizarre names was YACC—Yet Another Compiler Compiler. But the seed had been sown, and eventually the roboticians took up the cause.



A radical change that was required for the R2 was the rethinking of factories. In olden times, circa 1950, factories were places where things were made, or at least assembled. And these factories had machines and assembly lines firmly bolted to the floor. A worker could leave at 5 p.m. on a Friday afternoon, safe in the

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knowledge that the factory equipment would be in precisely the same place when he clocked in at 8 a.m. on Monday—the lathes, milling machines, drill presses, and broaching machines would all be there, welcome old friends ready to help out when called upon.

And the same applied to production lines, such as car production lines. Nothing had changed since the early Ford lines, inspired as they were by the Chicago slaughterhouses, just in reverse. The line would still be there on a Monday, firmly bolted to terra firma, simply waiting for the foreman to start the serpentine again for the new week of work.

But with the start of R2, all this changed. Instead of being a fixed and immovable collection of machines, the factory floor became more like a complex multi-dimensional mathematical matrix, where each unit was a cell that could be reprogrammed to any of a multitude of tasks. So the factory of yore was turned upside down—rather than having a machine tool firmly bolted to the floor, the factory itself—as a complete unit—became the machine tool.

It was this intellectual leap that enabled the creation of the first robots that truly deserved the designation of R2.

The confluence of these ideas led to the design revolution that heralded the start of R3. As with programs

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writing programs, R3 evolved into robots building robots.



Hoshi's choices in his quiet hospital room had been inspired—the three objects covered 87% of the domain of work. The sardine can prove to be the most interesting. Early attempts had taken the form of the clever can opener—use a knife to cut the plastic wrapper, and then cut open the can with a rotating disk. While it is true some humans did use a knife on the plastic, most simply tore the plastic as the wrapper was thin and designed to be opened by tearing.

Once torn, the human would use both hands to remove the can from the torn plastic wrapper. Often times a sardine maker would enclose a square of paper that was a small advertisement. These advertisements fooled the early R2 housebots until one of the team had a chance conversation with a blind aunt who had offered the obvious but profound comment, “housebots and I are the same—we cannot see, we can just feel.”

The trivial step of closing their eyes helped advance the roboticians' work immensely. Now they felt the top and the bottom of the can to determine if an advertisement was present. Once removed the opening ring of

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the sardines was now accessible to the housebot. Here, the R3-generation did have a slight leg up—they did not have to risk broken finger nails.

But in keeping with the design tenets, the new generation opened the can of sardines in precisely the way humans did in the high-speed videos. Namely one hand hold the can and the other first pushing the ring back to open the detachable top and then to grasp the ring and pull.

Ever the engineers at heart, the early designers actually had the housebots open the can almost 10 times faster than real people did. As Hoshi patiently explained by asking: “Why?”

The engineers, head in the clouds as always,
“But it’s like so cool.”

“Forget cool, just do it as *gently* as possible. And I want grandma mimicked perfectly.”

Most of the engineers did not understand gently, so Hoshi had to explain: just like people.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ORIGINALLY FROM MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, ANDREW Blencowe discovered at an early age what it was like to live on the edge of life. During his high school years he dropped out to become a motorcycle racer. Smitten by computers in his early twenties, he went on to become founder and CEO of an international software company with offices on five continents. It is his international perspective and a drive to challenge assumptions that influence his writing interests.

Learn more at www.AndrewBlencowe.com including information about Blencowe's WW2 historical fiction novel *The Goddess of Fortune*, available now.

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